



THE
New Era

OCTOBER

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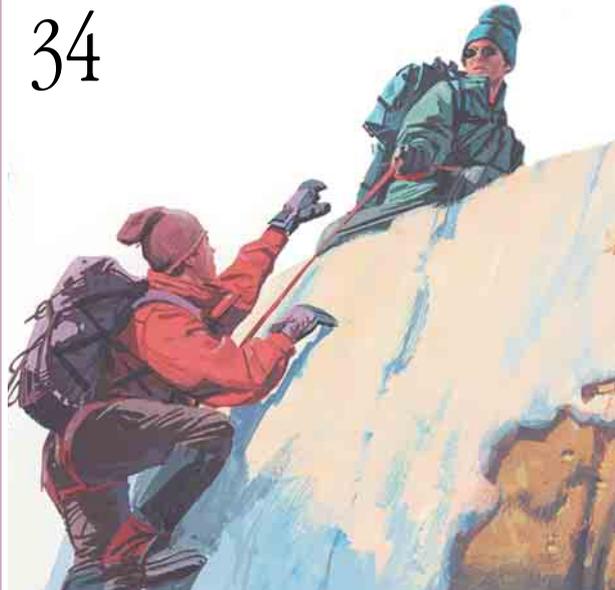
Cover: Taking the
sacrament to members
who are sick is a sacred
priesthood duty. See
"Sacrament Service" on
p. 20.

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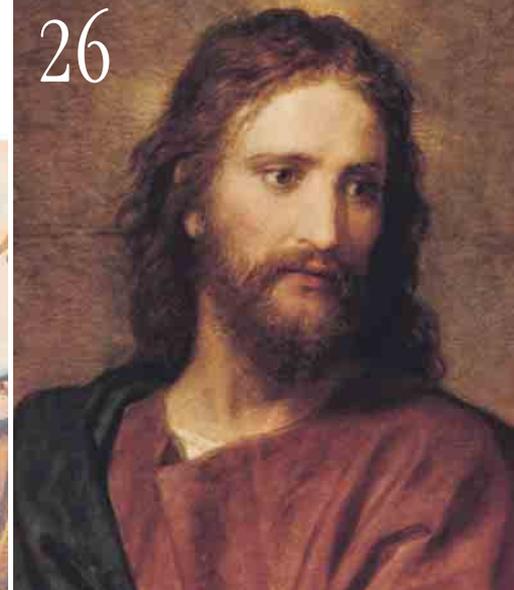
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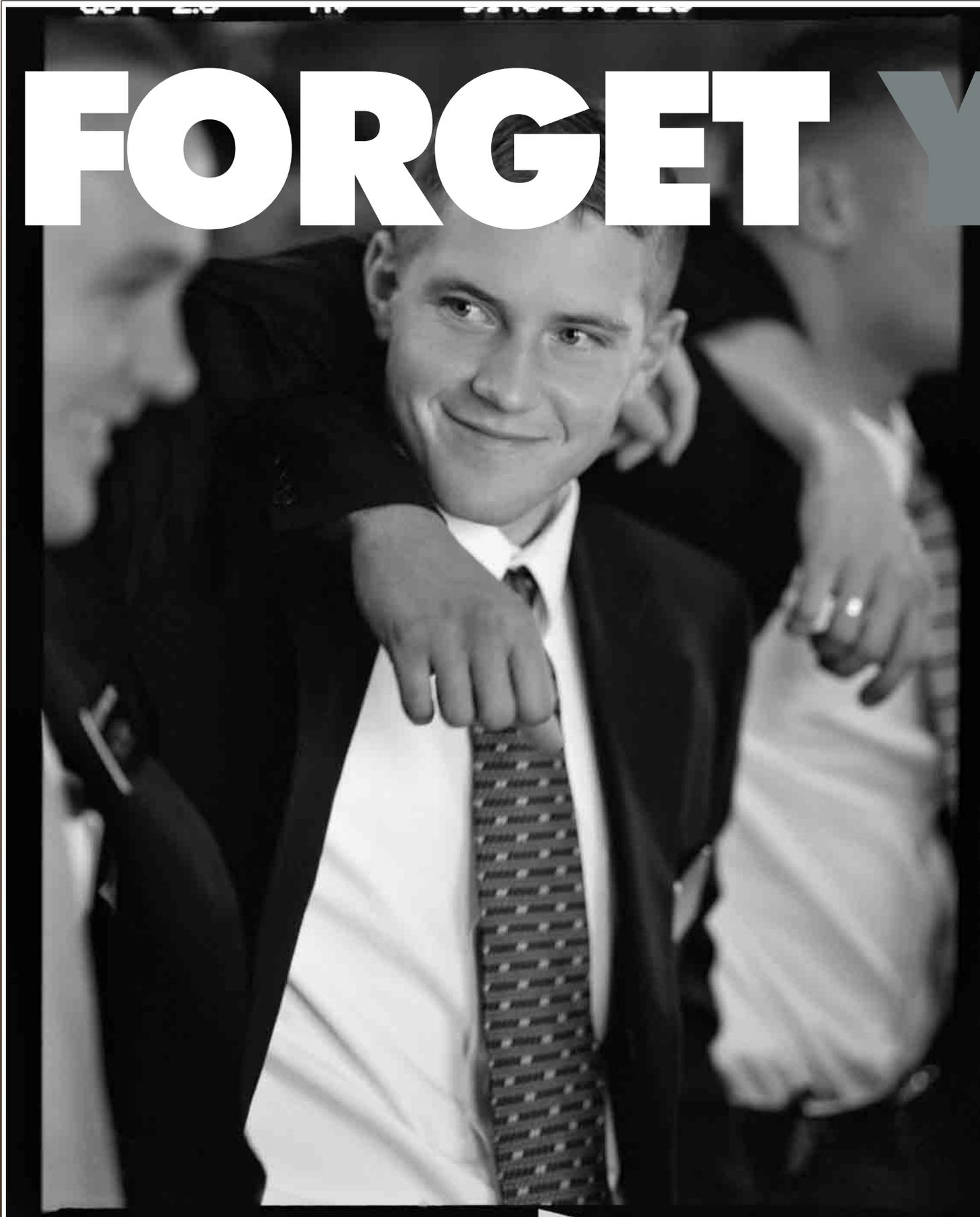
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FORGET Y



YOURSELF AND GO



I promise you that what appears today to be a sacrifice will prove instead to be the greatest investment that you will ever make.

There may be a few young men who may be wondering, ever so seriously, whether they should go on missions. There may be a scarcity of money. There may be compelling plans for education. There may be that wonderful girl you love and feel you cannot leave. You say to yourself, “The choice is mine.”

That is true. But before you make a decision against a mission, count your blessings, my dear friend. Think of all the

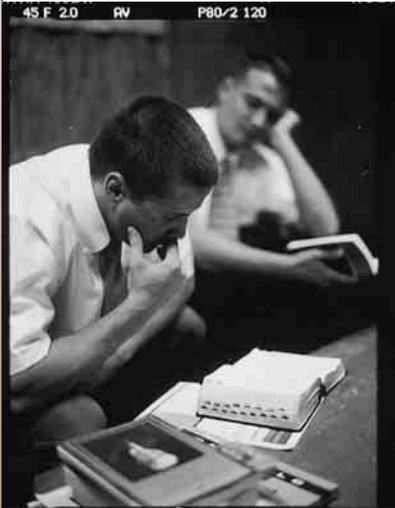


By President
Gordon B. Hinckley

great and marvelous things you have—your very life, your health, your parents, your home, the girl you love. Are they not all gifts from a generous Heavenly Father? Did you really earn them alone, independent of His blessing? No, the lives of all of us are in His hands. All of the precious things that are ours come from Him who is the giver of every good gift.

I am not suggesting that He will withdraw His blessings and leave you bereft if you do not go on a mission. But I am saying that out of a spirit of appreciation and gratitude, and a sense of duty, you ought to make whatever adjustment is necessary to give a little of your time consecrating your strength, your means, your talents to the work of sharing with others the gospel, which is the source of so much of the good that you have.

I promise that if you will do so, you will come to know that what appears



today to be a sacrifice will prove instead to be the greatest investment that you will ever make.

Let there be no hesitancy in your decision. Live worthy of a call, and respond without hesitation when that call comes. Go forth with a spirit of dedication, placing yourself in the hands of the Lord to do His great work.

To you younger boys, may I encourage you to save money now for a future mission. Consecrate it for this great purpose, and let it not be used for any other. Prepare yourselves. Attend seminary and institute. Prayerfully read the Book of Mormon.

The Church needs you. The Lord needs you. There are many out there who need exactly what you have to offer. They are not easy to find, but they will not be found unless there are those who are prepared and willing to seek them out. God bless you each one, every one of you, that a mission may be a planned and essential part of the program of your lives (from *Ensign*, May 1986, 40–41).

Prepare now

Prepare yourself now to be worthy to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary. He has said, “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). Prepare to consecrate two years of your lives to this sacred service.

Of course your time is precious, and you may feel you cannot afford two years. But I promise you that the time you spend in the mission field, if those years are spent in dedicated service, will yield a greater return on investment than any

Our young sisters are not under obligation to go on missions. You will be as highly respected, you will be considered as being as much in the line of duty, your efforts will be as acceptable to the Lord and the Church whether you go on a mission or do not go on a mission.



other two years of your lives. You will come to know what dedication and consecration mean. You will develop powers of persuasion which will bless your entire life. Your timidity, your fears, your shyness will gradually disappear as you go forth with boldness and conviction. You will learn to work with others, to develop a spirit of teamwork. You will draw nearer to the Lord than you likely will in any other set of circumstances. You will come to know that without His help you are indeed weak and simple, but that with His help you can accomplish miracles.

What a tremendous foundation all of this will become for you in your later educational efforts and your life's work. Two years will not be time lost. It will be skills gained (from *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 51–52).

The girl you marry

She will wish to be married to someone who loves the Lord and seeks to do His will. It is well, therefore, that each of you young men plan to go on a mission, to give unselfishly to your Father in Heaven a tithe of your life, to go forth with a spirit of total unselfishness to preach the gospel of peace to the world wherever you may be sent.

If you are a good missionary, you will return home with the desire to continue to serve the Lord, to keep His commandments, and to do His will. Such behavior will add immeasurably to the happiness of your marriage (from *Ensign*, May 1998, 51).

To the young women

I wish to say that the First Presidency



and the Council of the Twelve are united in saying to our young sisters that they are not under obligation to go on missions. I hope I can say what I have to say in a way that will not be offensive to anyone. Young women should not feel that they have a duty comparable to that of young men. Some of them will very much wish to go. If so, they should counsel with their bishops as well as their parents. If the idea persists, the bishop will know what to do.

I say what has been said before, that missionary work is essentially a priesthood responsibility. As such, our young men must carry the major burden. This is their responsibility and their obligation.

We do not ask the young women to consider a mission as an essential part of their life's program. Again to the sisters I say that you will be as highly respected, you will be considered as being as much in the line of duty, your efforts will be as acceptable to the Lord and to the Church whether you go on a mission or do not go on a mission.

I certainly do not wish to say or imply that your services are not wanted. I simply say that a mission is not necessary as a part of your lives (from *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 52).

Member missionaries

The gospel is nothing to be ashamed of. It is something to be proud of. . . . Opportunities for sharing the gospel are everywhere.

The process of bringing new people

I *f you serve a mission faithfully, you will be a better husband, you will be a better father, you will be a better student, a better worker in your chosen vocation. You will come to know your Redeemer as your greatest friend in time or eternity.*



into the Church is not the responsibility alone of the missionaries. They succeed best when members become the source from which new investigators are found (from *Ensign*, May 1999, 105–106).

You will . . .

You will bless the lives of those you teach and their posterity after them. You will bless your own life. You will bless the lives of your family, who will sustain you and pray for you.

And above and beyond all of this will come that sweet peace in your heart that you have served your Lord faithfully and well. Your service will become an expression of gratitude to your Heavenly Father.

You will come to know your Redeemer as your greatest friend in time or eternity. You will realize that through His atoning sacrifice He has opened the way for eternal life and an exaltation above and beyond your greatest dreams.

If you serve a mission faithfully and well, you will be a better husband, you will be a better father, you will be a better student, a better worker in your chosen vocation. Love is of the essence of this missionary work. Selflessness is of its very nature. Self-discipline is its requirement. Prayer opens its reservoir of power.

And so, my dear young brethren, resolve within your hearts today to include in the program of your lives service in the harvest field of the Lord as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (from *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 52). **NE**

TAKING MY OWN Advice

One night I was sending instant messages on the Internet to Amber, a friend of mine. I can't recall how we got started, but we were discussing God and my religious beliefs.

"I'm telling you, Ben, I've tried to pray before, and it doesn't work. I just feel like I'm talking to the wall," Amber wrote.

Relying on everything I had been taught since Primary, I responded, reassuring her that God does hear and answer His children who humbly approach Him. As I was reassuring her, I started to feel less sure myself. I began to feel guilty since I had never actually gotten down on my knees and prayed about all these things. The conversation progressed, and I became increasingly distressed at my lack of a personal testimony. My spiritual progression had been on the back burner for too long.

As a lifelong member of the Church, I sometimes took the gospel for granted. Don't get me wrong, I knew that being in the Church was good, and I made sure I went to church every Sunday. However, I always depended on the testimonies of others to confirm that the Church was true. I always tried to be faithful, but I did not actively seek to apply Moroni's promise to myself. Life was too complicated, and I thought there would be plenty of time for me to gain a personal testimony of the Church at some later point.

As I talked with Amber, I realized even more clearly what I was doing. I was neglecting the more spiritual things in my life in favor of trying to keep up with

Here I was, giving advice to my friend Amber on how she could gain a testimony. Suddenly, it hit me. I should practice what I was preaching. When I did, the result was wonderful.

By Benjamin C. Tyau

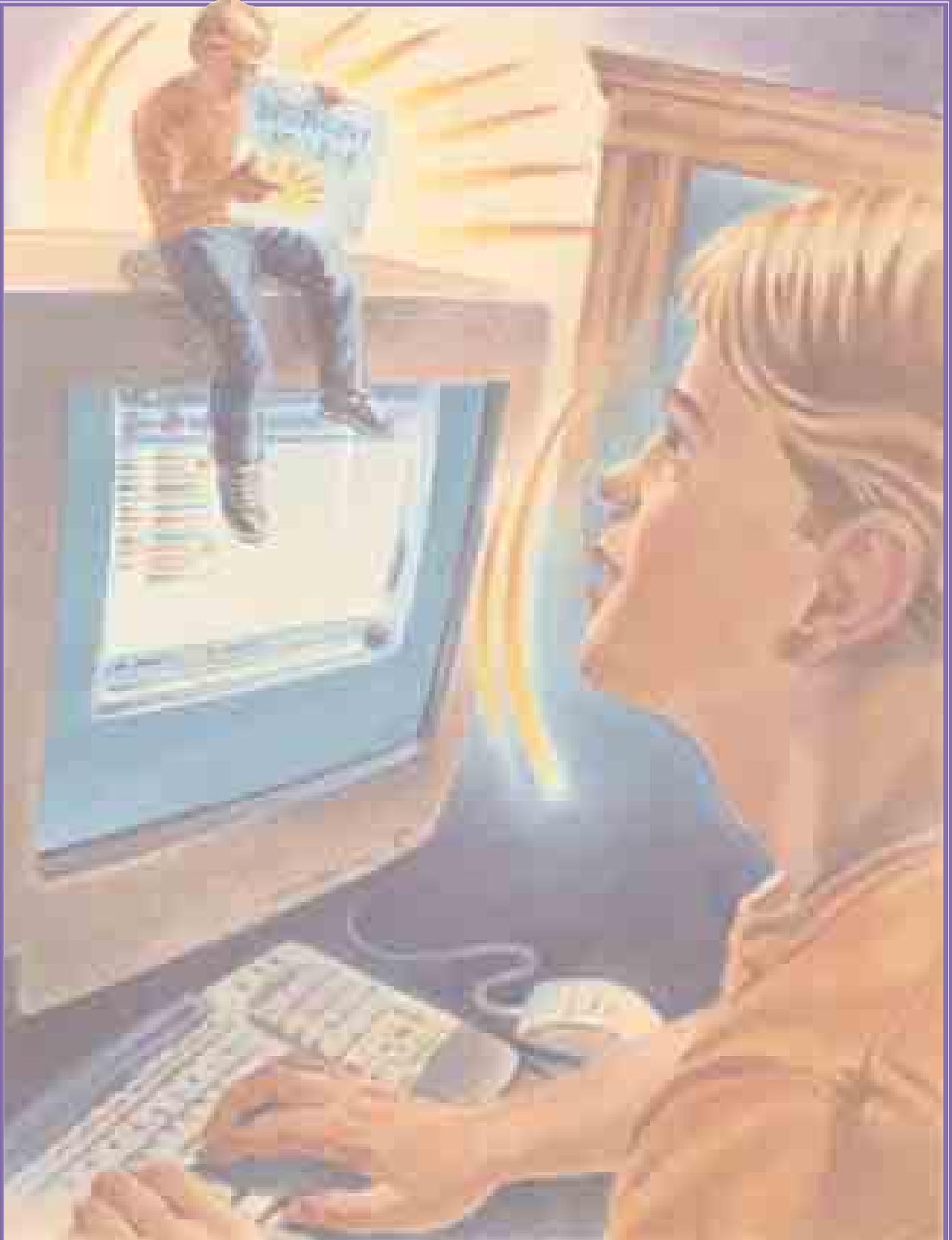
my hectic schedule. When was the last time I had read the scriptures? When was the last time I had a meaningful personal prayer? When was the last time I seriously thought about going on a mission?

Preoccupation with trying to calm my life's storm by myself had taken away from my focus on building a testimony and having faith in the Lord. Ironically, a solid testimony would have served to make everything else in my life fall into place.

"Amber, don't give up on praying. He will answer you," I wrote, while thinking that I should follow my counsel.

Before I went to bed that night, I got on my knees and prayed. I asked to know if the gospel is true and if Heavenly Father was hearing my prayer. I wanted to know Him and feel His presence in my life. I realized then that I simply couldn't wait any longer to gain a testimony of Him, especially during my turbulent teenage years. I prayed for a long time and knelt in silence for even longer, listening and feeling for the Spirit.

Nothing happened right away, but after I had sufficiently loosened my heart and made a concentrated effort to listen amidst the quiet darkness, I felt a sensation of peace throughout my upper body. As I held on to this defining moment of joy, I knew His Spirit had touched me. Finally, I had a personal testimony of Him that I could share with others. Even though I knew my life would still be hard and full of uncertainties, knowing that He was there for me made all the difference. **NE**



Illustrated by Dilleen Marsb



Your bishop wants what's best for you. He's on an errand from the Lord to help you prepare for the blessings of priesthood service.

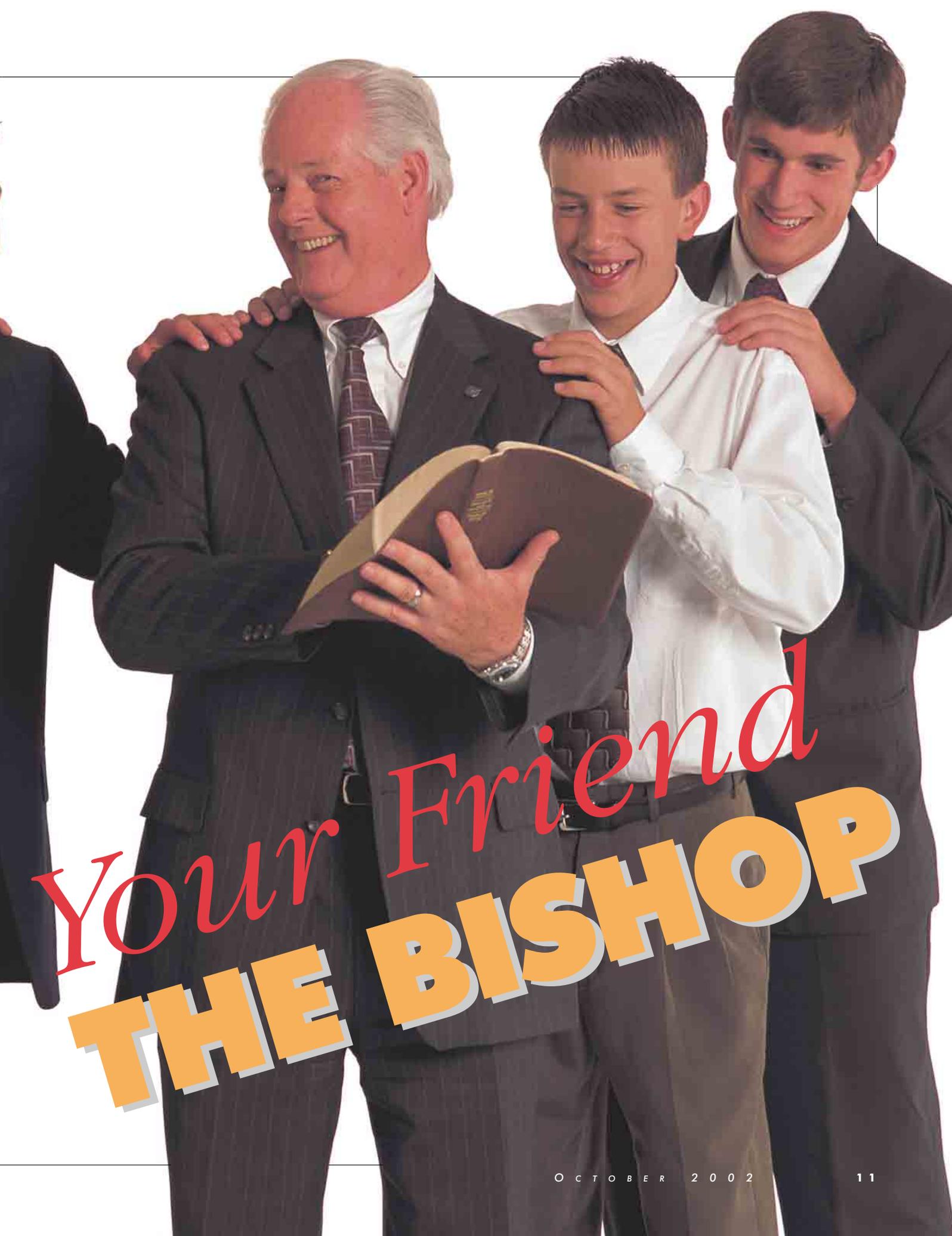
A deacon and I were talking about a bishop's interview. I asked, "What would you like to know about it?" He thought a minute and said, "I'd like to know what the questions will be." He knew his bishop would be interviewing him at least once a year, and he was anxious about the unknown.

But he wasn't the only anxious Aaronic Priesthood holder I knew. An older boy was anxious about an interview the bishop was trying to schedule with him. He tried to avoid it because he was "afraid he wouldn't pass."

Both of those boys would have been less anxious—in fact they would have



By Elder Henry B. Eyring
Of the Quorum of the Twelve



Your Friend
THE BISHOP



As the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and of my quorum, he could give me some things I couldn't get anywhere else. He was the person through whom God could call me or withhold callings from me.

looked forward to a bishop's interview—if they only understood why a bishop looks forward to visiting with them. I learned the “why” of those interviews a long time ago, on a Sunday afternoon. It was the only bishop's interview I ever had that wasn't in the bishop's office, but it's the one that taught me best what a bishop is trying to do when he interviews an Aaronic Priesthood holder.

The bishop's companion

In those days, priesthood meeting was in the morning, and sacrament meeting was much later in the day. I was at home, thinking my priests quorum work was done for the day. The phone rang. It was the bishop. He asked if I would go with him, as his companion, to visit a poor widow who needed help. I jumped in the car when he came by, nervous about the unknown but interested to see how a bishop helped the poor.

I didn't see any food in the car. And my surprise grew when we drove down a dirt lane, in what I thought was a vacant lot, and pulled up in front of a house with no paint and a broken sofa on the sagging wooden porch. We were invited into the dark living room by a woman in a faded and soiled dress. We sat at a table. The bishop began by asking, “Now, where is that budget form I gave you to fill out last week?” Then, for what seemed an hour, he worked that woman through a budget, a plan to repair her house, and a commitment to change her habits. I never said a word. I realize now that the bishop was watching me out of the corner of his eye the whole time.

We drove off in silence, the puzzled priest and the thoughtful bishop. He pulled into the driveway of my house, and we began to talk quietly. He asked me what I thought of what I'd seen. I told him honestly that I had always thought helping the poor meant giving them something, not asking them to do something. And then he opened his scriptures and a black notebook and taught me something he called, “the welfare principle.” He talked about building self-reliance and told me how to help people develop it.

When I walked into my house that afternoon, I didn't know that I'd had an interview with my bishop. I wonder now

if he somehow knew that I would someday be a bishop. But whether he knew or not, he did something remarkable that your bishop or branch president wants to do for you.

First, he cared about me enough to plan that interview carefully to teach me priesthood service. He didn't need my help that day. His counselors or a home teacher could have helped him more. The way he casually pulled open his little black notebook and opened it to the pages filled with scriptures and quotations showed he was anything but casual in preparing to teach me how to give priesthood service.

Second, he turned from teaching to letting me talk about my goals for improving my ability to serve. I realize now he was urging me to prepare to be his assistant in the quorum, a call that came within months.

Finally, he learned how well I was living the gospel. His questions that day weren't as direct as they were in some other interviews. But on that afternoon he asked if I had felt the Holy Ghost during our visit. And I realize now my positive answer probably told him what he wanted to know about my personal worthiness.

Three things

What he wanted, and what your bishop wants, was to give me the best chance he could to honor my priesthood. He knew that took at least three things: some understanding of how to use the priesthood; a personal commitment to use the priesthood; and a life clean enough, both by avoiding sin where I could and repenting where I must, that I could have the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He was wise enough, too, to know that my parents had done much of that. They had taught me, they had helped me set goals, and they had urged me to be worthy.

But as the president of the Aaronic Priesthood and of my quorum, he could give me some things I couldn't get anywhere else. He was the person through whom God could call me or withhold callings from me. And he had the keys of repentance for the ward, and so for me. I know now how much he didn't want to fail the Lord on his errand

to give me every chance to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood, for missionary service, and for temple marriage. And I know now how lucky I was to have such a bishop as Alvin R. Dyer.

Interviews

My bishop never interviewed me the same way twice, and your bishop will be inspired as he interviews you. There isn't a fixed set of questions. But all bishops have the same purpose: they are on an errand from the Lord, as your president in the Aaronic Priesthood, to help you prepare in understanding, in experience, and in moral cleanliness for the blessings of priesthood service. And they want that service to lead you through a mission and into the temple to start you toward an eternal family of your own.

The best interviews I ever had were more like conversations. A real conversation means that two people listen to each other and express honest feelings. Your bishop will ask you questions. He'll listen to what you say and pay attention to your feelings as much as to your words. And you should ask him questions. If you are afraid to admit what you don't know, you won't have the chance to learn. And if you are timid about telling him about your mistakes, you may miss the chance to clear away sin early, before it gains a hold that's harder to break. You might be able to fool a bishop, since he is human and therefore imperfect. But you will not fool God, and so to be dishonest to your bishop is to fool yourself, tragically and needlessly.

Try to remember that the bishop's purpose in every interview with you is to teach. He will teach you, if you let him, what he has been taught about the priesthood and how to use it. He will give you the calls that God has prepared for you, and those calls will teach you. And even when he talks with you about personal worthiness, his whole intent is to teach you how to be clean through righteous living and through the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

The Lord taught His disciples with that same intent. He said to them, in John 15:15: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called

you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

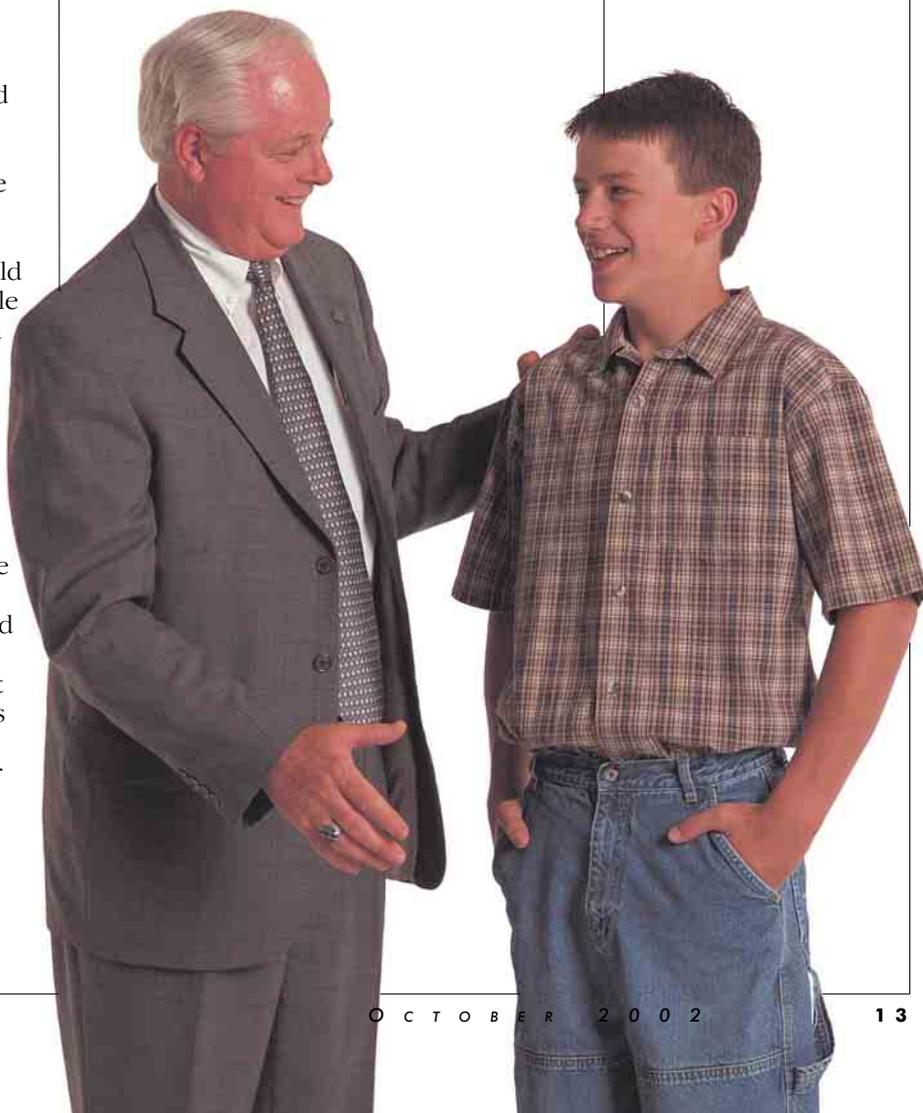
Your bishop, your friend

Memories of interviews long ago with my bishop still guide me. He tried hard to teach me all that he had been taught about the priesthood. When I had a last interview with him, years later, I realized that conversations with my bishop had become conversations with a friend. I hope that happens to you, too.

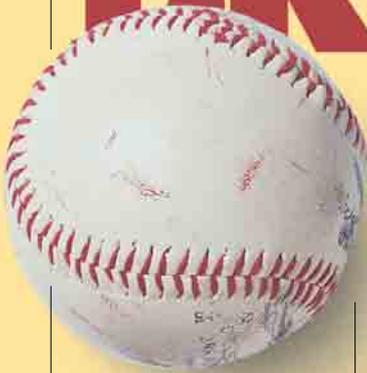
I bear you my testimony that the Aaronic Priesthood was restored through John the Baptist, and that our bishops today are called by God through inspiration. God honors their calls. Your life will be blessed as you honor their calls. And you will learn to look forward to your interviews with a bishop. **NE**

Originally printed in the June 1986 New Era.

Your bishop will ask you questions. He'll listen to what you say and pay attention to your feelings as much as to your words. And you should ask him questions. If you are afraid to admit what you don't know, you won't have the chance to learn.



WHAT GREAT BROTHERS DO



The greatest things I've learned in life have come from following my older brothers and doing the things they have done.

As a skinny 12-year-old, I watched through a chain-link fence as my two older brothers earned all-state baseball honors.

Life was exciting because they were my brothers. The guy wearing number eight and striking out three batters in a row, and the player hitting home runs over the centerfielder's head were the same guys I shared a basement bedroom with. They were the ones who first taught me about putting gel in my hair and how to start a campfire. We were good friends.

The feelings of inadequacy kicked in because as a five-foot-three, 98-pound weakling, I could not understand how I would ever be able to fire an 80-mile-per-hour fastball or hit towering home runs.

On one hot summer afternoon, my oldest brother could see something was bothering me. After he encouraged me to tell him what was on my mind, I said in

muffled tones, "How will I ever become a great baseball player like you?"

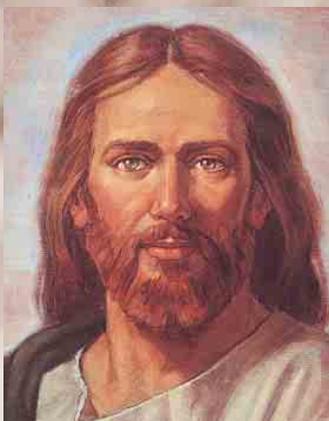
"Matt," he said in his usual cheerful voice, "you've just got to do the things that great baseball players do." After thinking about this, I came to realize that great baseball players aren't only naturally talented, but they make themselves skilled through hours of practice. I committed myself to do all I could.

Three broken noses and six years later, I was a starter on the varsity baseball team and had just signed a national letter of intent to play college baseball.

I started my freshman year at college, and everything was going great. Great, that is, until an all-too-familiar feeling of my personal shortcomings began to settle in my stomach. My second-oldest brother, who was not only co-captain of my college team but also my roommate, had just come home from the mission field. He told extraordinary stories about living in England and preaching the gospel.

I read letters from the mission presidents of both of my older brothers describing what a good missionary "Elder Bennett" was and how blessed they would be because of their obedience and faith. Again, I began feeling inadequate. How could I ever measure up to their high level of missionary success? Although my body had grown several

By Matt Bennett



inches taller and my muscles had doubled in size, my testimony had not grown proportionately.

I confided in my brother and roommate, "What can I do to prepare to be a great missionary like you were? How can I change people's lives like you did?" Again I received simple counsel. "Do the things that great missionaries do. Be nice to people, read your scriptures, and pray daily."

I took the advice to heart and could feel my spiritual growth begin to catch up with my physical body.

Finally the day came for me to serve my mission, and being a missionary wasn't nearly as glamorous as I had imagined from my brother's stories. I quickly realized I was a small seedling among tall oaks of spirituality. I turned to my mission president for advice. "To strengthen your testimony and the testimonies of those around you, follow the example of our Savior. Do the things that he did. Jesus Christ's life is an example for us in every way," he told me as we were driving together one afternoon.

The greatest things I've learned in life have come from following my older brothers and doing the things they have done. My ultimate goal is to follow Jesus Christ. I know the way to fulfill that goal is to do the things that He who is greatest of all has done. **NE**

Q & A

“One of the deacons in my quorum is so disruptive that it is nearly impossible to learn anything from the lessons or enjoy quorum activities. He never settles down. How can I help him?”

NEW ERA

When someone else’s behavior is keeping you from learning or making it difficult for you to enjoy an activity, it can be extremely frustrating. What’s even more frustrating is when the person causing the problems is one of your peers.

There is a time when joking around is appropriate, but when someone can’t figure out when that time is, it is annoying.

Irreverent behavior takes away the Spirit and makes it difficult to learn anything. “The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer,” said President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve. “Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22).

Many people who act up are doing it to get attention. This could be the motivation of your quorum member. Or it could be that he doesn’t realize his

Be an example. Don’t join in his jokes when it isn’t appropriate.

Talk to him in private.

Be kind as you try to help him understand the importance of being reverent and respectful.

Try to love him even though you dislike his actions.

If you are in a leadership position, bring up the topic of reverence during a leadership meeting.

As a quorum, decide on a set of rules for behavior during quorum meetings and activities.

READERS

Approach him privately and tell him the way he is acting is inappropriate behavior for church, and he is driving away the Spirit. Be kind and explain to him the church is the Lord’s house and he must act reverently.
Chris Howell, 17
Petersburg, New Jersey



I have experienced this also with the younger girls moving up to Young Women. You just have to treat them with kindness. Moving from Primary to the deacons quorum or Young Women is a big step, and the younger kids just want to be accepted. Show them they are loved, and eventually they will grow out of it.

Amelia Guffey, 15
Huntersville, North Carolina





behavior has gotten to the point where he is annoying others. He might just think he's being funny.

Be an example. It's important that you be on your best behavior so the young man acting up has a model to look up to. Don't join in his jokes when it isn't appropriate.

Talk to him in private. Don't make a big deal about it during class. Be kind as you try to help him understand the importance of being reverent and respectful. Remember to try to love him even though you dislike his actions.

Talk to your quorum leaders or advisers. Ask them if they have any ideas or if they would be willing to talk to the entire quorum or teach a lesson on reverence.

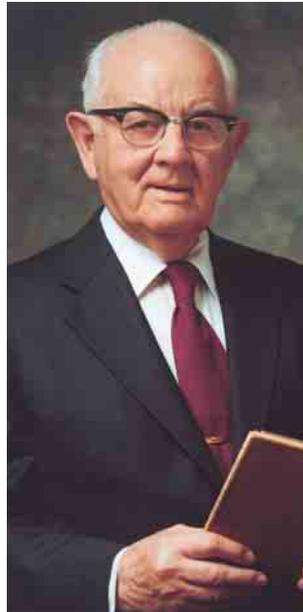
If you are in a leadership position, bring up the topic of reverence during one of your leadership meetings to see if anyone else has ideas.

We go to church to worship. But sometimes the time spent in church can turn into more of a social occasion. President Gordon B. Hinckley has talked about the Church as a "great social organization" but reminds us that we need to be reverent and respectful during church services. "We are friends. We love one another. In fact, we love one another so much that we can't be very reverent in sacrament meeting. We are always talking to one another in sacrament meeting. It's all right to talk with one another out in the foyer, but when we are in the chapel we ought to be quiet, reverent, and respectful and not irreverent" (*Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 76).

Although President Hinckley is talking about sacrament meeting, the same principles of reverence apply to all church meetings, especially those held in the chapel.

As you work to help your friend learn when reverence is appropriate, don't forget to pray for guidance and to show love and kindness. **NE**

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



T rue reverence is a vital quality, but one that is fast disappearing in the world as the forces of evil broaden their influences. We cannot fully comprehend the power for good we can wield if the millions of members of Christ's true church will serve as models of reverent behavior" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 224).

—President
Spencer W.
Kimball
(1895–1985)

I think a great way to calm an obnoxious person down is to ask them the question, "Would you be acting this way if Jesus were here?" Thinking of Christ keeps us focused on His gospel and keeps us from being rowdy.
Jason Farrell, 15
Danville, California



I've been in that situation before. If they're obnoxious and annoying, it might be that they are in need of a friend. Just be kind to him and let him know you care.
Kim Edstrom, 15
Salem, Utah



As a teachers quorum president, if there were a person messing around, I would go up to that person after church and talk with him privately. If the problem continued, I would talk with his leader or parents.
Todd Wise, 15
Claremont, California



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and where you are from. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger.

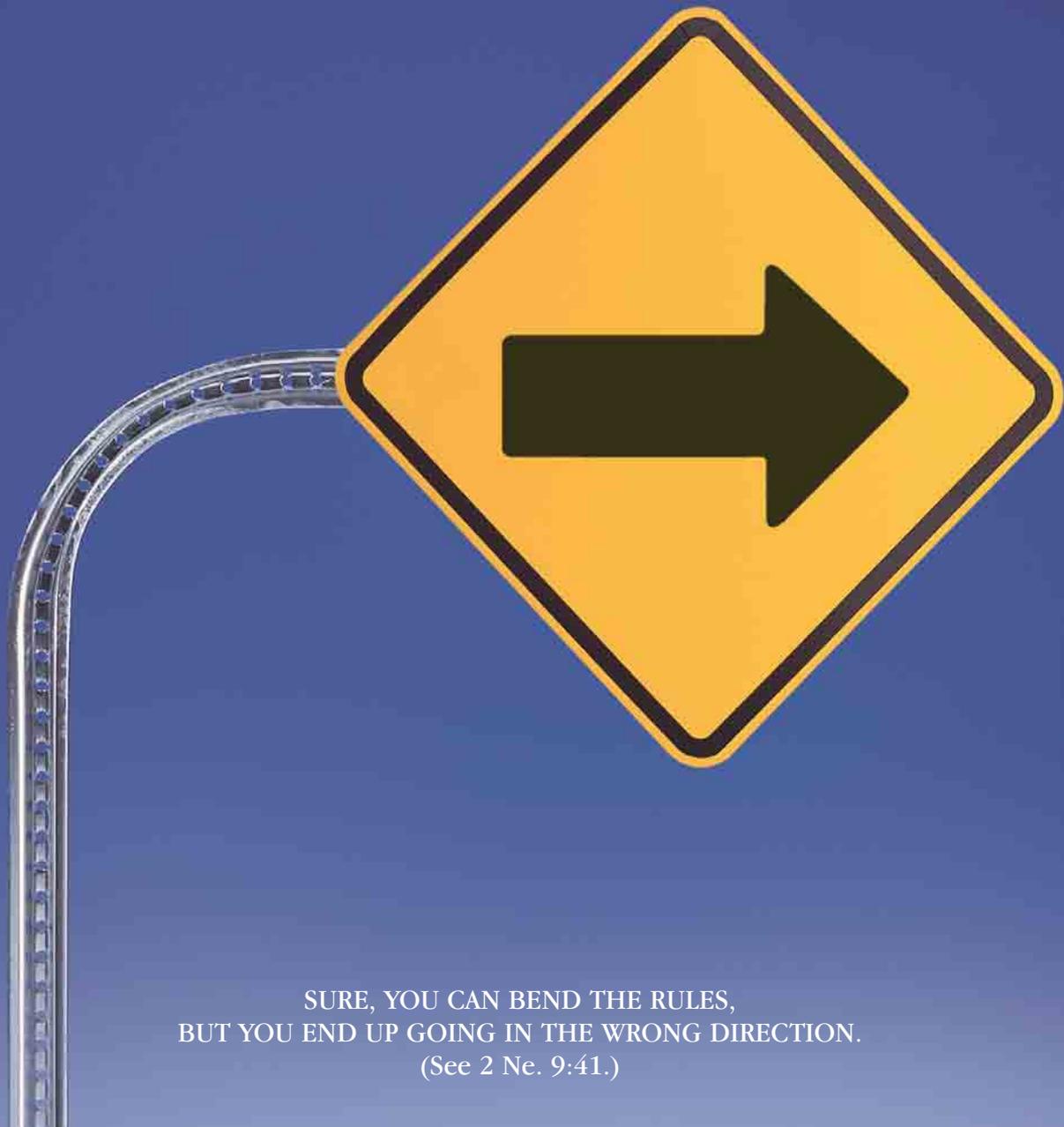
Q&A, New Era
50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

QUESTION

I turn 19 next year, and I'm preparing to be a missionary. I don't know much about the Melchizedek Priesthood, though. How will my experiences serving in the Melchizedek Priesthood differ from those I've had in the Aaronic Priesthood, and how can I best prepare to receive it?

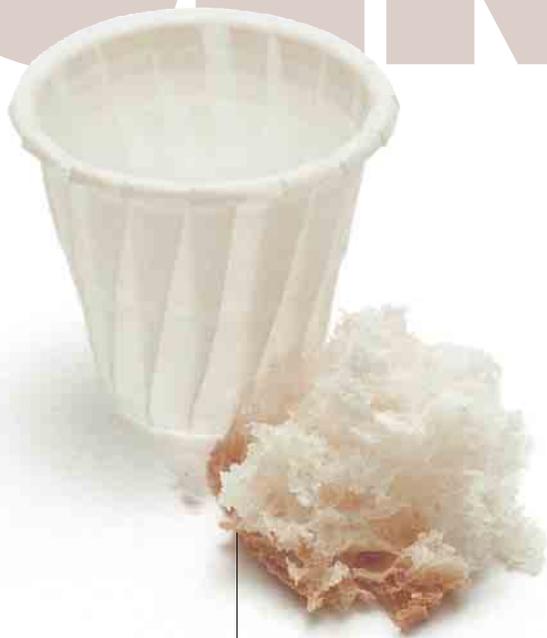
Please respond by December 1, 2002.

DON'T TRY
BENDING
THE
RULES



SURE, YOU CAN BEND THE RULES,
BUT YOU END UP GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.
(See 2 Ne. 9:41.)

Sacrament SERVICE



Preparing the sacrament can sometimes become routine. For this quorum, serving in the hospital, it became something more.



By Matthew Baker

Isaac Ernsten pulls on a pair of rubber gloves while one of the other young men in the quorum helps tie a hospital gown over his white shirt and tie. They all put on surgical masks and make sure they have both the sacrament trays before they walk into the hospital room. The man in the bed is one of many who has requested that the young men

bring the sacrament to him.

Each Sunday, patients in the Salt Lake Regional Medical Center who can't make it to church have church brought to them by the young men from the Salt Lake Emigration Stake. During the months of January and July, it's the responsibility of the young men from the 21st North Ward.

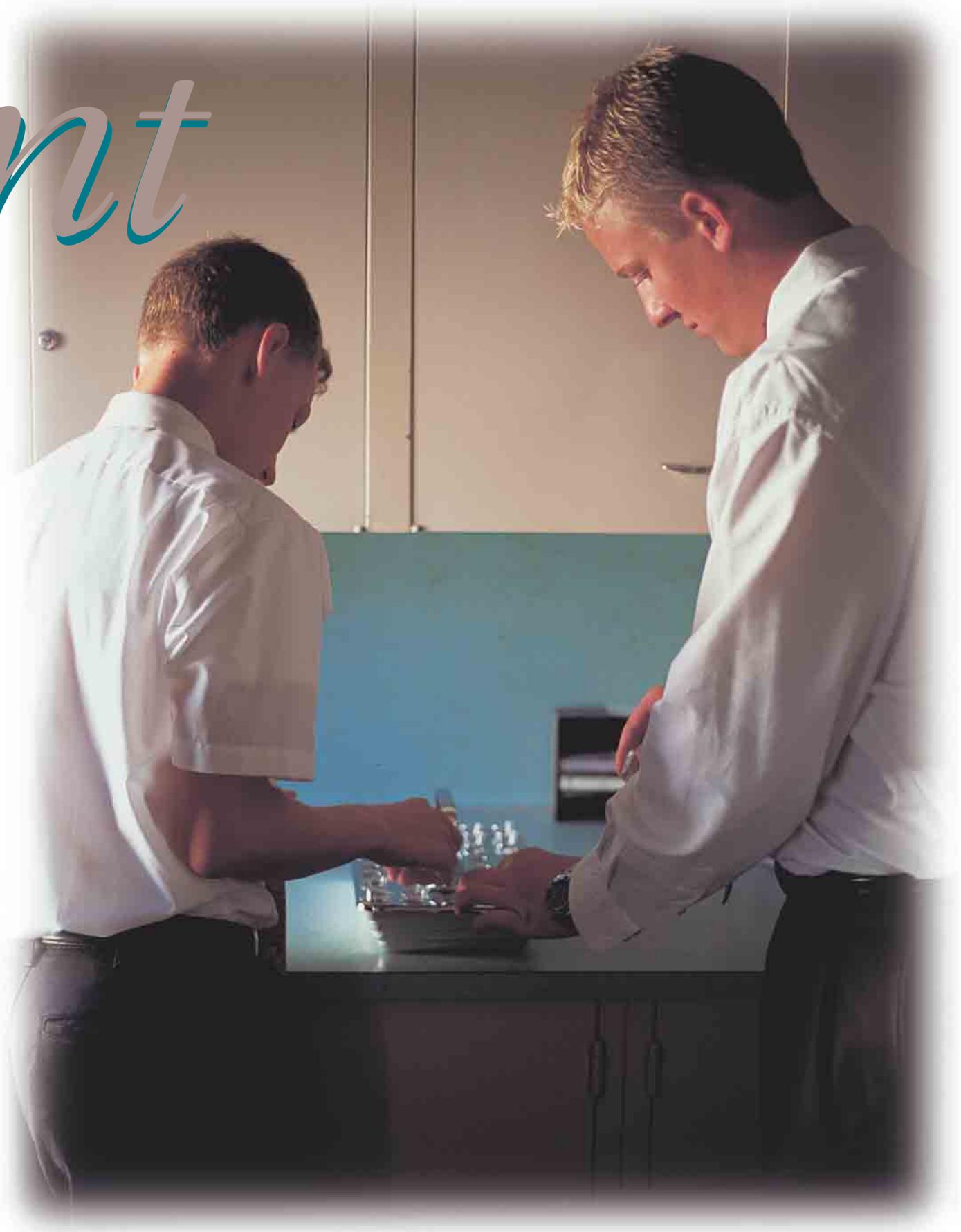
"In church, some people take the sacrament just because it's a part of the sacrament meeting," says Isaac, a priest who helps bring the sacrament to hospital patients. "These people have to request that the sacrament be brought to them. I think it means a lot to them. Some of them are so happy to see us when we get there. I can tell that they really want the sacrament."

Most of the young men will admit that sometimes it makes them a bit nervous to be around people who are seriously injured or dying, but they feel it is their duty, and they enjoy doing it. And even though the man in the hospital bed does not feel well, he is happy to see them come in.

Not so routine

The stained glass windows around the small chapel glow with the bright light from outside. The hospital branch uses a chapel that was built by the Catholic Church when the hospital was known as Holy Cross Hospital. More than half the

nt





congregation is made up of the young men from the 21st North Ward, and there are fewer than a dozen of them. Others in attendance include the branch presidency, Relief Society presidency, a few patients who feel well enough to leave their beds, and some hospital staff.

It takes one deacon only a few minutes to pass the sacrament to everyone. Then the young men put on the sacrament meeting program. They give the talks, offer the prayers, and fill in wherever else they are needed.

“In our home ward, preparing the sacrament can sometimes become routine,” says Abe Daris, a priest who has helped prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament at the hospital since he was a deacon. “Not that it should be routine, but here it is something more. It makes me realize how important the sacrament is. Even if there are only one or two members who show up, it’s still important enough for a whole quorum to help out a branch president and conduct a sacrament meeting. It’s important that members renew their covenants every week and feel the Spirit.”

After the meeting, the young men visit the individual rooms of people who have requested the sacrament. “That’s my favorite part,” Abe says. “It makes me realize how important the sacrament is to people. When we come with the sacrament, they just light up, and they’re so excited.”

What they give

All of the priesthood holders can remember specific people and experiences in the hospital that strengthened their testimonies. Abe remembers a woman who was very ill. “She had a lot of trouble breathing,” he said. “She couldn’t talk at all and could barely move. Even though we couldn’t communicate verbally, we could see in her eyes that she was happy to receive the sacrament. We smiled at her, and she smiled back. We could feel the Spirit and knew she appreciated it. It’s hard to explain. You had to be there.”

One of Abe’s brothers, Jeremiah, a teacher, remembers helping a woman who couldn’t move to take the sacrament. “I had to hold the sacrament water out and pour it into her mouth,” he says. “That was probably one of the more memorable experiences. I was helping someone who couldn’t do it for herself. She was really happy to get the sacrament. I’m sure she was glad I was there.”

Before they bless the sacrament and pass it to the patients, Simon Williams, one of the teachers, enjoys visiting. “There are all sorts of people there. Sometimes we visit new mothers, and sometimes we visit older people,” he says. “When you are in a hospital, I think you have a lot of time to think about life. People start thinking about what they’ve done in the past and start thinking more about Heavenly Father and the gospel. I think taking the sacrament for the people in the hospital can mean more for them than for many people because a lot of the people in the hospital are going to have some pretty big changes in their lives.”

What they get

Each week as the young men give service in the hospital, they receive something themselves. One thing they all agree on is that their assignment has given them a greater understanding of the importance of the sacrament. “A lot of times in my home ward I don’t really take the chance to think about what the sacrament means because I’m focused on passing it,” Simon says. “Sometimes we take the sacrament for granted. But it really stands for something amazing.”

The youth feel it is their duty to serve others. But no matter how much they give, they say they are the ones who are rewarded most. “We have such a good time doing it that it’s not really like it’s a sacrifice,” Abe says. “When you’ve been given so much, you have to serve and help other people. This has just been another way for us to give back, and not only to help other people, but to grow ourselves. Our duty to God is to serve Him by serving other people.” **NE**



“When you are in a hospital, I think you have a lot of time to think about life. People start thinking about what they’ve done in the past and start thinking more about Heavenly Father and the gospel. I think taking the sacrament for the people in the hospital can mean more for them than for many people . . .”



f r e c k



Lees

It was a simple thing—kind of silly, in fact. But my sister's act of love and caring set an example I'm still using myself.

Before I was five years old, I had discovered that the walkway of vinyl between our dining room and our kitchen was a good place to sulk, especially when I wanted my dissatisfaction to be noticed. I would sit there for a long time and feel that no one understood or loved me.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case. My teenage sister, Rebecca, found me there one evening before dinner. She knelt down and quietly said to me, "Manda, let's go count your freckles."

It was a simple suggestion but so kindly put forth that I forgot my frowns and followed her to the bathroom mirror. She set up a stool for me so I'd be tall enough to see my nose up close in the mirror. With her chin resting on my head, she started with number one, and I helped her as high as I could count. I remember proudly entering the kitchen with the announcement that I had more than a thousand freckles, and we hadn't even finished counting.

With just a small investment of her time and energy, my sister had changed my black mood. And, although my sulkiness that night probably wouldn't have lasted very long, by giving me some positive attention, Rebecca insured me against the next time I felt unhappy.

A few months ago I was able to work in an elementary school, helping to teach struggling first graders how to read and write better. One boy I worked with, Steven, acted quiet and uninterested every time we got the books out. I wasn't sure how to help him. Nothing I tried worked. I just desperately wanted to let this boy know how important reading

and writing were.

One day I sat there next to him, both of us silent as the rest of the class buzzed around us. Steven was slumped halfway around in his chair. As I surveyed his untied shoelaces and the dirt and streaks of grass stains on his clothing, a picture of myself at the same age sulking on the kitchen floor came to my mind. I realized that for Steven to trust me he needed to know that I cared about him and not just his reading and writing ability.

"Wow, you sure are dirty," I commented to his back. "You must be a really good soccer player at recess."

Steven looked at me sideways and said, "No, I got in a fight."

I was quiet for a few moments before I asked, "Are you okay?"

And then, still without really looking at me, Steven started to tell me about his day. We spent the whole half hour talking. By the end of our time, I knew Steven would be more excited to see me in the future. And, in a few days, we were working on his reading skills.

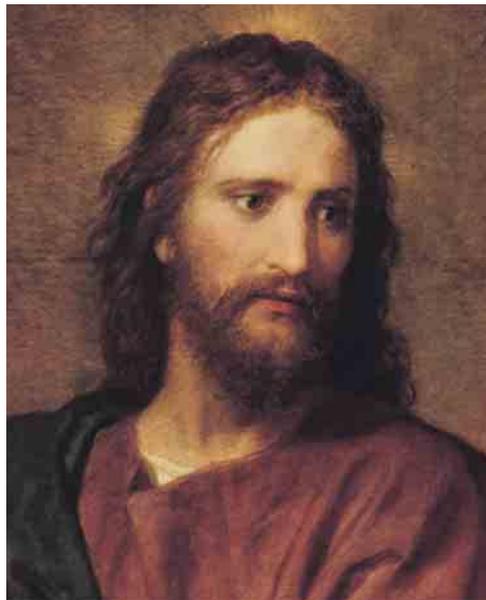
When I was five, I never thought to thank my sister for loving me. It wasn't until I had the experience with Steven that I remembered how preoccupied I was with myself when I was his age. The things I learned early in life shaped how I feel about myself now, and my older sibling's constant love was, and still is, a positive influence in my life.

I want to pass that on. I'm not a parent yet, but even as a teenager, I've found how joyful and how fun it can be to tell my little sisters, nieces, and nephews about freckles or big feet or any other simple reason why I love them. **NE**

By Amanda Thomas

The Voice

OF HIS SERVANTS



Joseph Smith



“We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the

All through the ages the prophets have testified of Jesus Christ—of His divinity, of His birth, death, and Resurrection, and of His Atonement.

In this final dispensation also, the testimonies and the lives of latter-day prophets stand as special witnesses for Christ, and we are reminded that “whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah saying:

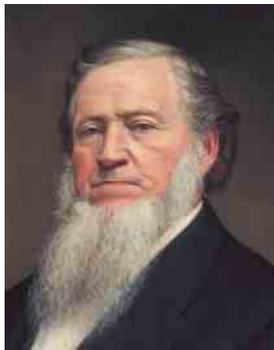
“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:2–4).

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

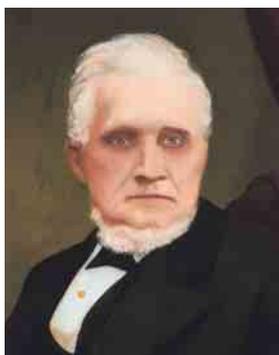
Brigham Young



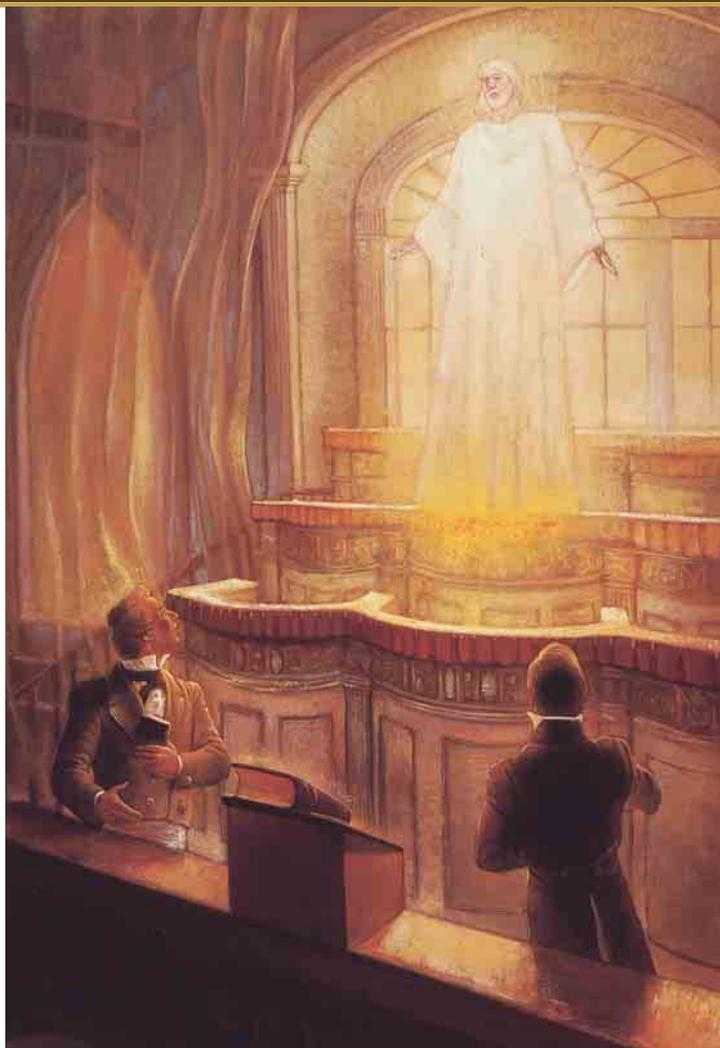
“I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world; I have obeyed His sayings, and realized His promise, and the knowledge I have of Him, the wisdom of this world cannot give, neither can it take away.

“My faith is placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and my knowledge I have received from Him” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 26).

John Taylor



“The Atonement made by Jesus Christ brought about the resurrection from the dead, and restored life. And hence Jesus said: ‘I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead,

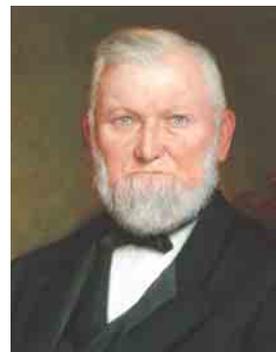


yet shall he live;’ (John 11:25) and Jesus Himself became the first fruits of those who slept. . . . How far does that principle extend and to whom is it applicable? It extends to all the human family; to all men of every nation” (*The Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, 178).

Wilford Woodruff

“I have always looked upon the life of our Savior—who descended beneath all things that He might rise above all things—as an example for His followers. And yet it has always, in one sense of the word, seemed

strange to me that the Son of God, the First Begotten in the eternal worlds of the Father, and the Only Begotten in the flesh, should have to descend to the earth and pass through what He

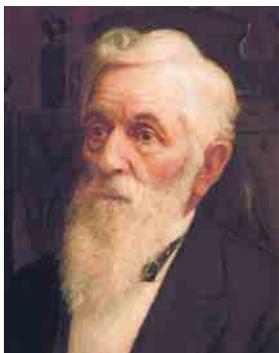


did—born in a stable, cradled in a manger, persecuted, afflicted, scorned, a hiss and byword to almost all the world, and especially to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea. . . . There is something about all this that appears sorrowful; but it seemed necessary for the Savior to descend below all things that He might ascend above all things” (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 4).

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!”
(D&C 76:22).

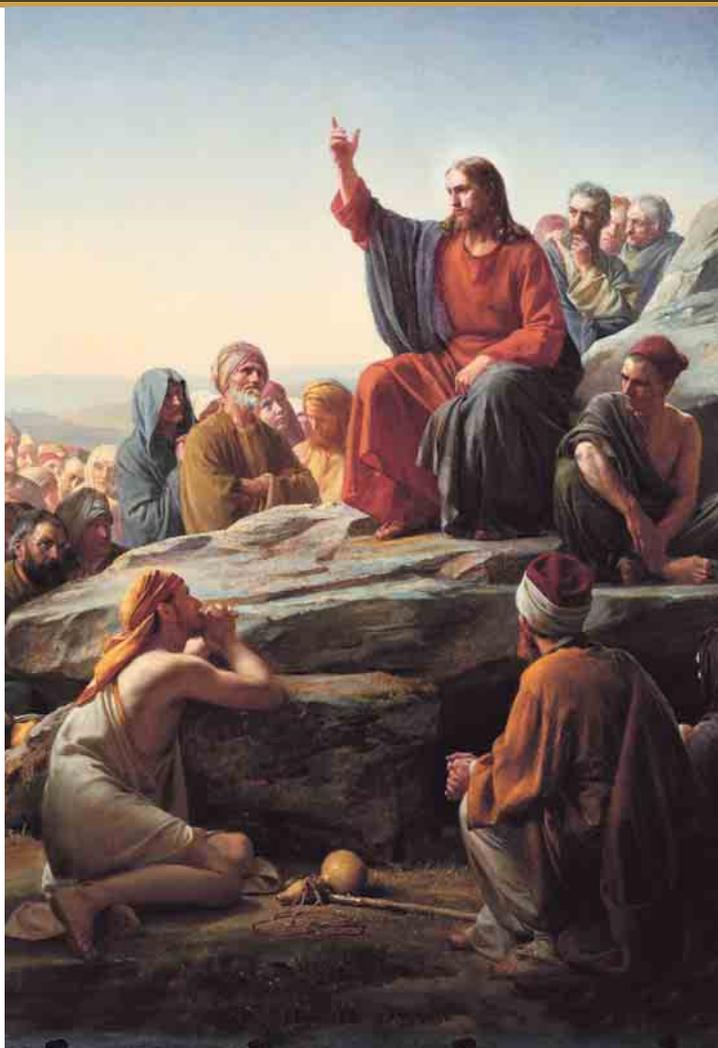
Editor’s Note: Capitalization and spelling have been standardized in all quotes.

Lorenzo Snow



“Some two or three weeks after I was baptized, one day while engaged in my studies, I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a knowledge of the truth of the work—that I had not realized the fulfillment of that promise, ‘he that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine,’ (see John 7:17) and I began to feel very uneasy. . . . I had been accustomed, at the close of day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I concluded I would not forgo my evening service, . . .

“I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, . . . and O the joy and happiness I felt! No language

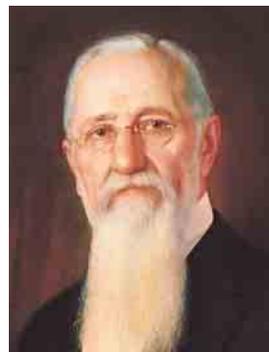


can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the Holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the gospel” (*The Presidents of the Church*, 139–140).

Joseph F. Smith

“I bear my testimony to you, that I have received an assurance which has taken possession of my whole being. It has sunk deep into my heart; it fills every fiber of my soul; so that I say before this people, and would be pleased to have

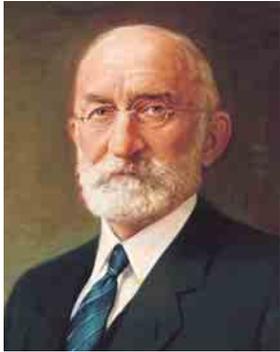
“No person can study this divine personality, can accept His teachings without becoming conscious of an uplifting and refining influence within himself.”



the privilege of saying it before the whole world, that God has revealed unto me that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of the world; . . . I know, as I live, that this

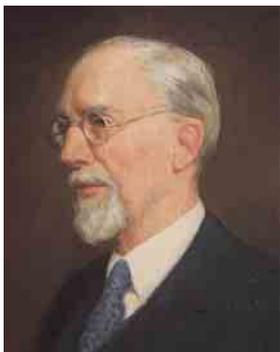
is true, and I bear my testimony to its truth. If it were the last words I should ever say on earth, I would glory before God my Father that I possess this knowledge in my soul” (in Conference Report, April 1901, 72).

Heber J.
Grant



“I know that God lives, I know that Jesus is the Christ, I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, . . . God lives; Jesus is the Christ, and He is the chief corner stone of this great work—He is directing it, and He will continue to direct it” (*Testimonies of Our Leaders*, 50).

George Albert
Smith



“I have been buoyed up and, as it were, lifted out of myself and given power not my own to teach the glorious truths proclaimed by the Redeemer of the world. I have not seen Him face to face but have enjoyed the companionship of His Spirit and felt His presence



“I know that He came into the world to redeem the world from sin, and through the Atonement made by Him all men are redeemed from death.”



(*Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, 24).

“There is not a principle which is taught by the Savior of men but is applicable to the growth, development, and happiness of mankind. Every one of His teachings seems to touch the true philosophy of living. I accept them wholeheartedly. I like to study them. It is a joy to try to live them” (*Improvement Era*, Nov. 1961, 818).

in a way not to be mistaken. I know that my Redeemer lives and gladly yield my humble efforts to establish His teachings. . . . Every fibre of my being vibrates with the knowledge that He lives and some day all men will know it.

“The Savior died that we might live. He overcame death and the grave and holds out to all who obey His teachings the hope of a glorious resurrection” (*Testimonies of Our Leaders*, 53).

David O.
McKay

“What you sincerely in your heart think of Christ will determine what you are, will largely determine what your

acts will be. No person can study this divine personality, can accept His teachings without becoming conscious of an uplifting and refining influence within himself”

Joseph Fielding Smith

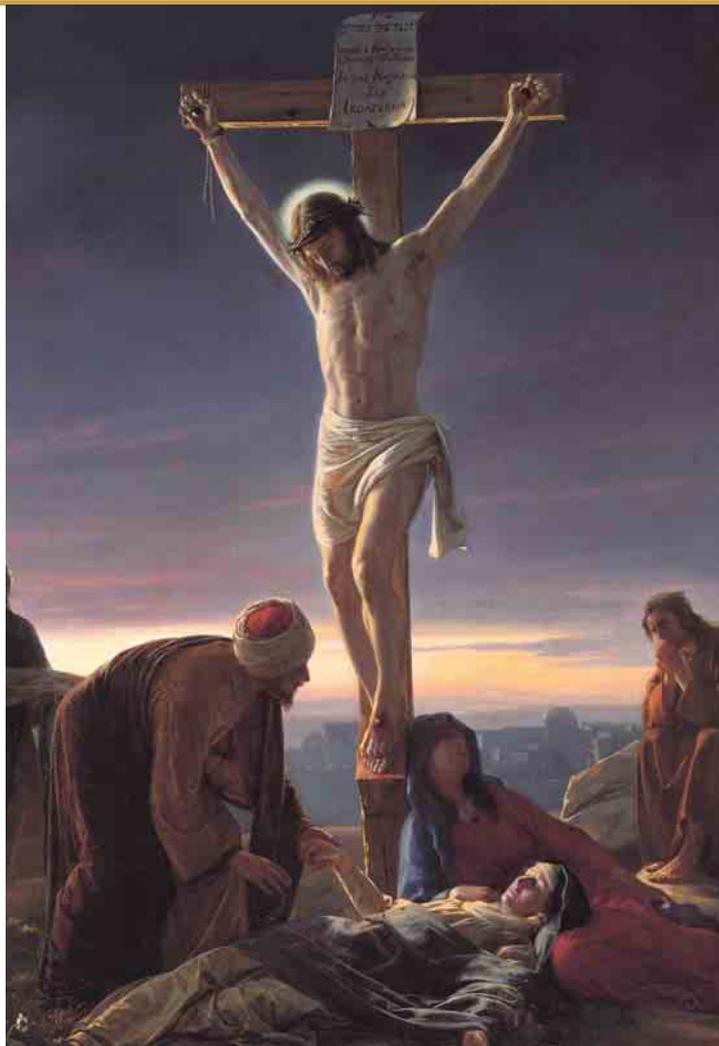


“Like Job, I can say, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth’ (see Job 19:25). I know that He came into the world to redeem the world from sin, and through the Atonement made by Him all men are redeemed from death. . . . I know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, with life in Himself as His Father has life in Himself. Because of this wonderful truth, it was possible for Him to redeem us from death and the grave, and, on condition of our repentance, from our individual sins” (*Testimonies of Our Leaders*, 165).

Harold B. Lee

“I say, with all the conviction of my soul, I know that Jesus lives. I know that He was the very Son of God. And I know that in this church and in the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be found the way to salvation.

“I came to know as a witness more powerful than sight, until I could testify

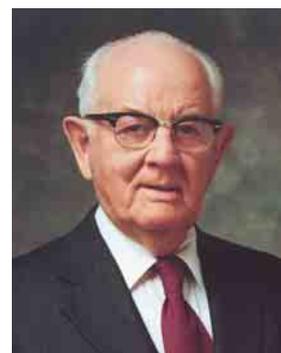


“I believe that through His atoning sacrifice, the offering of His life on Calvary’s Hill, He expiated the sins of mankind. I believe in the reality and the power of His Resurrection.”



with a surety that defied all doubt, that I knew with every fiber of my soul that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that He lived, He died, He was resurrected, and today He presides in the heavens, directing the affairs of this Church, which bears His name because it preaches His doctrine. I bear that testimony humbly and leave you my witness” (*Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, 636–37).

Spencer W. Kimball

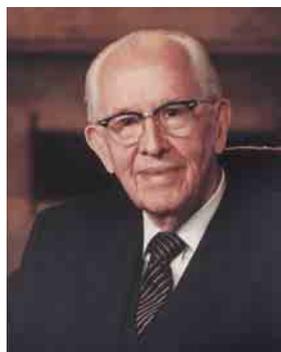


“I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that He was crucified for the sins of the world.

“He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, my God.

“With all my heart I pray that the Saints may keep His commandments, have His Spirit, and gain an eternal inheritance with Him in celestial glory” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 73).

Ezra Taft Benson



“Jesus Christ was and is the Lord God Omnipotent (see Mosiah 3:5). He was chosen before He was born. He was the all-powerful Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the source of life and light to all things. His word is the law by which all things are governed in the universe. All things created and made by Him are subject to His infinite power.

“Not only was Jesus born in a humble setting in Bethlehem and crucified on a cross on Golgotha, but on the third day He arose from the grave. Today He lives! Of that I personally testify. I know it. He is close to His Church and to His servants. The knowledge that He lives is the most priceless knowledge in the world” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 6, 468).

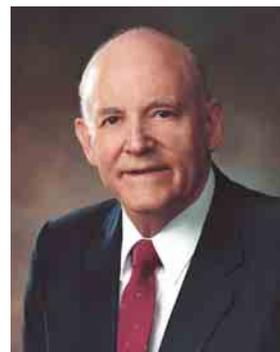
Howard W. Hunter

“I give to you my solemn witness that Jesus Christ is in fact the Son of God. He is the Messiah . . .

“It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that I bear my witness. I know of Christ’s reality as if I had seen with my eyes and heard with my ears. I know also that the Holy Spirit will confirm the truthfulness



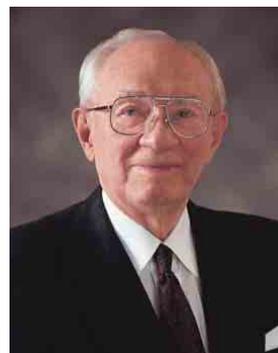
“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God . . . He lived, He died. He was resurrected, and today He presides in the heavens, directing the affairs of this Church.”



of my witness in the hearts of all those who listen with an ear of faith” (*Ensign*, Jan. 1984, 70).

Gordon B. Hinckley

“I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal, living God . . .



“I believe that through His atoning sacrifice, the offering of His life on Calvary’s Hill, He expiated the sins of mankind, relieving us from the burden of sin if we will forsake evil

and follow Him. I believe in the reality and the power of His Resurrection. . . .

“He is the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. I believe in Him. I declare His divinity without equivocation or compromise. I love Him. I speak His name in reverence and wonder. I worship Him as I worship His Father, in spirit and in truth. I thank Him and kneel before His wounded feet and hands and side, amazed at the love He offers me” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 50–51). **NE**

LOVE AT HOME

Monday nights were set aside as the official night for family home evening in October of 1970, but the Church's family home evening program has been around since 1915, when it was instituted by President Joseph F. Smith.

When President Smith started the program, he promised that love in our homes would increase if we would have family home evening. "Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel," he said, "and they will gain power to combat the evil influence and temptations which beset them" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:339). Make a goal this month to contribute to the lessons and activities in your home as much as you can.

"a
pattern
of
piety"

THE FIRST BISHOP

Edward Partridge was the first Presiding Bishop of the Restored Church. Born in 1793, he became dissatisfied with the religions of his day when he was in his twenties. And, in 1830, after investigating the Church, he was baptized by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Prophet said of Edward, "he was a pattern of piety, and one of the Lord's great men, known by his steadfastness and patient endurance to the end" ("History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons*, 15 Sept. 1843, vol. 4, 320).

Edward became the Presiding Bishop of the Church less than two months after his baptism, and he certainly needed the "patient endurance" mentioned by the Prophet Joseph. He and his family were harshly persecuted by the mobs in Missouri and then in Nauvoo. On one occasion he was dragged from his home and tarred and feathered by a mob of more than 200 men. But Bishop Partridge's faith carried him through his trials.

The bishop died when he became very ill in Nauvoo. He was only 46. Of Edward Partridge, the Lord said, "his heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile" (D&C 41:11). And in the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that the Lord received Edward Partridge unto himself (see D&C 124:19).

"his heart
is
pure"

HOLIDAY MAGIC

Isn't it amazing how you magically weigh a few pounds extra after New Year's Day? Well, not so magical when you remember the approximately 50 pounds of cakes, candies, and other holiday treats you've been eating for the previous two or three months.

With the holiday season fast approaching, now might be the perfect time to resolve to practice moderation and to stay fit over the next few months. It's a lot easier and healthier to stay away from excessive amounts of the unhealthy foods that abound during the holiday season than to try to make those extra pounds disappear after New Year's Day. Alakazam!

LEADER- SHIP TIP

Get organized. A notebook or calendar is a great way to keep track of what you're supposed to be doing and where you're supposed to be. If you're having trouble doing all you need to do, remember to delegate. If you're unsure of what you're supposed to be doing to fulfill your calling, talk to one of your leaders.

**"Friendships
cannot endure
if they are
based on the
sands of
selfishness."**

(Improvement Era, Dec. 1967, 46)
—President Howard W. Hunter
(1907–95)

WRITE AWAY!

We want to hear your true stories about how your family has helped you stay close to the gospel and the Savior, or about how you and your family overcome challenges together. Please send your submissions to:

New Era
50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150
or
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

write!

The edges of the crevice are incredibly slippery and crumbly. There is no safe way to satisfy curiosity without risking disaster.

DANGER AHEAD!

AVOIDING PORNOGRAPHY'S TRAP

Why is pornography considered such a big deal? We let three young men tell their stories of entrapment, struggle, and despair. And of how they were finally rescued.

It has been an incredible day on the snow-covered mountain, the most challenging climb you and your buddies have ever attempted. Nearing the peak, you spot a deep crevice just ahead—the kind of crevice that can swallow up a hiker and leave no trace. Will you walk to the edge of the slippery slope and risk everything? Will you warn those behind you or let them take their chances?

Pornography is like that crevice. One of its greatest dangers is that you might not even realize how treacherous it is until you are caught in its trap. Three young Latter-day Saints have shared their stories anonymously. We will call them Blair, Ryan, and Rob. They hope their experiences will help others avoid this trap. And, for anyone with a similar struggle, they give advice on how to escape.

Blair: I grew up in the Church and have a testimony. However, there is a part of

my life that few people know. At age seven I often saw a pornographic poster on a teenage neighbor's wall. It left an impression in my mind that I could not forget. Unworthy thoughts led me to develop an unworthy habit I felt I couldn't break.

Ryan: When I was about 12 years old I went to a friend's house and found him and a bunch of neighborhood boys gathered around the computer. I joked, "Hey, are you guys looking at pornography?"

They said, "How did you guess? Come check this out."

That was the beginning of a problem in my life. I soon began using our family computer to find more and more images.

Rob: You usually don't realize you have a problem until you are in so deep you can no longer see the light. That's what happened with me. I was curious and justified my involvement with pornography by reminding myself that guys at school were involved with it too, and it didn't seem like a big problem for them.

Just Looking or Getting Hooked?

Pornography first appeals to curiosity. Somehow, just looking doesn't seem all that dangerous. Every one of us has gone into a store just to look—not to buy. But this is a huge store, with almost unlimited merchandise. Once we are in the store, the invitations to satisfy our



curiosity are endless. And so curiosity is never satisfied.

There are lots of things in life—like rattlesnakes or abandoned mine shafts or drugs—that we may be curious about. But knowing how dangerous they are, we walk away or leave the party or turn off the computer.

Actually, with pornography, there is no such thing as just looking. Looking is the problem. Viewing pornography triggers sexual feelings. We can easily get hooked on those pleasurable feelings, especially if they seem to relieve stress or anxiety—and we can start a cycle of addiction just as difficult to break as an addiction to drugs or alcohol.

Rob: Curiosity turned to interest, and interest developed into a strong habit. Soon I was addicted. I would get home from school, go straight to the computer, and be there for hours. My social life suffered. So did my schoolwork, family ties, and—most important—my spirituality.

At the very time I most needed the promptings of the Spirit in my life, I was less and less able to feel anything. Life became a constant struggle against depression.

My soul hungered, but the only thing I fed it offered no nourishment. I would get down on myself, so I would delve into pornography to feel better. But the pornography would upset me even more.



STAYING FAR FROM DANGER

It is both dangerous and wrong to deliberately view things that stimulate sexual thoughts. Our environment is full of such things. And because they are often legal and common, it is sometimes impossible to avoid seeing them.

But you don't have to let them trap you. If you put on the full armor of God every day by praying, studying the scriptures, and doing your best to keep the commandments, you will develop the strength to withstand this and any temptation.

Here are some other ways you can stay far from the lethal spiritual crevice called pornography.

1. Know it when you see it. A simple definition is this: Pornography is any entertainment that uses immodest or indecent images to stimulate sexual feelings. So even a mainstream television program or advertisement can be pornographic. If images trigger sexual feelings in you, you should avoid them.

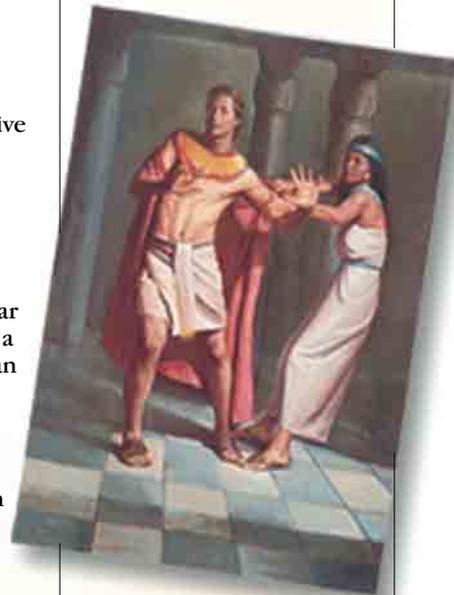
2. Break the emotional connection. There is a connection between any addictive behavior and emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. If you are feeling stressed or anxious, try to deal with those feelings directly—rather than using pornography or any other destructive means to cover them up. Prayer, scripture study, exercise, positive friends, and regular Church attendance can all help. A parent, a Church leader, or another trusted adult can be a lifeline if problems seem too big to resolve alone.

3. Surf smart. If you have the Internet at home, ask your parents to install an Internet filtering service. But don't rely on the filter alone; it may fail you. The only real control is self-control. Do keep your computer out of your bedroom; keep it where others will be around.

4. Be a modern-day Joseph. Remember what Joseph did when Potiphar's wife tried to trap him in an immoral situation? Joseph "fled, and got him out" (Genesis 39:12). In other words, he ran. When you are exposed to pornography, leave immediately—whether by a mouse click, a channel change, or a quick exit from a friend's house.

5. Get the most powerful help of all. Don't let your spirit grow weak from lack of spiritual food. A steady diet of righteous influences—such as prayer, scripture study, Mutual, seminary, and a careful study of *For the Strength of Youth*—can give you the strength you need to navigate through a world that has spiritual crevices at every turn.

It takes more than just trying to refrain. To successfully resist this widespread evil, you must fill your life with positive influences like prayer and scripture study, seminary and Mutual. Study For the Strength of Youth.



Remember, when Potiphar's wife tried to lure Joseph into an immoral situation, he didn't linger. He ran! (See Genesis 39:12.)

Totaling the Damages

Guilt, fear, and depression are common emotions for those involved with pornography—guilt, because they know what they are doing is wrong; fear, because they are terrified their secret will be found out; and depression, because they no longer feel the Spirit. Relationships with family, friends, Church leaders, and the Lord are damaged.

Blair: My self-confidence dwindled in church, school, and everywhere. Many times I felt very alone, awkward, and unworthy. If a girl liked me, I would think, “She wouldn’t like me if she *really* knew me.” I would shy away from being social.

Rob: Through all those years I attended church, but I was mentally inactive. I kept going to church so I wouldn’t upset my parents. But I knew the lifestyle I was caught up in was wrong. I noticed a change in my own countenance day by day, year by year. I became calloused and hardened. I found myself lying to my parents, my bishop, everyone around me. Inside I was going through personal turmoil and spiritual torment.

The Key to Change

As these young men struggled with their addiction to pornography, each tried to overcome it on his own. But like a hiker trapped in a dangerous crevice, each needed help. Talking to the bishop became the key to changing the direction of their lives.

Blair: I prayed for strength to leave these temptations alone. I made a list of things like prayer, scriptures, and clean thoughts that would help me draw close to God. But although I worked hard, it didn’t solve my problems.

The thought of confessing to the bishop made me cringe. I felt it would be better to tell the bishop about the problem when it was in the past. But I finally realized it wasn’t ever going to be

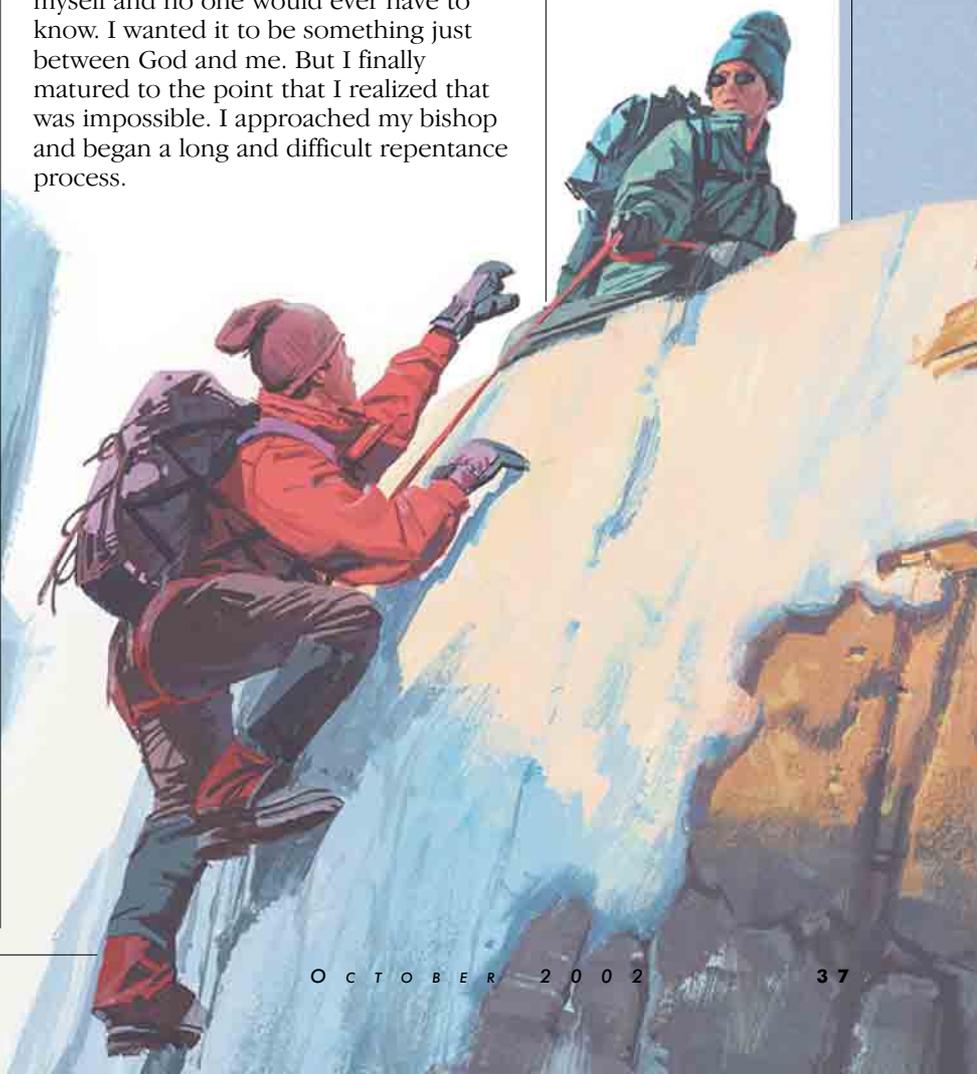
in the past if I didn’t confess. If God already knew my struggles and I felt comfortable talking about them in prayer, why not talk face to face with God’s servant? Once I finally decided to confess, I felt a reassuring peace that it was the right thing to do.

If you are using pornography, you are not morally clean, even if you haven’t done anything else immoral. Rob talks about realizing that he wasn’t worthy to go to the temple or on a mission.

Rob: I humbly bowed before the Lord in tears and pled for strength beyond my own. Night after night I prayed, and finally I knew I had to talk to my bishop about it. That was the hardest part—admitting to someone else that I had a problem. I kept thinking I could handle it myself and no one would ever have to know. I wanted it to be something just between God and me. But I finally matured to the point that I realized that was impossible. I approached my bishop and began a long and difficult repentance process.

If you’ve become trapped, you need help. Rob, Ryan, and Blair all learned the same lesson:

Trying to go it alone delays the healing. All three young men began to find strength, peace, and healing when they talked honestly and openly with their bishops.



One former bishop says: “Besides my own family, I don’t think I loved anyone in my ward quite as much as I loved those who came to me with broken hearts seeking forgiveness and peace. I rejoiced when they were clean and whole again. And afterward, I never looked at them as former sinners—only as beloved brothers and sisters.”

Repentance may have been difficult, but it was also comforting and filled with hope.

You Are Not Alone

Speaking of those who struggle with this problem, one bishop says: “Help is available. The repentance process is just that—a process. It takes time to break negative patterns, and each small victory must be acknowledged, reinforced, and celebrated along the way. Sometimes those I have worked with still struggle, but at least they are not hiding anymore. They have begun to build a support system. They have realized they don’t have to face this challenge alone.”

A former bishop explains: “Besides my own family, I don’t think I loved anyone in my ward quite as much as I loved those who came to me with broken hearts, seeking forgiveness and peace. They cared more about what the Lord thought of them than what any person thought. I respected their courage and desire to make things right. I shed tears over them. I rejoiced when they were clean and whole again. And afterward I never looked at them as former sinners—only as beloved brothers and sisters.”

“Trust in the Lord,” counseled Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “He knows what He is doing. He already knows of your problems. And He is waiting for you to ask for help” (Ensign, May 1989, 36).

How Is Blair Now?

I felt relief when I stopped pretending. Sharing the burden with my bishop and my family meant I no longer had to deal with this addiction alone. Now I hold on to this support system.

A problem that dominated my youth could not be overcome overnight. This road has been long and hard—and it continues. It isn’t enough anymore to look happy. I want to be happy. I am coming to know Christ and the Atonement with much deeper and more

A PROPHET’S WARNING

“I plead with you boys . . . to keep yourselves free from the stains of the world. You must not indulge in sleazy talk at school. You must not tell sultry jokes. You must not fool around with the Internet to find pornographic material. You must not dial a long-distance telephone number to listen to filth. You must not rent videos with pornography of any kind. This salacious stuff simply is not for you. Stay away from pornography as you would avoid a serious disease. It is as destructive. It can become habitual, and those who indulge in it get so they cannot leave it alone. It is addictive.

“It is a five-billion-dollar business for those who produce it. They make it as . . . attractive as they know how. It seduces and destroys its victims. It is everywhere. It is all about us. I plead with you young men not to get involved in its use. You simply cannot afford to.

“The girl you marry is worthy of a husband whose life has not been tainted by this ugly and corrosive material” (*Ensign*, May 1998, 49).



**President
Gordon B. Hinckley**

personal meaning. The Atonement gives me the strength I need so my self-confidence and self-respect grow step by step each day.

And Ryan?

I was honest with my bishop. And when my dad talked to me about the Internet sites I was visiting, I was honest with him too. We worked on the problem together. We decided not to have the Internet in our home for a while. That was a big help.

I'm turning 16 soon, and I'm glad I decided not to let pornography control my life. I feel better about myself, and I think about young women differently than I did before. With my bishop's help, I'm preparing now for the temple, a mission, and a great marriage one day.

And Rob?

It took a lot of time and sincere effort to break bad habits. Eventually I was judged by my priesthood leader as worthy to serve a mission. The best feeling in the world was to go through the temple and know I am clean. The Spirit I wanted to feel during all those teenage years came flooding into my heart and life. I am so thankful for the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

The adversary still works on me, trying to get me to backslide. But I have learned to put on the armor of God every day. I know Jesus Christ loves me, and I love Him.

And You?

*The best way to avoid a problem with pornography is to stay as far away from it as possible. But if you are struggling with pornography or any unworthy habit, please talk to your bishop or branch president. He loves you, he will be discreet, and he can help you put the power of the Atonement to work in your life. With the help of the Savior and His servants, you can gain the strength you need. You can become clean and worthy in every respect. **NE***

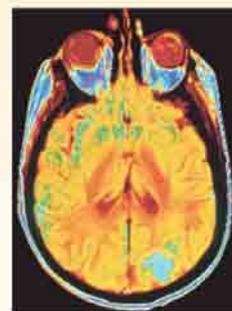
The best way to avoid a problem with pornography is to stay as far away from it as possible.

ANOTHER DRUG?

Pornography can be powerfully addicting. Scientific research—including new brain-scan technology—is beginning to show that pornography may cause physical and chemical changes in the brain similar to those caused by drugs. The only sure way to avoid the danger is to stay away from pornography in the first place.

If you have become addicted, you must seek help. The first person to see is your bishop or branch president. He can help you bring the Savior's redeeming and healing power into your life. He can also help you obtain professional help as necessary. Please don't try to go it alone.

Pornography isn't just available, it is being pushed and marketed. Nobody—no adult, no returned missionary, no one—is so mature or so strong that he or she can risk deliberate exposure. Plan to be on guard your entire life. And that is even more true for those who have had a previous problem with pornography. It's like being recovered from a drug or alcohol addiction. You must not return for even a taste because you can be overwhelmed in a moment.

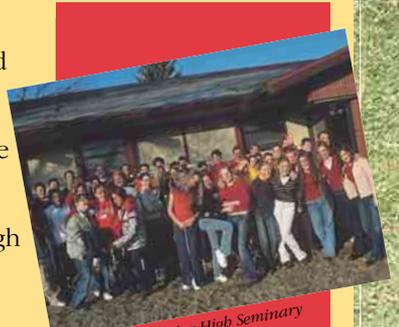


Scientific research—including new brain-scan technology—is beginning to show that pornography may cause physical and chemical changes in the brain similar to those caused by drugs.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

You might be only one in a large family, or it could just be you and one parent who make up your family. Whatever your situation, you can definitely be an influence for good. Here are some suggestions from Brother Darren Glathar's seminary classes adjacent to Springville (Utah) Junior High on how you can strengthen your family.

- Be a willing and helpful participant in family home evening. If you need to, encourage your family to hold a family home evening as the prophets have counseled. You could even offer to prepare the lesson.
 - Help bring the family together for family prayer each morning and night.
 - Stay awake and participate during family scripture study. Be a good example to your younger brothers and sisters by having a positive attitude about it.
 - Organize a family activity. It could be something as simple as playing a game or going for a walk together.
 - Go to church, firesides, and the temple together.
 - Listen to and obey your parents (see the fifth commandment in Ex. 20:12).
 - Always treat your family members with respect, even if you sometimes get annoyed with your siblings. Do your best to be patient with them, and always remember you love them.
 - Serve members of your family anonymously. Instead of complaining about how messy your sister is, you could help her by making her bed.
 - Visit family members who don't live with you, such as your grandparents.
 - Cheerfully complete all the chores you have been assigned.
 - Be there for your family. If someone has something special they are involved in, like a performance or a sport, support them by being there. Build up and encourage each other.
 - Contribute to the spirit of your home by living so as to have the Holy Ghost with you at all times.
 - Plan a family service project.
 - Spend one-on-one time with your family members to get to know them and love them better. **NE**

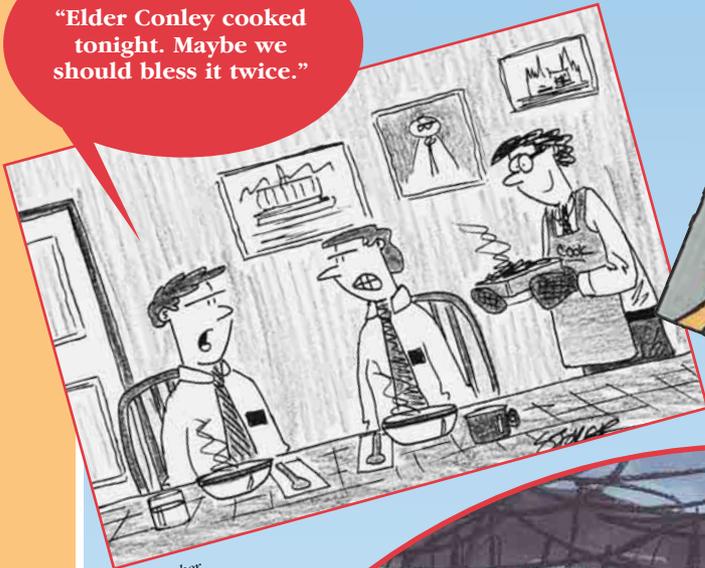


Springville Junior High Seminary

Be there for your family. If someone has something special they are involved in, like a performance or a sport, support them by being there. Build up and encourage each other. Contribute to the spirit of your home by living so as to have the Holy Ghost with you at all times.

T H E E X T R A S M I L E

"Elder Conley cooked tonight. Maybe we should bless it twice."



Ryan Stoker



Arie Van De Graaff



Val Chadwick Bagley

"There is sunshine in my soul today."

WHAT YOU ARE MEANT TO BE



By Margaret D. Nadauld
Young Women
general president

You inherited great potential for good from your heavenly home. May you grow to become all you were meant to be.

It is a remarkable blessing to be a daughter of God today! We have the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have the priesthood restored to the earth. We are led by a prophet of God who holds all of the priesthood keys. I love and honor President Gordon B. Hinckley and all of our brethren who bear the priesthood worthily.

I am inspired by the lives of good and faithful women. I know our Heavenly Father loves His daughters very much. From the beginning of time the Lord has placed significant trust in them. He has sent us to earth “for such a time as this”

(Esth. 4:14) to perform a grand and glorious mission. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches about the “noble and great ones.”

“Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:56).

What a wonderful vision that gives us of our purpose on earth! We must always remember that where much is given, much is required (see D&C 82:3). Our Heavenly Father asks His daughters to walk in virtue, live in righteousness, so we can fulfill our life’s mission and His purposes. He wants us to be successful, and He will help us as we seek His help.

Divine differences

That women were born into this earth female was determined long before mortal birth, as were the divine differences of males and females. I love



Grateful daughters of God guard their bodies carefully, for they know they are the wellspring of life and they reverence life. They don't uncover their bodies to find favor with the world. They walk in modesty to be in favor with their Father in Heaven.



the clarity of the teachings of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in the Proclamation on the Family. They state: "Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose." From that statement we are taught that every girl was feminine and female in spirit long before her mortal birth.

God sent women to earth with some qualities in extra capacity. President James E. Faust of the First Presidency observed that femininity "is the divine adornment of humanity. It finds expression in your . . . capacity to love, your spirituality, delicacy, radiance, sensitivity, creativity, charm, graciousness, gentleness, dignity, and quiet strength. It is manifest differently in each girl or woman, but each . . . possesses it.

Femininity is part of your inner beauty" (*Ensign*, May 2000, 96).

Our lives reflect that for which we seek. If, with all our hearts, we truly seek to know the Savior and be more like Him, we shall be, for He is our divine, eternal Brother. But He is more than that. He is our precious Savior, our dear Redeemer. I ask, with Alma of old, "Have ye received his image in your countenances?" (Alma 5:14).

Recognizing them

You can recognize young women who are grateful to be daughters of God by their outward appearance. They understand their responsibility over their bodies and treat them with dignity. They care for their bodies as they would a holy temple, for they understand the Lord's teaching: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Young women who love God would never abuse or deface a temple with graffiti. Nor would they throw open the doors of that holy, dedicated edifice and invite the world to look on. How even more sacred is the body, for it was not made by man. It was created by God. We are the stewards, the keepers of the cleanliness and purity with which it came from heaven. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17).

Grateful daughters of God guard their bodies carefully, for they know they are the wellspring of life and they reverence life. They don't uncover their bodies to find favor with the world. They walk in modesty to be in favor with their Father in Heaven. They know He loves them dearly.

You can recognize young women who are grateful to be daughters of God by their attitudes. They know the errand of angels is given to women, and they desire to be on God's errand, to love His children and minister to them; to teach them the doctrines of salvation; to call them to repentance; to save them in perilous circumstances; to guide them in the performance of His work; to deliver His messages. They understand they can bless their Father's children in their homes and neighborhoods and beyond. Young women who are grateful to be daughters of God bring glory to His name.

You can recognize young women who are grateful to be daughters of God by their abilities. They fulfill their divine potential and magnify their God-given gifts. They are capable, strong young women who bless families, serve others, and understand the glory of God is intelligence. They are young women who embrace enduring virtues in order to be all our Father needs them to be. The prophet Jacob spoke of some of those virtues when he said their "feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate before God, which thing is pleasing unto God" (Jacob 2:7).

Grateful daughters of God love Him and will teach others to love Him without reservation and without resentment. They will grow up to be like the mothers of Helaman's youthful army who had great faith and "had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47).

Motherhood

When you observe kind and gentle mothers in action, you will see women of great strength. You will observe that their families can feel a spirit of love and respect and safety when they are near her as she seeks the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the guidance of His Spirit. You will see they are blessed by her wisdom and good judgment. The



husbands and children, whose lives these mothers bless, will contribute to the stability of societies all over this world. Grateful daughters of God learn truths from their mothers and grandmothers. They teach their daughters the joyful art of creating a home. They seek fine educations for their children and have a thirst for knowledge themselves. They help their children develop skills they can use in serving others. They know that the way they have chosen is not the easy way, but they know it is absolutely worth their finest efforts.

They understand what Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve meant as he said, “When the real history of mankind is fully disclosed, will it feature the echoes of gunfire or the shaping sound of lullabies? The great armistices made by military men or the peacemaking of women in homes and in neighborhoods? Will what happened in cradles and kitchens prove to be more controlling than what happened in congresses?” (*Ensign*, May 1978, 10–11).

Grateful daughters of God know it is the nurturing nature of women that can bring everlasting blessings, and they live to cultivate this divine attribute. Surely when a woman reverences motherhood, her children will arise up and call her blessed (see Prov. 31:28).

Always remember that women of God

can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are coarse; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity.

Reaching your potential

How I pray that every young woman will grow up to be all the wonderful things she is meant to be. I hope that as a daughter of God you honor the priesthood and sustain worthy priesthood holders. I hope you understand your own great capacity for strength in the timeless virtues that some would scoff at in a modern liberated world for women.

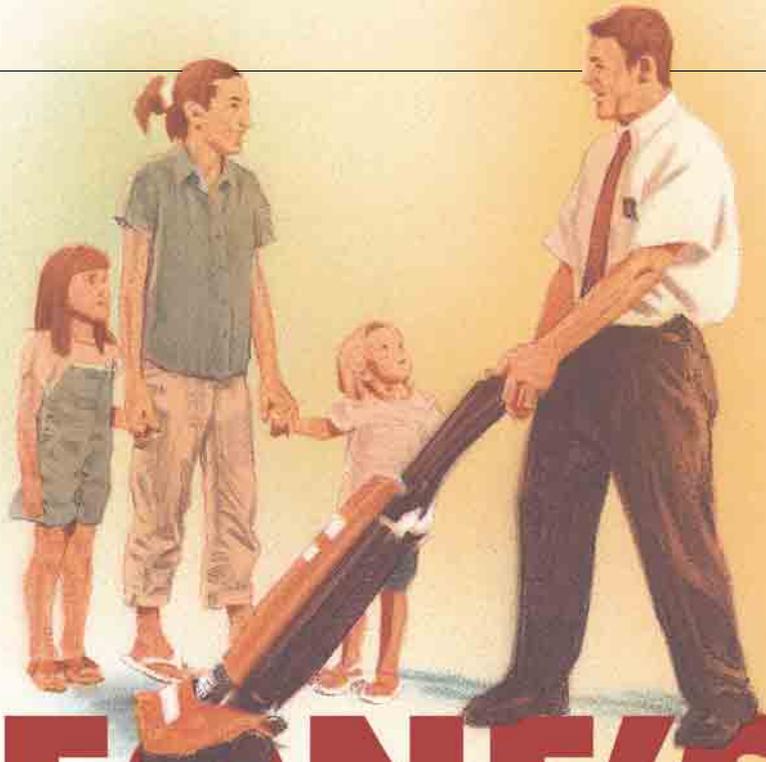
May you understand the great potential for good you inherited from your heavenly home. We, as women, must nourish our gentleness, our nurturing nature, our innate spirituality and sensitivity, and our bright minds. Celebrate the fact that girls are different from boys. Be thankful for the position you have in God’s grand plan. And always remember what President Hinckley said: “Woman is God’s supreme creation. Only after the earth had been formed, after the day had been separated from the night, after the waters had been divided from the land, after vegetation and animal life had been created; and after man had been placed on the earth, was woman created; and only then was the work pronounced complete and good” (*Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11).

Remember all that you are and must be, all that you were prepared to be in royal courts on high by God Himself. Thankfully consider how you can use with gratitude the priceless gifts you have been given to lift others to higher thinking and nobler aspirations. **NE**

Adapted from an October 2000 general conference address.

Celebrate the fact that girls are different from boys. Be thankful for the position you have in God’s grand plan. Remember all that you are and must be, all that you are prepared to be in royal courts on high by God Himself.





SOMEONE'S ANGEL

Lord, help me," she had prayed. "I don't know if I can handle this! Please, please send an angel or something."

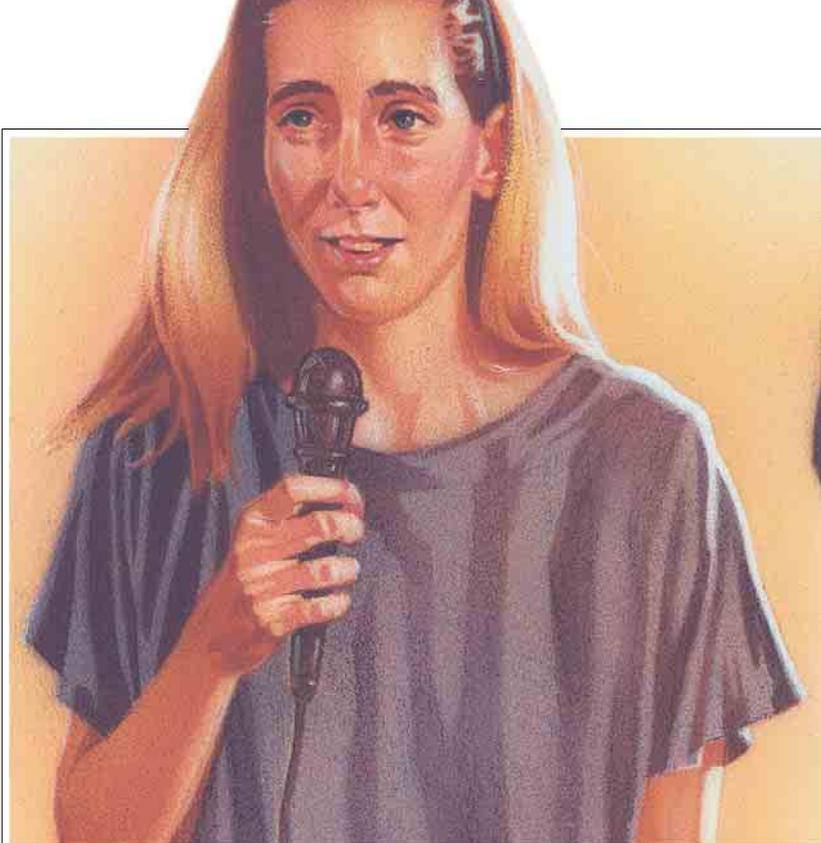
By Benjamin Ireland

Sister Jones was praying for help. We were praying to know where we should go. Thank goodness both our prayers were answered.

Visit Sister Jones" is what was written down for 1:00 P.M. Sister Jones was a member of the ward who we had visited a few times in the California Arcadia Mission, but she had not been to church for a long while. She had a good husband and three adorable little daughters. Every time we saw her, we asked her to come to church, but she had not come yet.







I began to cry. For one thing, I had never been called an angel before. I am just me—a simple missionary. But for one short afternoon, we were someone's angels.

I had often thought and prayed about how we could encourage her to come back to church and was beginning to doubt if we would ever succeed. I suggested to my companion that we go tracting instead. He agreed that tracting was important, but he seemed inspired in his suggestion to follow through with our plan. I swallowed my pride and said a silent prayer. The Spirit whispered to me that following our plan was what God wanted us to do.

We biked to Sister Jones's place, and as we pulled up she was taking out the trash. When she looked at us she seemed discouraged. She did not seem particularly thrilled to see us.

"Hello, Sister Jones," I said cheerfully. "How are you doing?"

"Okay," she responded halfheartedly. I knew something was not quite right. The last time we visited she had commented how hard it was to keep up on her housework because of an illness she had contracted. I wondered if this was the cause of her unhappy countenance. The Spirit whispered again to me. Without leaving room for argument we announced, "We're here to do your dishes."

She was taken aback and a little reluctant to let us help. I could see she was longing for some relief. She led us inside, and immediately I went to a sink full of almost every dish in the house. Meanwhile my companion started

vacuuming. All Sister Jones could manage to do was sit down on the couch, exhausted, watching us gratefully. We finished the vacuuming, my companion dried the dishes, and soon the house was sparkling. Sister Jones expressed her appreciation with a teary smile.

"Thank you, Elders. I really needed that today."

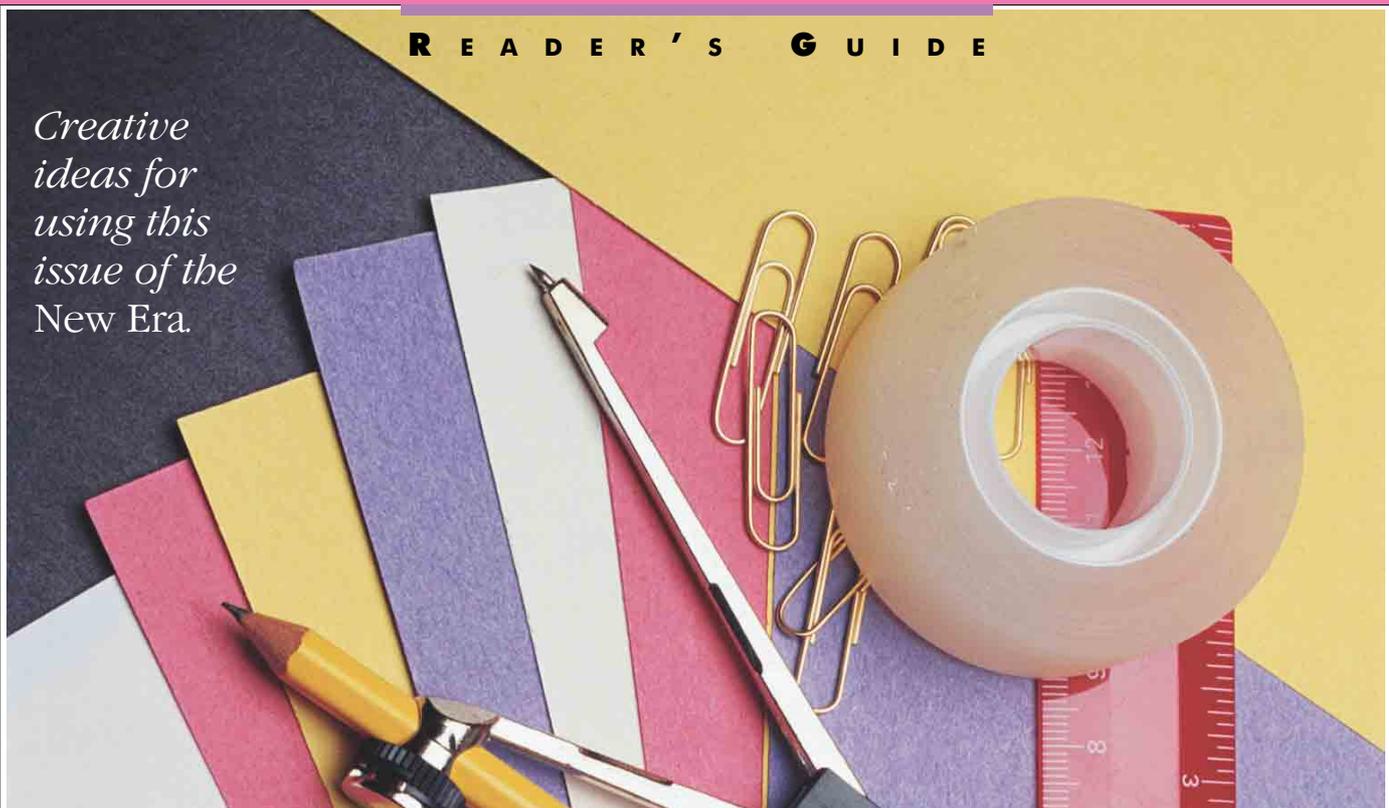
"No problem, Sister Jones. We're always glad to help. You know that," my companion said. She smiled, and we let ourselves out.

The following Sunday I was surprised to see her in the congregation at church. It warmed my heart. It was fast and testimony meeting, but what added to my surprise was Sister Jones getting up to bear her testimony.

After bearing her testimony of the truthfulness of the Church, she added, "This week I was having a really hard time. I've been sick and not able to do everything. One day when it was particularly difficult, I began to pray. 'Lord help me, I don't know if I can handle this! Please, please send an angel, or something. Please.' And right then, two of his angels pulled up on their bicycles and asked if they could help. I was so touched. It was exactly what I needed."

I began to cry. For one thing, I had never been called an angel before. I am just me—a simple missionary. But for one short afternoon, we were someone's angels. Still, I cannot take credit for it. In that fast and testimony meeting, the Holy Spirit once again whispered to me with the sweet comfort that comes from following God's will. It is not always what we want to do. It is not always what we think is best. But God's way is always right. We may not have reached our goal for tracting hours that week, but we reached a much higher standard—the standard of doing what our all-wise Father above wanted us to do. **NE**

Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.



Personal Improvement

□ Read “What Great Brothers Do” (page 14) and think about someone who is a good example in your life, perhaps a sibling or a friend in your ward. Identify a specific quality that person has and set two or three short-term goals that will help you develop that quality in your life.

□ Taking the sacrament is a privilege many of us take for granted (see “Sacrament Service” on page 20). This Sunday, take a moment to thank a deacon or another priesthood holder in your ward for the service they provide in passing the sacrament each Sunday.

□ When was the last time you spent some one-on-one time with a sibling? Read “Freckles” on page 24 for inspiration, and make a “date” to spend some time doing a fun activity with a brother or sister.

Family Home Evening Idea

□ “See No Evil” on page 34 deals with the serious topic of pornography, and the ease with which it can enter our homes. Under the guidance of your parents at your next family home evening, discuss strategies for avoiding unwholesome entertainment. Read D&C 121:45 together and discuss its meaning.

Value Project Idea

□ Our prophets have given us numerous testimonies of the Savior, a few of which are contained in “The Voice of His Servants”

(page 26). If appropriate, ask your parents or other members of your family to write their testimonies of Christ. Put them all together in a file. Don’t forget to include your own testimony.

Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women Mutual Ideas

□ Two missionaries discovered that simple acts of service were the best way to let a sister know she was loved (see page 46). Is there a member of your class or quorum who could use some help with his homework? A ride to an activity? Some special attention? Spend a portion of your next Mutual night planning a service activity for someone who is less active.

□ Is reverence an area where your class or quorum could improve? Read Q&A together (page 16) and then, with your teacher, brainstorm some ideas to improve reverence in your Sunday meetings. After a month of implementing your ideas, evaluate your progress. If you feel you’ve improved, celebrate with a treat.

Seminary Devotional Idea

□ Read “Taking My Own Advice” on page 8, and summarize it in your own words for your class. Ask class members to write short notes expressing their testimonies to give to friends. Then, instead of giving the notes away, invite them to keep the notes as a reminder to work on their testimonies daily.

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Really inspired

I would like to say the article “Everyone But Me” (April ‘02) really inspired me because it made me think back to when I felt alone and not needed. Thank you again for the magazine. It’s the only thing I read when I feel down.

*Joel Maldonado
Naples, Florida (via e-mail)*

Grateful

The prophet has asked us to be grateful, and I am grateful for the *New Era* and all the work that goes into it. My favorite thing to read is the scriptures, but the *New Era* comes in a close second. Many of the articles touch me and I appreciate the inspiring, knowledgeable, and encouraging words.

*Alyssa Hansen
Ridgefield, Washington (via e-mail)*

Loved the trek

I am a 12-year-old Beehive in the Rawlins Wyoming First Ward. I would like to thank you for printing the article, “Walking in Remembrance,” in the July 2002 issue. It was really fun to read because Martin’s Cove is only 40 miles from my home, and I have been there many, many times. I was even privileged to attend the dedication. It was also extra special because I received my copy of the *New Era* the day before we left on our own bi-ward trek.

*Rachel Russell
Rawlins, Wyoming (via e-mail)*

Different perspective

When I received my August 2002 issue, the first article I read was “Carving A Character.” About half-way through *diabetes* jumped off the page at me. Before I continued, I called my sister to come listen to the rest of Matt Rogers’s story. My sister was diagnosed with type-1 diabetes when she was four years old. Even though she has had the disease for four years, lately she has become very depressed about her illness. She feels like no one else understands what she is going through, and she tries to ignore her illness, hoping it will disappear. I loved reading her the scripture Matt mentioned (Ether 12:27); his diabetes had been something

“The prophet has asked us to be grateful, and I am grateful for the New Era and all the work that goes into it.”



to help shape his life. It gave my sister a different perspective. Now she tells me she wants to be a sculptor!

*Kassandra Greer
Walkersville, Maryland (via e-mail)*

Not the only one

I just want to say that I loved reading the article “Rising Above the Blues” in the April 2002 edition. It helped me feel that I wasn’t alone. I have depression, and at times I feel so helpless and guilty that I don’t want to exist. Now I realize I’m not the only one, and that if Jesus Christ suffered all things, I can survive. This article really made me feel better.

*Name Withheld
Utah (via e-mail)*

The same things

I love reading the *New Era*. It is so inspiring and helps me to feel the Spirit while I read. As I read the stories they help me know I am not alone, that there are other faithful teenagers around the world who have to go through a lot of the same things I go through. The *New Era* is the best magazine because it brings the Spirit of the Lord with it, which is something that could never be found in other teen magazines.

*Kristy Rae Rowberry
Henderson, Nevada (via e-mail)*

Correction

The picture we ran in Of All Things in the August 2002 issue is of George Albert Smith, eighth president of the Church. We should have run a photo of George A. Smith of Zion’s Camp. We apologize for the mistake and any confusion it may have caused.

*We love hearing from you. Write us at
New Era*

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Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Loving Still

By Holly Jo Weston

It seems like
every intricate detail
of our last conversation should be
etched—
no, chiseled—
in my soul.
But when I close my eyes,
I can't even picture your face,
and it hasn't been that
long since . . .
When I was young,
I ran to hug the
graham-cracker, strawberry-jam,
grandmother-scented you.
As I'd close my eyes,
how comforting to feel
the love-peck
on my delicate cheek,
and it must have been,
as I'd run off
to play in your flowers.
It seems like
I should have hugged you
longer.
And when I close my eyes,
all I can feel
are gentle tears
warming my face.
Or is it you?
Loving still.

By Lana Leishman



“It makes me realize how important the sacrament is to people. When we come with the sacrament, they just light up, and they’re so excited.”

**See
“Sacrament
Service,”
p. 20.**