

THE New Era

OCTOBER 2010

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**HOW CAN I MAKE DAILY PRAYER
MORE MEANINGFUL p. 2**

The Message: How Can I Make Daily Prayer More Meaningful?

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Elder D. Todd Christofferson

*Prayer is one of the things that will give us
the strength and the power to be examples of
the believers.*

Line upon Line: D&C 130:20–21

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I Needed to Come Back

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*I have repented and now hold firmly
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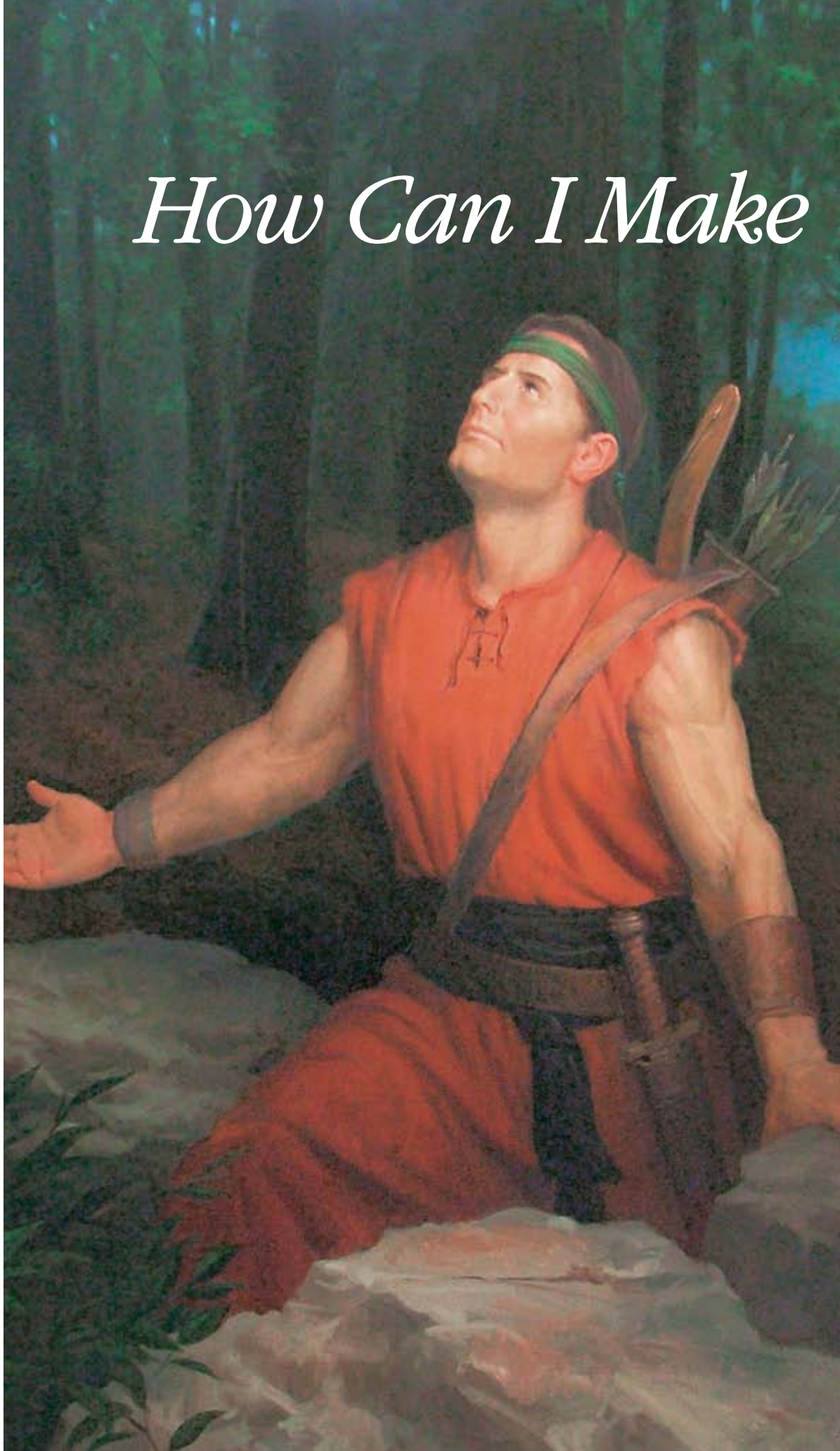
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How Can I Make

When Enos prayed,
He prayed
about himself first
and then about the
Nephites and then
the Lamanites—even
his enemies were a
part of his concern.
That really makes
prayer meaningful, to
focus on others.



DAILY PRAYER

More Meaningful?

A member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles answers teens' questions about prayer.

How can I make daily prayer more meaningful? It's a good question, and it's one that applies to all of us. President Hinckley used to say that sometimes when we pray it's like we're picking up a phone, ordering groceries, and then we hang up the phone—we put in our order, and we don't think any more about it than that. But if we take a few minutes just to think about our particular need in a given moment, then prayer becomes more meaningful.

In 2 Nephi 32:9 it says: "Behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul."

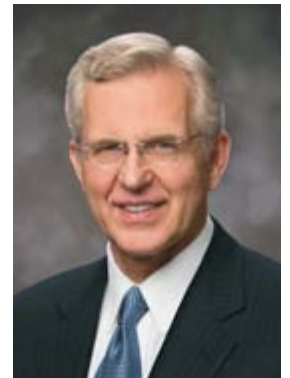
Everything we do ought to be done with an eye toward our Heavenly Father's blessing and consecrating to our good all of our activities in a given day. So if we sense our need and think about it, prayer becomes more meaningful.

Beyond that, it's important to remember we shouldn't just be praying about ourselves, because there are a lot of people in our sphere of acquaintance who have great needs as well, and we ought to be remembering them and what kind of help they need from the Lord. Those kinds of prayers are like when Enos prayed. He prayed about himself first and then about the Nephites and then the Lamanites—even his enemies were a part of his concern. That really makes prayer meaningful, to focus on others.

Lastly, when you're grateful, when your prayers include a lot of thanks to the Lord for your blessings, they become much more meaningful.

How do you have the Spirit with you when you pray?

This is crucial. It makes all the difference. Remember the promise we find in Moroni 10:4. It tells us to pray about the Book of Mormon "with a sincere heart, with real intent." And when we say "sincere heart" and "real intent," it means that you want to know the Lord's will and you want to do it, that you're committed, as you pray, to knowing and doing His will. And that makes prayer very meaningful. If we're just praying for what *we* want and we don't want to know His will, it won't be the same feeling or have



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

the same meaning.

Years ago when I was serving as a bishop and was weighed down with all of the problems members of the ward seemed to have, I began praying about finding solutions and ways to help. I got some impressions in answer to my pleas for help. Then, it seemed that the Spirit would guide my prayer so that what I was praying was guided by the Spirit as well as what came back in answer to my prayers. And I think that's the most meaningful kind of prayer we can achieve, where the Spirit guides the prayer as well as the responses from our Heavenly Father. And I believe that comes when we really do want to know what the Lord wants and we're committed to do whatever that is as we pray.

How often should we pray?

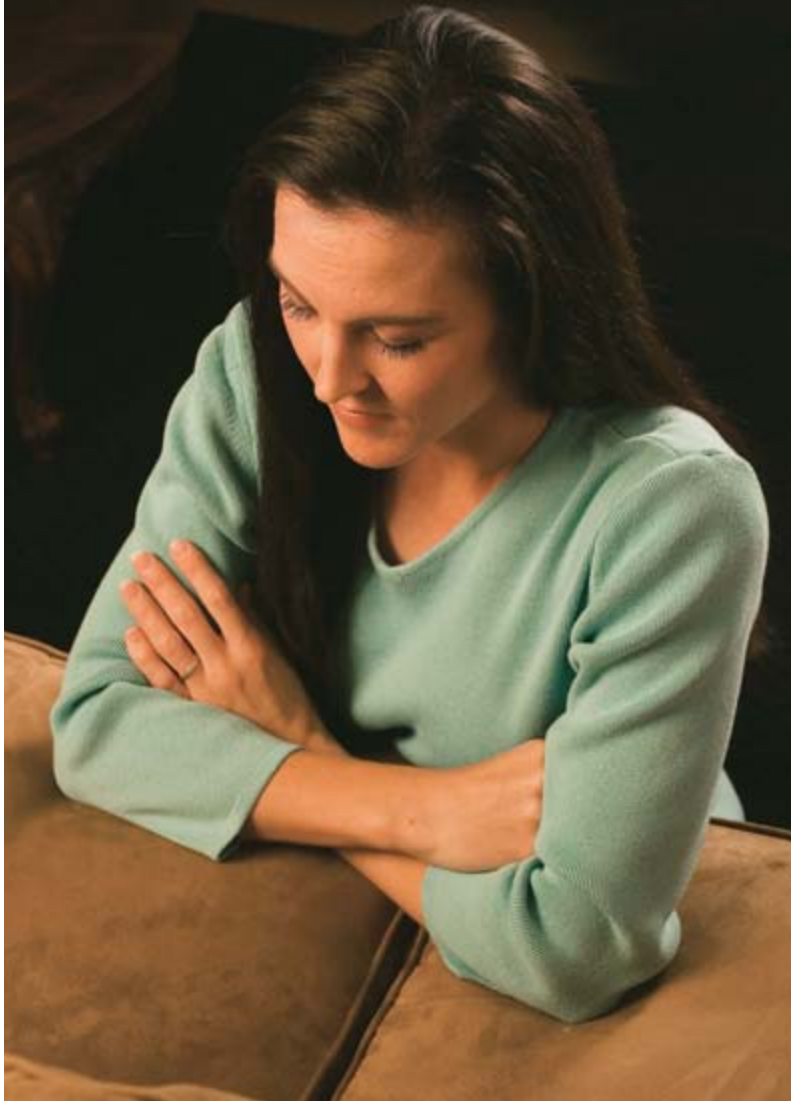
There really is not a rule. We don't have a set number. I think as you go through a day, it's natural to pray about things as they come along.

Elder David A. Bednar talked in a general conference about prayer and praying always (see "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 41). He said if our morning prayers are looking out toward the day and what's coming, we're previewing the day in our prayer. In our evening prayers, we report to the Lord on what's happened through the course of the day. We may be thanking Him for blessings received, we may be repenting of a few things that happened that were not right, and then there are all the prayers in between. It just becomes part of a stream of prayers. It's all part of a pattern, and that goes on day in and day out and week after week and through the years. That's what it means to have your heart drawn out in prayer to Him.

One other scripture comes to mind, from Alma 37:36–37: "Cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night

We need a time
where we
can pray as
long as we feel we
want to and need to.



lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.”

Sometimes it’s a very, very simple prayer in a stressful crisis (“Help. Please help me.”). So we’re talking about our thoughts going to Heavenly Father. Our prayers can be brief through the course of the day, and it’s just what flows out of us naturally. The closer we get to Him, the more that happens automatically and we feel that closeness. It’s like having a friend and walking together through a hallway at school. You want to turn and talk to each other about what’s going on at the moment. And as you draw closer to God, that companionship, that friendship, if you will, tends to develop in the same way.

That being said, don’t forget that we ought to look for opportunities when we can have long prayers, when we can have a quiet time and will not be interrupted. We need a time where we can pray as long as we feel we want to and need to, where Heavenly Father can teach us and talk to us at length and not just always be responding to a quick prayer—that’s fine for the moment but not all we should ever do.

What if we don’t get an answer to our prayers when we want it or need it?

That’s an interesting question. It brings to mind something that Elder Richard G. Scott said in a general conference talk: “What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of His trust. When you are living worthily and

your choice is consistent with the Savior’s teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust. As you are sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, one of two things will certainly occur at the appropriate time: either the stupor of thought will come, indicating an improper choice, or the peace or the burning in the bosom will be felt, confirming that your choice was correct. When you are living righteously and are acting with trust, God will not let you proceed too far without a warning impression if you have made the wrong decision” (“Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 10).

It’s a valuable experience sometimes to pray and not immediately receive the answer you feel you need. It’s all conditioned, of course, on our living the way we should, continuing to seek His guidance, and being open to those promptings.

We ought to remember we don’t dictate to God the timing of His answers to us and the content of what comes in response to our prayers. I learned this when I was about 16. I was in the pageant at Hill Cumorah. I lived in New Jersey at the time, and they had some of the youth from New Jersey and New York as participants. I thought I had a deep belief in the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and felt that they were true and that the First Vision was as he described it. I thought, “This is the perfect chance. I’ll go to the Sacred Grove one night after the performance and get the final confirmation I need there.”

So I did. I went there late one night. It was a beautiful summer evening. Nobody else was there—perfectly reverent and peaceful. And I prayed. I didn’t ask for anything specific. I just said, “Can I have some confirmation of my belief?” Really I wanted a

think that’s the most meaningful kind of prayer we can achieve, where the Spirit guides the prayer as well as the responses from our Heavenly Father.

God loves us; He knows what's best for us, and our job is always to be willing and ready to receive.



testimony of my feeling about the Prophet and the Book of Mormon.

Nothing happened. I prayed a long time—I'm sure more than an hour. Nothing. I was really disappointed. I said, "What did I do wrong? Why didn't the Lord answer me? Wasn't it the perfect place, the perfect time? What should I have done that I didn't do?"

Later, what I was looking for came, but it was at home in a quiet moment when I was reading the Book of Mormon. That witness from the Holy Ghost flooded over me, and I knew. I knew I knew. And when I looked back on the experience, I said, "Why didn't He answer my prayer then? Why was it later?" I learned two important lessons from that:

First, you don't have to be any place special for the Lord to answer your prayer. You don't have to make a pilgrimage to Palmyra or Jerusalem or anything like that. He knows where you are. He knows your name. He can answer you right here, right now, any moment.

And second, you don't dictate to God. You just don't tell Him what and when. That comes according to His will and His timing and His wisdom. He loves us; He knows what's best for us, and our job is to be open. Our job is always to be willing and ready to receive. Then He knows what's best and when to answer us and how to answer us. So, after all is said and done, we still have to live by faith.

Prayer is one of the things that will give us the strength and the power to be examples of the believers. The influence of the Lord, the meaningfulness of our prayers, His guidance in our life day to day, the strength that comes with all of that really does make it possible for us to consistently be examples of the believers in everything we do. **NE**

D&C 130:20–21

These verses teach about the eternal significance of obedience.

Before the foundations of this world

“All blessings that were ordained for man by the Council of Heaven were on conditions of obedience to the law thereof.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 164.

Irrevocably decreed

Irrevocably—unchangeably or irreversibly; finally; in a way that can’t be taken back

Decreed—officially ordered by a recognized authority

“... and in this life through his obedience and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

20 There is a “law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

21 And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

22 The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son has

Predicated

Predicated—based (on)

When we obtain any blessing

The scriptures contain many instances of specific blessings promised to us when we obey certain commandments. Here are just a few examples. Can you find more?

- Guidance and answers to prayers if we keep the commandment to “be thou humble” (see D&C 112:10).
- Protection against the powers of darkness if we follow the prophet (see D&C 21:4–6).
- Knowing the “mysteries of God” if we repent, exercise faith, bring forth good works, and pray continually (see Alma 26:22).

- Health and treasures of knowledge if we keep the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89:18–21).
- Having the “windows of heaven” opened to us if we keep the law of tithing (see Malachi 3:10).
- Eternal life if we keep all the commandments and endure to the end (see D&C 14:7).



It is by obedience

“God’s choicest blessings are clearly contingent upon obedience to God’s laws and

commandments. The key teaching is from modern revelation [D&C 130:20–21]. . . .

“... This great principle helps us understand the *why* of many things.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Love and Law,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 27.



Obedience to that law

“If you really want a certain blessing, you’d better find out what the laws are

that govern that blessing and then work on becoming obedient to those laws.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Mission and Ministry of the Savior: A Discussion with Elder Russell M. Nelson,” *Ensign*, June 2005, 19.

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

I Needed to COME BACK

*I had drifted away,
but the Lord was still
reaching out to me.*

Name Withheld

For three years I wandered, spiritually blind, until the Spirit helped me realize what I had been missing.

Growing up LDS was pretty normal to me. Most of my friends were LDS. We went to Primary together, played together, and then moved on to Young Women and Young Men together. I had my future planned by the age of 15: get married in the temple, go to college and become a fashion designer, start a family, and continue to live the teachings of the gospel. I was obedient to the Church standards.

But when I was 17, I started questioning the Church and became more relaxed in keeping my standards high. By my senior year of high school I had stopped going to church. I thought I was in love with a boy and felt that he was all I needed. I tore up my relationship with my family. That fall, after graduation, the boy and I split up, my heart was broken, and I fell in with the wrong crowd. I thought drugs and alcohol could fill the emptiness in my heart. For the next three years I wandered, spiritually blind. Occasionally I would have spiritual moments, but I either ignored them or was too proud to recognize that the Lord was there for me.

About this time my younger brother was

preparing for a mission. I started to feel that something was missing in my life, but I couldn't figure it out. I was still very lost until the night he was set apart as a missionary. That night as I sat in a room full of close friends and family, I could feel the Spirit's presence. I started to feel the warmth of my Savior, and in my heart I could feel the fullness I had been missing. I felt a whisper in my ear as if to say "This is what you need." I knew in that instant that the Church is what I needed.

Since then I have repented and firmly held on to the iron rod. It isn't always easy, and I am often tempted, but because I feel closer to the Savior, I recognize the temptations now and shun them. Never have I understood the promptings of the Spirit so clearly in my life. The Spirit speaks so clearly when you're listening. The Lord will always be there for you as much as you are willing to let Him into your life. And if you have strayed, He will still be standing near to offer a hand to help you repent and get back up and onto the right path. **NE**

ILLUSTRATION BY G. BJORN THORKELOSON



GO TO THE RESCUE

"My dear brothers and sisters, ours is the responsibility, even the solemn duty, to reach out to all of those whose lives we have been called to touch. Our duty is to guide them to the celestial kingdom of God. . . . May we reach out to rescue those who need our help and our love."

• • •
President Thomas S. Monson,
"Sugar Beets and the Worth of a Soul," *Ensign*, July 2009, 7.

AN EXAMPLE TO NONMEMBER FRIENDS

Compiled by Mary Dahl

*Teens from
Vancouver,
British Columbia,
say it's best to
share your beliefs
every chance
you get.*

The teens in the Coquitlam Ward of the Vancouver British Columbia Stake got together and decided to answer this question asked in the New Era's Question and Answer section: "How do I get to know people who are not Church members, be a good example to them, and invite them to church when I can't spend time with them because they hang out at places I shouldn't go?"

The Coquitlam Ward has 18 young men and women attending 12 different schools. They wrote: "We feel like we have lots of experience associating with nonmembers and kids that do not have our standards." They held a joint lesson and talked about the best ways to be a righteous example.

Don't Be Ashamed

The best way we all agreed upon is not to be ashamed of our beliefs and to share our standards and beliefs every chance we get. When we arrive at school from seminary and our classmates ask why we are so happy and why we smile all the time, we take this opportunity to tell them about seminary and what we have learned that day.



NEmore

Find more answers to the question addressed here in the March 2010 *New Era*.

Participate

One young woman shared an experience where she was supposed to perform in the final night of her drama production, but it conflicted with the stake youth conference trip to Seattle. So she used this opportunity to tell her friends all about the temple and plan of salvation.

Many of us said it was important to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, dancing, drama, orchestra, and service to have positive associations with friends.

A young woman told of her volunteer work, where a group of students spent an evening serving dinner to the homeless. This was a wonderful night of associations with teachers, classmates, and the less fortunate.



Invite Friends to Come with You

One teen, whose friends like to “party,” invited her friend to a joint Mutual activity. The friend said it was her best day ever, and she loved how everyone was so happy and so friendly.

Another young woman told of how she invited a group of friends from school over to her home and how her friends were so amazed that her family was so friendly, happy, and positive.

A young man said that while playing on his soccer and

basketball teams, he had to tell his coaches that he would not be able to play on Sundays.

This was hard to do as he felt a commitment to the team, but his coaches were very impressed with his commitment to his religion. Later, he invited his soccer team to visit the church meetinghouse.

All the players and the parents were impressed with the beauty of the church and had lots of questions about the pictures inside.

Several of us said we carry the *For the Strength of Youth* mini-pamphlet to school with us and read it and share it with as many friends as we can.

Just Be Friends

They decided that the best way to be a good example is to be friendly. Look for ways to uplift, smile, help, and talk to those around you. Uphold your standards, and when questioned why don't you drink iced tea or something, be confident and say you love and believe in the standards the Church has set. Dress modestly, speak with integrity, use good manners, be good listeners, and be honest, helpful, and kind. Always be inclusive and invite friends to as many righteous activities as you can. And most important of all, be the kind of friend that everyone wants to be with. **NE**

RUNNING TOGETHER

By Tiffany Kwok

I first got to know my friend, whom I will call Sally, through running with her. I tried to find someone who had the same running speed as me and found Sally. We found that we had many similarities, which got us talking.

My friend was a Christian, but in some ways doubted God. Over time, Sally and I have become great friends, and through the respect I showed her and the friends we shared, she realized there was something different about me. I was able to share snippets of the gospel with her and explain a little about what we do in the Church. I was able to invite her to activities. Later on I was able to invite her to a Sunday meeting.

I talked to her about my spiritual experiences, invited her to our youth conference, and was able to give her advice on her problems. I suggested she pray—such a simple thing but a great answer to problems. She has taken my advice, and through prayer she has grown closer to Heavenly Father. She also was able to take some of the Bible stories we were taught and apply them into her life. She began to take religion a little more seriously.

I hope I was able to influence her a little to have a stronger connection to Heavenly Father. **NE**



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT REIER

When my little sister, Lillian, was born, I had just been baptized. My father told me that if I stayed worthy to the covenants I had just made, he would let me baptize Lillian when she turned eight. He said that it is a great honor to baptize someone and challenged me to always live worthy of that great privilege. Throughout the next eight years I would often think about my father's promise and challenge and was careful to always make good choices.

Lillian and I spent a lot of time together growing up—I even taught her how to ride a bike! In coming to know Lillian more, I've learned that she has a kind heart and a Christlike spirit. My mom always reminded us how important family relationships are, and she encouraged me to be kind, helpful, and compassionate to all my siblings. That counsel, along with my goal to qualify to baptize my sister, helped Lillian and me to develop a special and unique bond.

On the day of Lillian's baptism, our dad took us into an empty classroom in the church building. He went over the baptism prayer with me and showed Lillian where to put her hands on my arm. We were both so excited! When Lillian came out of the water, neither of us could stop smiling. As she exited the font, she turned back and said, "Thank you, Kent, for baptizing me!"

My dad confirmed her, and we drove to the temple, which was nearby, and took pictures—a family tradition at baptisms to remind us that we are an eternal family. I'm so thankful for the gospel in my life. Baptizing Lillian was testimony-building and has helped me in my preparations to serve a full-time mission. Just as my dad kept his promise to me, Heavenly Father keeps His promises to us. Honoring covenants brings great blessings, and I look forward to making my temple covenants in the future. **NE**



BAPTIZING LILLIAN

By Joseph Kent Craig

“What does it mean to ‘stand as a witness of God at all times’ (Mosiah 18:9)?”

Standing as a witness of God involves both who we are and what we do. In order to be a witness of the Savior, we must strive to be like Him. This means setting a Christlike example for others through the clothes we wear, the words we speak, the music we listen to, the service we give, and the friends we make.

Take advantage of every opportunity to share your testimony of the gospel with others. Your beliefs may sometimes be questioned or challenged, but you can stand as a witness when you defend your testimony. You can also stand as a witness when you withstand temptation. You can ask Heavenly Father to help you have the courage to stand up for what you believe.

Standing as a witness of God will give you confidence and power because it means you are living as the Savior would have you live. If you are striving to be a witness of God, stand tall and remember that the Lord has promised eternal life to those who faithfully witness of Him (see Mosiah 18:9). **NE**

Don't Be Afraid to Be Different



Standing as a witness of God at all times means to stand up for what you believe in, even when it does not seem like the “cool” thing to do. For example, at school I do not use inappropriate language, and I ask people to stop if they do. One time I made cookies for a boy in my Spanish class because he did not swear for one week. Even though standing up for what I believe in causes me to be different, I am not afraid of being unlike my peers if it means keeping the Lord's commandments.

Alison G., 17, Texas, USA

Honor Baptismal Covenants



My friends sometimes challenge my spiritual beliefs. Taking the time to explain and defend my beliefs takes courage. When I talk about what I believe in, I always feel the Spirit. I know as I live the gospel through my words and behavior, I am planting seeds for missionary work. I know as I honor the covenants I made at baptism, I am standing as a witness of God at all times and in all places.

Makenzie G., 16, Massachusetts, USA

Follow the Lord's Example



Being a witness of God is a responsibility that does not refer only to Sundays. It speaks to us of being an example in all places and in every circumstance. My friends and my teachers at school know that I am a member of the Church, and they are always observing my behavior and my answers in everything I say and do. It is an honor and a great responsibility to be a member of the restored Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days. For me, being witnesses of Christ means doing the things that He did and serving others, as He taught us to.

José M., age 16, Monterrey, Mexico

Be Steadfast and Immovable



As members of the Church we have standards and beliefs that may be different from the rest of the world.

But we should never feel discouraged or embarrassed about our righteous decisions. We need to be steadfast and immovable and have the courage to follow God's commandments at all times. Heavenly Father is always with us, comforting us, supporting us, and giving us strength to press forward.

Kelly N., 15, Arizona, USA

Defend Our Testimonies



Knowing that we are witnesses of God is something for which we ought to feel very glad and privileged, since it is a

full trust that God has in us, and it is our responsibility to defend our testimonies of God the Father at every moment. Thinking of this helps me a lot as a missionary, to be able to feel more worthy of my calling and to strive from day to day to defend my faith, my testimony of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Levano, 20, Peru Lima East Mission

Choose the Right



To "stand as a witness of God at all times" means to be a Christlike example for others in every situation.

You use clean language, show kindness, and keep the Sabbath day holy even if it means you have to sacrifice something or be different from people around you. It also means you choose the

right even when no one is watching, like when you use personal time to read the scriptures and pray.

Marisa M., 13, Pennsylvania, USA

Share the Gospel



When you stand as a witness of God at all times, you are, like the scriptures say, standing as a witness of His miracles as well as standing

out and living up to your standards. If someone were to ask you what you believe in, you shouldn't be afraid to tell the truth and talk to him or her about the gospel. If you stand as a witness of God, you will be saved in the last days and have eternal life.

Braiden P., 15, Nevada, USA

Keep High Standards

Standing as a witness of God at all times means that you never lower your standards for any occasion. For example, you should be modest not only at school or church, but at the pool too. It's a way of living in which you wouldn't be ashamed of what you're doing if God were standing right beside you.

Allison F., 16, Utah, USA

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



WE ARE WITNESSES OF CHRIST

"We are witnesses of Christ when we receive a sure, personal testimony that He lives. . . . We are witnesses of Christ when we live so as to reflect His teachings. . . . We are witnesses of Christ when we help others come unto Him."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Becoming a Witness of Christ," *Ensign*, Mar. 2008, 59, 60, 61.

NEXT QUESTION

"I've heard that
the **Book of Mormon**
is written for our day.
What does
that mean?"

Send your answer and photo by November 15, 2010.

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

You can also send your response to **newera@ldschurch.org**

or to:


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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

A young woman with dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera, is seated in a red plastic chair. She is wearing a vibrant red sari with gold floral embroidery and a matching gold necklace and bangles. In her lap, she holds an open Bible, which is resting on a black stand. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting.

OPENING DOORS IN INDIA

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines



Gospel doors are always worth opening, because they lead to so much that is good.

It can be intimidating to open a door if you don't know who or what is on the other side, where the door leads, or even if it is safe to cross the threshold on your own. But opening a door can be exhilarating when you know that someone who loves you is already knocking, that inviting Him in will lead to great opportunities, and that once you open the door, you'll never feel alone again.

In Hyderabad, India, LDS youth are learning a lot about opening that second kind of door—the one that leads to faith in Jesus Christ—because they remember what the Savior said:

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Because they are willing to open the door to Him, they are also learning to open gospel-related doors of many kinds.



Opening the Scriptures

Dressed in a bright red sari, 15-year-old Monica Mekala of the Hyderabad Fourth Branch sits near the back door of her family's home reading her scriptures. The light shining through the door, the light in her eyes, the bright smile on her face—all seem to say she is pleased with the wisdom she finds in the word of God.

"Right now I am reading Doctrine and Covenants 82:9–10," she says. "In that scripture, the Lord says He will give us directions about how to act so that we can receive salvation and tells us that when we do what He says, He will keep His promises." She says obedience opens many doors, because it leaves us free to pursue any righteous endeavor.



Developing Talents

Her brother, Melwin John Mekala, 17, agrees. He is quick to display sports trophies and other awards he's won—not to brag about his accomplishments, but to bear testimony of the Lord's blessings to him. "One of my favorite scriptures is Matthew 25:15–23," he says. "It explains that if you have talents, you should improve them." He says that developing talents opens doors by creating opportunities to bless others. "One of the great things about sports is teamwork. You learn to help each other, whether it's pushing each other during training or helping each other during a game. It's like being in a priesthood quorum—you help each other when you're studying and learning the gospel, and you support each other when you're giving service and helping other people."



Preparing with the Priesthood

Enoch Rahul Tallari, 14, of the Hyderabad Second Branch opens doors for people every week by helping with the sacrament. "The sacrament is a symbol of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for all of our sins," he says. As the Aaronic Priesthood prepares the bread and water, says the prayers, and distributes the sacrament to members of the congregation, "we are doing it so the people can get closer to the Savior and always remember Him," Enoch says. Providing a way for them to renew their covenants

helps them to remember that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14).



IN THE LIBRARY

Jayaprakash Gaddam, 14, of the Hyderabad Fourth Branch was excited to visit his family's ancestral village. "I have friends there, and I wanted to share the gospel with them," he explains. In particular, he wanted to give a Book of Mormon to one of his relatives who is also one of his best friends.

"When I gave it to him, he said, 'What is this book?' I explained that it is another testament of Jesus Christ and that it contains the fulness of the gospel. I told him that it came through a prophet of God, Joseph Smith. I bore my testimony that it is true, that it contains the words of Jesus Christ, and that it converts us to the true gospel."

"Then he surprised me. He explained that he goes to a Bible college and that the library there should have a copy of such an important book. So he took the book and donated it to the library. Later on, he told me that now everybody at the college knows they have that Book of Mormon."



A Door for Dad

The Domnic family of the Hyderabad Second Branch knows something about doors, too. The three daughters—Kavitha, 15; Hema, 16; and Smitha, 18—say education is a door to the future: “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” (D&C 130:18). They talk about seminary as a part of their eternal education. It is a door that, through the scriptures, opens upon a path to the Savior. They also talk about how the Holy Ghost can open a door to the truth of all things (see Moroni 10:5).

But one of the most memorable doors for the Domnic daughters is the gospel door that opened eight years ago for their mother, Anu, and then, with patience and prayer, for their father, Julian Francis.

“When the missionaries taught me the gospel, I knew it was true,” Sister Domnic says. “I knew the Church was a place where I could bring my daughters to find safety from worldly things. I also had a strong feeling that



they would take so much trouble just for me, but I finally quit smoking and decided I should be baptized. From there on I have lived a righteous life, and my family and I have received more and more blessings.”

my husband would join and that our whole family we would be blessed.” But Julian Francis would have to stop some bad habits—smoking, drinking, and cheating people out of money as a rickshaw-taxi driver.

“I didn’t want my wife and daughters to learn about the gospel,” he says. “I told them that if they wanted to join a Christian church, just go to the one on our corner. Why did they want to go to the Mormon church all the way across town?” He also feared that if his wife and daughters changed religions, they would create ill will among the extended family.

But as the gospel door opened wide for his wife and daughters, he found his own questions becoming more and more sincere, and his own behavior improving. His wife and his two oldest daughters were baptized and confirmed, and he started taking missionary lessons seriously. He sold his rickshaw taxi and found other work. He quit drinking alcohol. But he struggled to stop smoking.

Then one day he found out the elders were fasting on his behalf. “I started crying. I couldn’t believe they thought it was worthwhile to fast for me. For me!” The missionaries challenged him to quit. “They gave me some gum and told me that when I felt like smoking, to chew gum instead. They said if I could be free for an hour, then I could go for another hour, then four hours, then eight. They kept coming each day, giving me gum and encouraging me. I kept wondering why

“I am so grateful for the missionaries who came to our door, and to my parents for walking through the door that led us all to Christ,” says Hema. “Now our family can walk through chapel doors, through temple doors, and someday through whatever entrance takes us back to our Heavenly Father.” Hema, like the other youth in Hyderabad, knows that such blessings start by opening the door where the Savior is knocking. **NE**



WORTH THE WALK

Smitha Domnic, 18, of the Hyderabad Second Branch knows that choices are important. She made such a choice when it came to attending seminary.

“When I was in 10th standard [10th grade], seminary was quite far from my home, about three kilometers [1.8 miles]. There was no one to take me and one of my friends, and it was too expensive to pay for rickshaw-taxi rides. I wasn’t sure if we could get to seminary and also get to school, but I made a choice that seminary was important. So every morning we walked to get there. The teacher would wait to start class until we arrived.” From seminary, they found they could easily get to school.

So was it worth the walk? “Absolutely. We kept going to seminary, and this year I’ll be finishing as a four-year seminary graduate!”

A String of Good

Should I give my music teacher a copy of the Book of Mormon?

I had been playing the violin for three years before I started taking private lessons. My teacher, Robert Stoyanov, had emigrated from Russia some years before I was born and was a well-respected member of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Stoyanov enjoyed chatting. Occasionally, he would tell me stories about his childhood in Russia, and he often questioned me about how my family was doing and asked about school.

One time, the conversation turned to religion, and I told him I belonged to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When he gave me a puzzled look, I said, “Most people know us as Mormons.” He then told me of several LDS students in the past. In future lessons, he would occasionally inquire about what we believe, and I would explain to the best of my ability.

One day he asked about something, which led to something else, which led to something else, and for 20 minutes, I was in a question-and-answer session. It was then that I started thinking about giving Mr. Stoyanov a copy of the Book of Mormon.

I had my doubts, of course. Mr. Stoyanov was a professional, well-educated man. I wondered if he would be receptive to the Book of Mormon at all.

I resolved to give him a copy of the book at my next lesson. My mom suggested we find a copy in Russian. We looked for a couple of days with no success and had almost given up when a good friend provided us with a copy she had purchased when her son was called to serve a mission in Ukraine. I wrote a quick note, wrote down the nearby missionaries’ address, slipped in a pass-along card about eternal families to mark Moroni 10:3–5, and went to my lesson.

I presented him with the gift and waited anxiously for his reaction. “This a present for me? Oh, thank you! Thank you so much. Your family are such wonderful people! God bless you.” He said this very fast and in a heavy Russian accent. Mr. Stoyanov had many more questions, which I answered as guided by the Spirit.

On my way out, he told me I was as well-grounded as all of his other Mormon students had been.

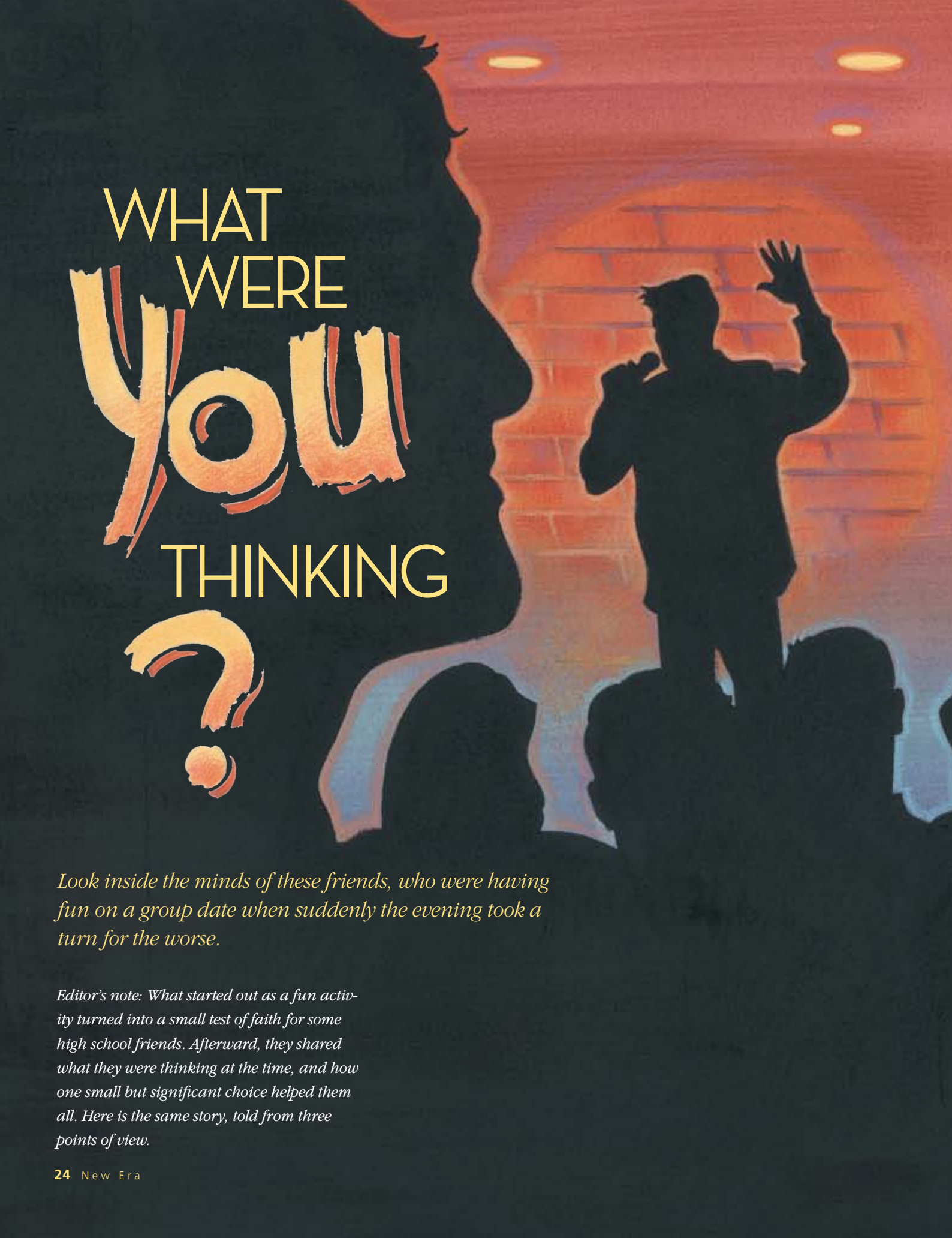
Later I started thinking about this remarkable experience and realized his acceptance of that priceless gift was not due to my example alone. Each of his Latter-day Saint students before me had planted seeds of faith. Each had left a small impression on him, and these impressions gradually prepared him to receive the Book of Mormon with enthusiasm. Never again will I think that no one is watching my actions. Someone always is. **NE**



Examples

**КНИГА
МОРМОНА**


Новые Свидетельства
об Иисусе Христе



WHAT WERE YOU THINKING ?

Look inside the minds of these friends, who were having fun on a group date when suddenly the evening took a turn for the worse.

Editor's note: What started out as a fun activity turned into a small test of faith for some high school friends. Afterward, they shared what they were thinking at the time, and how one small but significant choice helped them all. Here is the same story, told from three points of view.

An illustration of three young adults at a comedy club. Sam, a young man with dark hair, is on the left. Carrie, a young woman with long brown hair, is in the center. Jake, a young man with light brown hair, is on the right. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is a warm, reddish-brown color with several small, glowing yellow circles, suggesting stage lights or a club atmosphere.

Sam: I was eager to go to the comedy club. A couple of my friends that I trust had been there previously, and they said it was funny and that all of the jokes were clean. So we were all excited and looking forward to a night of fun.

When the show started, the comedian *was* funny. He told some good jokes, but after a span of about 15 minutes his humor took a heavy turn downward. His jokes turned dirty. I was feeling super uncomfortable.

Sam: I turned to Carrie, and asked, "Are you ready to go?" I said it more as a statement than a question. I knew I was with a wonderful girl, and I was pleased when, with a smile on her face, she said, "Yeah, let's go."

Sam: I took her to the exit and then went quietly to the seats where my friend Jake was sitting with his date. I leaned down and whispered, "We've had enough. We'll be out in the parking lot." We waited outside for the show to end.


Carrie: I had heard of this comedy place and was excited to go. As the show began, it was good, clean comedy. But soon after, the humor grew more crass and inappropriate. I wanted to get up and leave, but I struggled with the decision because I knew my date had spent quite a bit of money on the tickets. I started to feel more and more uneasy.

Carrie: Then, to my rescue, my date Sam turned and whispered, "Are you ready to go?" I was so relieved! It was the answer to my silent prayer! We got up and left the theater.

Jake: When crude humor started to take the main stage at the comedy club, I was uneasy. When the comic started to make sacrilegious comments about the Church, I felt uncomfortable and thought about leaving. But somehow silly ideas crept into my head—I had just spent money to get in, everyone would laugh at us or think we weren't mature enough to handle the humor, and my date wasn't LDS. What would she think if I stood up to leave?

All this left me sitting indecisively in my seat. Looking back now, I'm embarrassed that I let a couple of worldly rationalizations get in the way of my spiritual courage. Once the bad jokes started coming, I should have left immediately; it's as simple as that.

Jake: This is where the importance of having good friends comes in. As I sat there doing nothing, amidst the jokes, a finger tapped my shoulder. I turned to see my best friend crouched down behind me and pointing to the door. "I can't handle this guy any longer," he said, "We'll be waiting in the parking lot."



Sam: In the parking lot we started talking a little bit about what had happened, but not 30 seconds had passed when I heard the door open. I looked back to see Jake with his date, and all of my friends with their dates, walking out into the parking lot. Not a whole lot was said about what had happened, but we all knew we had done the right thing.

Carrie: It wasn't necessary to wait, however, because shortly after we left, the rest of the group filed out of the theater. I had the most incredible feeling in my heart at that moment. I was so grateful for the example my date had set, grateful for his great respect for me. He was a guardian of truth and virtue that night, and that was more important than getting his money's worth out of an inappropriate show.

I will forever remember and be grateful for that night and the experience I had.

Sam is a close friend. He was known throughout the high school student body as being a good guy. He was full of integrity and virtue, so it was no surprise to me that he did what he did that night.

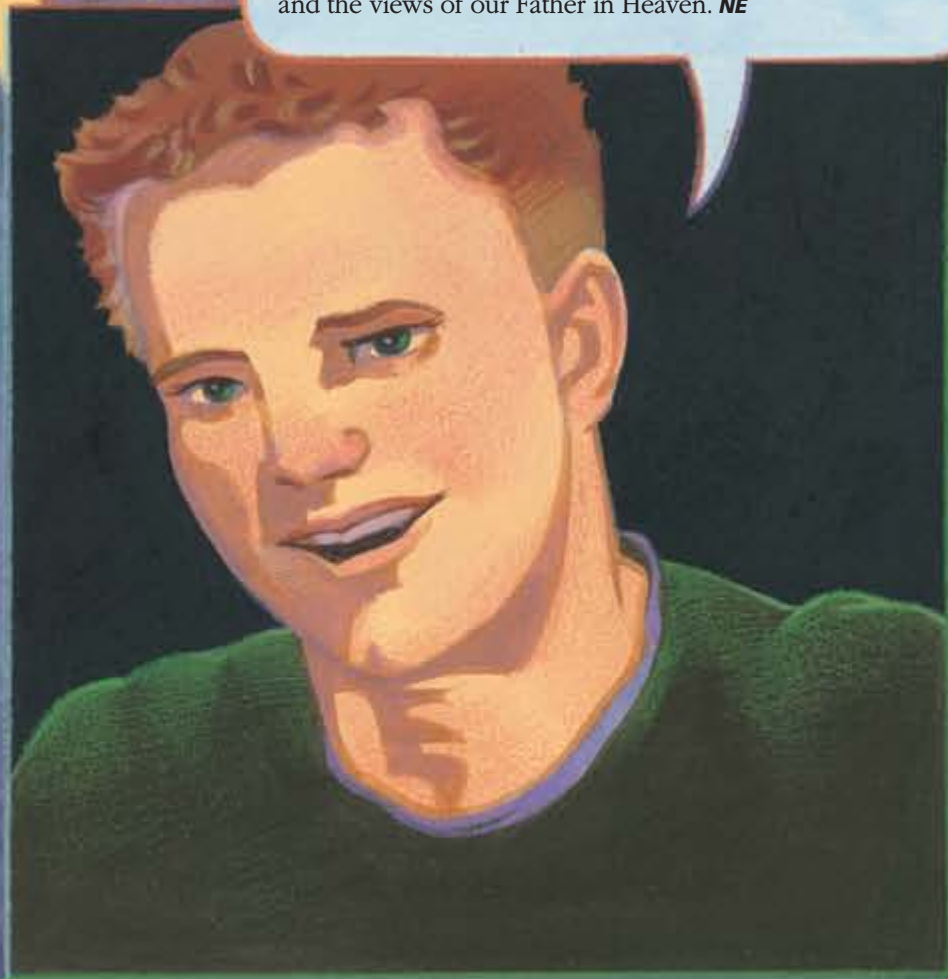
Editor's note: Elder Sam Featherstone is currently serving in the Mozambique Maputo Mission, Carrie Matheson is now a full-time student majoring in nursing at the University of Utah, and Elder Jacob Hoj is currently serving in the Santa Rosa California Mission.



Jake: At that moment my friend became my hero. He left. Then I, along with our other friends, followed. My date knew we had high standards and recognized that we felt uncomfortable with the jokes, so she went along with our decision. I predicted the comedian would make fun of us for leaving, and he did. "But who really cares?" I said to myself as we left the room.

I'm grateful for the example my friend set by leaving that night. He had the courage to act, and I don't know if I would have done the same thing had he not been there. Once he did the right thing, many others followed. Never underestimate the importance of friendship. Live your life so that you can be a role model to others, as Sam was to me.

Friends are one of the most essential parts of life, and choosing the right ones can help all of us progress spiritually. When we're with friends who share the same values and standards we do, we are more able to feel the Spirit, more able to distinguish between the views of the world and the views of our Father in Heaven. **NE**



AN EXAMPLE TO Dad!

There's a little more to the story. When Sam set an example for his friends, he didn't realize he was also setting an example for his dad.

Not too long afterward, Sam's father Scott was at a concert, sitting on the second row in the middle—prime seats. But he got a feeling that the performers were going to start saying bad things. He thought "I am sitting right in the very front and in the middle. Everyone will know why I am getting up and leaving."

But then the thought came to him, "If my son can get up and walk out of a comedy show then I can get up and walk out of a concert."

The performers *did* start saying inappropriate things, and Brother Featherstone *did* get up and leave. His son's example helped him to have the courage to do what was right.



GOING THE EXTRA

By Loran Cook

Jonathan Conger took on an Eagle Scout project that taught him that when you sow hard work, you reap blessings.



When his Scout leader asked Jonathan Conger, a priest in the Lundstrom Park First Ward, Logan Utah East Stake, if he wanted to plant and harvest a wheat field for his Eagle Scout project, Jonathan said, "Sure." Little did he know the immensity of the project before him. Only later did he realize how much he would have to rely on Heavenly Father and the community to help him achieve his goal.

Jonathan's Scoutmaster at the time, Edward Redd, first got the idea for the project while visiting the Cache Community Food Pantry. During his visit, Brother Redd asked what the pantry needed most, and they told him flour was always a much needed commodity.

When he first started thinking about Eagle project ideas,

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE CONGER FAMILY AND BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE



Jonathan had been planning to paint some benches at his local meetinghouse. Then Brother Redd told him about 10 acres of land he owned that hadn't been planted yet. He suggested to Jonathan that they should plant wheat on the land, have it milled, and donate the flour to the pantry as his Eagle Scout project.

"I didn't really think about how big a project it would be, but it sounded good," said Jonathan. Planting and harvesting a 10-acre field is not an easy job. Jonathan and Brother Redd discussed how to grow the wheat, take care of the field, harvest the wheat, and find a mill to grind it.

First on the list was finding seed. This was where the first of many people came to Jonathan's aid. A member of Jonathan's ward had planted wheat the previous year and

had a silo filled with seed. He offered to give Jonathan the seed for planting the field.

Planting Seed

Now that he had seed, Jonathan had to wait until April for the field to dry out enough to be ready for planting. Looking ahead to the harvest, they searched for a mill that would handle the grinding of the wheat, and they eventually found a local mill that agreed to help. Jonathan told them that sometime around September they would bring the wheat to be ground into flour.

To prepare for planting, Jonathan first had to arrange for the field to be leveled so the seed would fall on even ground. They were given permission to use a tractor to



BE WILLING TO WORK

Do you have an Eagle Scout or service project on the horizon? Are you looking for something to do? Jonathan offers this advice.

"Be open to doing something difficult. You don't need to always paint a park bench or put in a basketball hoop. Be ready to do whatever comes at you and do your best."

That's sound advice from a young man who is more at home playing the piano and preparing for medical school than pursuing a career as a wheat farmer.

level the field and pull the seed drill (used to plant the seeds). But the tractor broke. Luckily Brother Redd knew someone who could fix it.

"He took it home, fixed it, and brought it back to us," said Jonathan. "He didn't even hesitate. I told him what I was doing and asked him for help. He said, 'Sure. Anytime.'"

The next step was for Jonathan to organize for the field to be fertilized and then, in July, to be irrigated. This became a challenge when Jonathan realized the irrigating was not automated. The pipes had to be laid and moved by hand. Watering the field took three days.

"It was kind of troublesome," Jonathan said. "You set the pipes on the ground, and it was really muddy and gross because irrigating for a few days turns the field into a swamp." Even though it was hard work, Jonathan has fond memories of the fun he had irrigating. Fortunately the natural weather took care of the rest of the irrigation needs as it was one of the wettest springs the area had seen in a long time.

"We were really lucky when we planted. It rained right afterwards, and if we had waited any longer, the ground would have been too

wet again. Everything fit in just right."

Another set of challenges arrived with harvest time, but Jonathan found that when you're in service to a good cause, others are always willing to help. A week before harvest, Jonathan checked in with the flour mill and found that the person he had made all the arrangements with was on vacation for the next week and had not told anyone of the agreement. Now the mill did not have room to take his wheat until a later date. Also, they faced the task of harvesting the wheat with a small combine that would take them many hours.



Wheat to Those in Need

The mill made the effort to clear a space for the coming wheat, and the farmer who had donated the seed just happened to be passing by in his combine harvester when they were about to begin harvesting. He had been on his way to harvest his own field and decided to help out again, harvesting the field in under three hours. In the tradition of helping hands, another farmer lent a trailer to the project to store the wheat for a few days until the mill could receive it. Yet another person helped to store the flour after it had been packaged and set on pallets at the mill.

The 10-acre field produced 23,000 pounds of wheat, 20,000 of which was given to the mill to grind. The mill kept some of the flour as payment for processing the wheat, but finally Jonathan was given 5,400 pounds of flour, enough to bake approximately 5,400 loaves of bread, all of which was donated to the food pantry. The rest of the wheat was kept, cleaned, and sold to cover the costs of fertilizer and herbicides. More people donated time and resources to again store the wheat and then help in loading the flour at the Cache Community Food Pantry, which opened its doors after hours specifically to receive it.

Jonathan is happy with the service he provided, and the flour's delivery signified the end of his project. But visiting the pantry made him realize what he had achieved. He knew that what he had done was going to benefit a lot of people.

"It felt good to help those people, and I was just glad I could help in the little way I did," Jonathan said. The Eagle Scout project left a good feeling, and Jonathan knows that it couldn't have been done without a lot of help from family, fellow Scouts, and other people who donated time and energy.




Jonathan feels that Heavenly Father's help in particular was important.

"Obviously God played a big part in guiding us while we were doing this, because at times things didn't work out very well, but then they came together all of a sudden," Jonathan said. "It may just seem like luck, but I think God was watching, and He knew this was a good project and He wanted to help me."

Jonathan Conger isn't planning to grow more wheat in the future. He's more likely to be found playing the piano, thinking about medical school, and preparing for a mission. But he will always remember his Eagle project and what it taught him about the law of the harvest. **NE**

Jonathan's Eagle Scout project took a lot of planning, planting, and participation. In the end, he and others harvested 23,000 pounds of wheat. Once it was processed, Jonathan donated 5,400 pounds of flour to his local food pantry.



By Leah Derham-Boyce

MY DOUBLE

My parents divorced when I was young, and when I was five, my father had to return to his home in the United States.

Meanwhile, back in England, my mother met the sister missionaries and was baptised into the Church. Unfortunately, she became less active and moved away with my sister and me.

Then, by accident, one Friday evening in the summer of 2004, we saw the missionaries—elders this time—to whom I'm still grateful for following the Spirit's promptings leading them into a town in the middle of nowhere. They'd been inspired to come to us and were at the end of a very lonely, unsuccessful, disheartening day when we saw them.

Of course, my mother knew very well that young men in suits with badges could only be the Mormon missionaries, so she began talking to them. They gave us weekly lessons in our home, and we began attending church. The following March I was baptised. I have never regretted that choice, and as the only LDS teen in my town, I'm having to set the best example I can to show everyone what Mormons are *really* like!

I still visit my dad in Tennessee every year or so and have been able to attend church while there. That's where the double-life comes in—two families, two wards, two cultures, and yet only one true Church!

I find both families a wonderful strength to me, regardless of the fact that the English part are the only Church members. I find you can learn so much from your families about many things, especially because everyone has the light of Christ. It's great to be able to see that natural goodness manifest in people.

*I found the Church
comfortably the same
in both my worlds.*

DOUBLE LIFE

It's also great to see the similarities between both of my wards. It brings great joy to my heart to see that the amazing amount of strength and integrity the youth have is the same across the world. I think that the cultivation of such strength and ability to keep your standards is largely because of the Church Educational System and youth programmes. In my three years of being taught seminary by my mother in my own home, I've been strengthened greatly, learned about myself, gained some much-wanted knowledge about the scriptures, but most importantly, I've learned about the Saviour. The same goes for Mutual, Sunday School, and the Young Women lessons on Sunday (in *both* wards). They have all brought me immensely closer to Him. I love my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and my glorious, magnificent Father in Heaven, and I *know* They love me.

I occasionally have doubts and wish to be "normal" sometimes, but I love the gospel, and I will never abandon my Saviour. And I pray that all youth may feel the same. The Lord loves you. He atoned for you. No matter what circumstances you live in, if you remember Them and "let virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly; then shall [your] confidence wax strong in the presence of God" (D&C 121:45). My testimony is that the Saviour lives and that Joseph Smith was a true Prophet. **NE**

Editor's note: British spellings have been preserved.



The

POPULAR

*Could I really walk away from
the popular crowd?*

Table

By Meredith Stockman-Broadbent

In elementary school, I always heard about the “popular” kids. Being popular wasn’t something you did, it was who you were—and by the beginning of my first year in middle school, I was at the top of the middle school popularity chain. I hung out with the popular kids in the popular part of the hallway, had the same popular brand clothes, and most importantly, ate lunch with them at the exclusive Popular Table in the cafeteria.

The Popular Table had the perfect location, right by the lunch line but far away from the teachers. Even better, it was the only table where boys and girls sat together. I felt so cool as I sat with them, and we talked about our TV shows and our clothes.

But one thing was just a little off—these popular kids weren’t really that nice. When I was with them I felt popular, but I didn’t feel happy. Sometimes we all gossiped or made fun of others. There was a lot of swearing and talking about things I knew were not appropriate, and I didn’t feel like they cared about me. My “friends” rarely did anything really nice for me, and eventually I began to feel like a doormat.

“You should try to make some new friends,” my older sister said. “By the time those kids get to high school, they’ll probably be drinking and maybe even doing drugs. That’s what happened to a lot the popular kids from my middle school.”

I was shocked. “These are my friends,” I thought, “and

they’re not going to do anything that would bring me down. Besides, even if they aren’t that nice, at least they still let me hang out with them.”

One day, as I was walking to my lunch table, I saw Cindy, a girl from church who was in the grade above me. She sat on the complete opposite side of the cafeteria.

“Hey there!” Cindy called to me. “Do you want to sit with me and my friends?”

“Ah . . . no thanks,” I said, “I have my own lunch table.”

But one day, at the Popular Table, one of the girls was rude to me. She hurt my feelings, and I was tired of feeling like my friends just tolerated me. But where else could I go?

Then I remembered Cindy’s offer.

“All right,” I thought. “I’m going to sit with Cindy. But just today.”

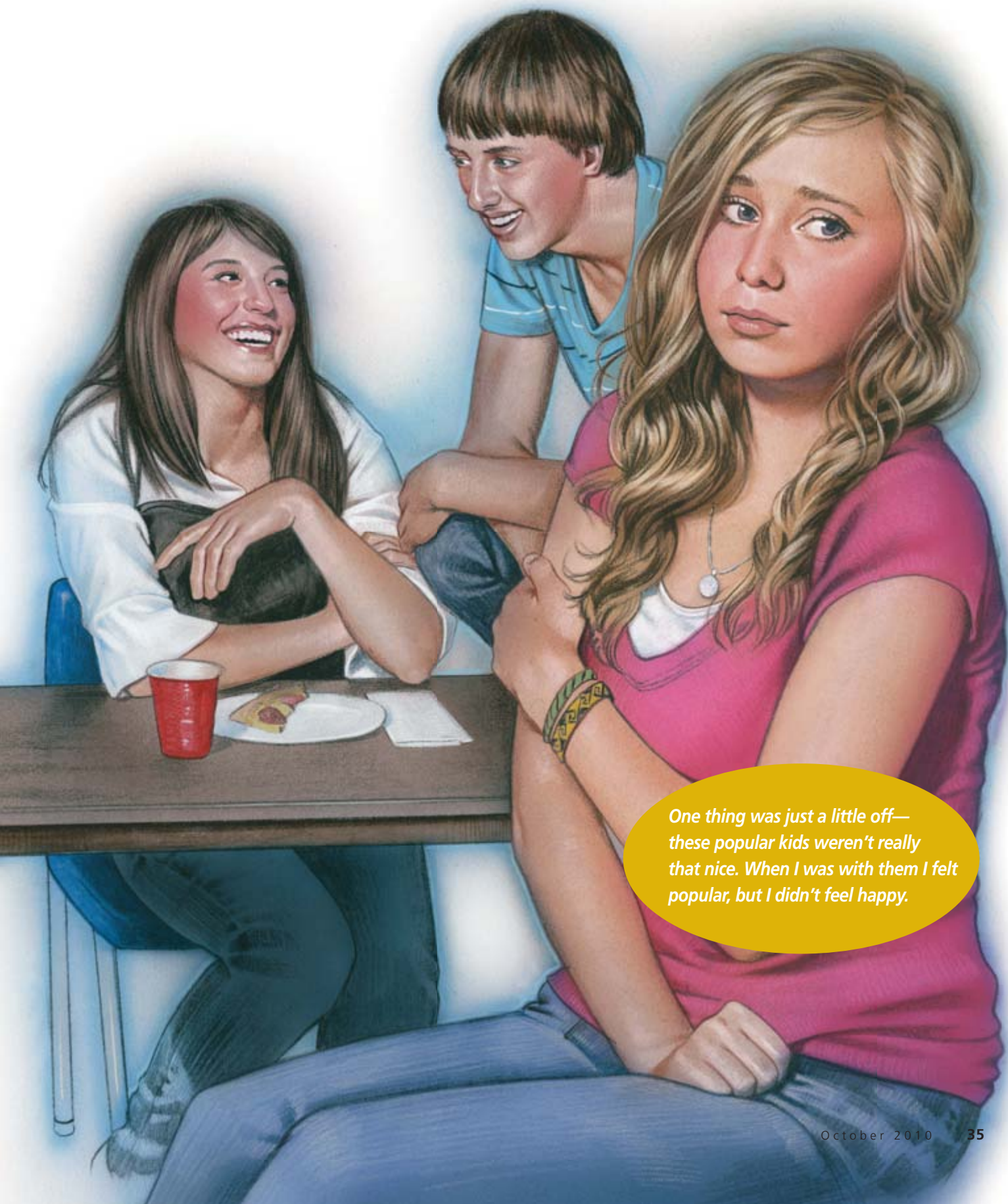
I picked up my lunch tray and tried to hold back the tears as I walked away from the best table in the cafeteria.

Cindy saw me, smiled, and said, “Hey, Meredith! Want to sit with us?”

I breathed a sigh of relief. “Sure,” I said and sat down at her table.

Cindy and her friends welcomed me to their table and were really nice. It was a completely different feeling from sitting with the popular kids. I was surprised. Not only were these girls nicer, but we also had similar standards, and that made it easier to go through lunch without having to listen to swearing or crude stories.

I decided to eat with them the next day, and the day



One thing was just a little off—these popular kids weren't really that nice. When I was with them I felt popular, but I didn't feel happy.

after that, until eating with Cindy and her friends became routine. I was still nice to the popular kids, and we got along fine in class, but I stopped hanging out with them in the hallways.

One day, at the end of the year, Cindy and her friends had a field trip and were gone during lunch. I walked over to the popular side of the cafeteria and sat with my old friends again. During lunch, there was all the old swearing, telling crude jokes, and making fun of people, but now they were also talking about drugs and immoral activities. I couldn't believe how much they had changed over the course of the year, and I was so grateful I had moved to the other side of the cafeteria when I did.


My sister was right; their standards were different from mine, and it would have become more difficult to follow the counsel of the prophets and stay close to the Lord if they had been my only friends. That year I made friends who were not of my faith but who shared a lot of the same standards and made it easy for me to practice my

beliefs. They stayed my friends all the way through high school.

I'm grateful for my friend Cindy, who invited me to sit with her, and to the Lord for giving me courage to change lunch tables. It seemed like such a big deal, but having friends with different standards was an even bigger deal.

President Thomas S. Monson counseled, "Friends help to determine your future. You will tend to be like them and to be found where they choose to go. . . . The friends you choose will either help or hinder your success" ("In Harm's Way," *Ensign*, May 1998, 46).

The Lord blessed me to find friends who were fun, encouraging, and shared my standards. Trading being "popular" for being happy was definitely worth it. **NE**



I was surprised. Not only were these girls nicer, but we also had similar standards, and that made it easier to go through lunch without having to listen to swearing or crude stories.

NEmore

For some good advice about friendship, read the Friends section of *For the Strength of Youth* ([2001], 12–13).

DON'T LET SATAN STRING YOU ALONG

You're not free unless you're knot-free.
(See 2 Nephi 28:22.)

VOLUNTEER, MISSIONARY, AND SCHOLAR

“As the only Latter-day Saint teenager at my school I tend to stand out,” says Tania Jane of Houston Texas. “But I use that as an advantage to let people see that I am different and ask questions that will eventually lead to a discussion about the gospel.” Something else unique about Tania is that when she graduated from high school this past year she did so with an Associates Degree from college.

Tania Jane also volunteers at the local YMCA. She loves teaching, interacting, and just joking around with the children there.

When obstacles stand in her way Tania works to overcome them. “This past year was a challenge for me to go to seminary,” she says. “My ward did not have seminary classes because there were not enough students. I was the only one.” She was finally able to find a stake home study seminary class. She says participating this year was a lot harder than her first year, but it was definitely worth the effort.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN JONES

BY THE NUMBERS

2,001
Number of subscribers who have joined the New Era e-mail group. If you'd like to join our e-mail list and get regular NEmail newsletters, just say so in an e-mail to newera@ldschurch.org.

PERSONAL PROGRESS X 3

In May, 2009, Kelsey Briggs of Bend, Oregon, received her Young Womanhood Recognition at the same time as her grandmother, Jeanie Bean. Then, just under a year later, Kelsey's mother, Cindy Briggs, received her recognition: it was three generations of women in the same family in the same ward growing spiritually—and growing together.

Kelsey, who fulfilled her Good Works project by serving about two hours a week for two years as a “big sister” at the local Boys & Girls club, said, “This program has been enlightening for all three of us. It's a lot of work, but the rewards are great.”

Kelsey's mother, who is a Young Women leader in her ward, said, “When I received the new materials and booklets last year I was determined to finish up the Personal Progress program, not only to satisfy my own objective but to set an example for the girls I'm privileged to work with in our ward, and keep pace with my own daughter and mother.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY VAUGHN R. BRIGGS



“**LEARN WHAT THE LORD EXPECTS OF YOU, MAKE A PLAN TO DO IT, ACT ON YOUR PLAN WITH DILIGENCE, AND THEN SHARE WITH OTHERS HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CHANGED YOU AND BLESSED OTHERS.**”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency “Act in All Diligence,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 60.

THE CHURCH IN USA—ALASKA



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON WARNER

The first members of the Church came to Alaska with the gold rush in 1898. One of them, Dr. Edward G. Cannon, was a 79-year-old convert. In his attempt to establish the Church in Alaska, he maintained a movable “tabernacle” that he transported from settlement to settlement. The first official congregation in Alaska was organized in 1938, and by 1961, there were 3,050 members there.

Church growth continued with Alaska’s population growth in the late 1960s. Growth was spurred by extensive rebuilding following earthquake damage and by an oil discovery. In 1981, the Church built several special Church buildings designed for the Arctic weather.

One of the first smaller Church temples was built and dedicated in Anchorage in 1999.

Here are a few facts about the Church today in Alaska:

Membership	31,268
Missions	1
Temples	1
Wards & Branches	82
Family History Centers	21

HYMN VOCABULARY #6

Do you know the meaning of that hymn you just sang? Choose the correct definition for each of the following words that can be found in one or more of our hymns.

- A. Fraught (*Hymns*, no. 5)
 - 1. Steam or smoke
 - 2. To battle or wrestle
 - 3. Full of or filled with
 - 4. Tightly wound
- B. Approbation (*Hymns*, no. 292)
 - 1. Exhaustion
 - 2. Surety or conviction
 - 3. Restrictions or rules
 - 4. Approval or praise
- C. Reposes (*Hymns*, no. 340)
 - 1. Lies down in rest or in death
 - 2. Stands up straight and tall
 - 3. Clarifies or explains
 - 4. Takes back or confiscate
- D. Vex (*Hymns*, no. 147)
 - 1. Having five sides
 - 2. Stamina and strength
 - 3. Build up
 - 4. Cause distress to
- E. Resplendent (*Hymns*, no. 87, 248)
 - 1. Attractive and impressive
 - 2. Joyous
 - 3. Expensive or costly
 - 4. Repaired or reconditioned

Answers: A:3, B:4, C:1, D:4, E:1

GOOD COURAGE

“At a Young Women activity we made these necklaces to wear as a reminder of this year’s Mutual theme, ‘Be strong and of a good courage’ ” (Joshua 1:9).
Nicole Cunningham, Davenport First Ward, Davenport Iowa Stake
 PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE CUNNINGHAM

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

Exodus 14:14 This is my favorite scripture, because it’s short yet so powerful! If we are on the Lord’s side, he will help us fight our battles!

Lauren M., age 17, Idaho, USA

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Go to newera.lds.org and click on Submit Your Material.

Cultivate Virtuous Traits

By Bishop H. David Burton

Presiding Bishop

*Virtuous
traits form
the foundation
of a Christian
life and are
the outward
manifestation
of the inner
man.*

integrity
humility
charity
spirituality
accountability
civility
fidelity



As I neared my 12th birthday, there were several requirements to be completed before I could graduate from Primary. One was to recite the thirteen Articles of Faith in the prescribed order. The first twelve articles were relatively easy, but the thirteenth was much more difficult. It was remembering the order of the virtues that presented the challenge. Thanks to a Primary teacher who was patient and persistent, I finally completed the memorization. . . .

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

The Ity Virtues

I wish to speak about personal traits we call virtues. Virtuous traits form the foundation of a Christian life and are the outward manifestation of the inner man. The spelling in English of many individual virtues concludes with the letters *ity*: integrity, humility, charity, spirituality, accountability, civility, fidelity, and the list goes on and on. Relying on literary license, I refer to the virtues ending in *ity* as the “ity” virtues. “Ity” is a suffix that means quality, state, or degree of being.

We need only look around us to see what is taking place in our communities to realize that personal traits of virtue are in a steep decline. Reflect on the behavior of drivers on crowded highways; road rage happens all too often. Civility is all but absent in our political discourse. As countries around the world face

financial and economic challenges, fidelity and honesty seem to have been replaced with greed and graft. A visit to a high school will often subject you to crude language and immodest dress. Some athletes display poor sportsmanship and seldom show humility unless publicly exposed for legal or moral infidelities. A large segment of our population feel little personal responsibility for their own temporal well-being. Some in financial distress blame bankers and lenders for loaning sums to satisfy insatiable wants rather than affordable needs. On occasion our generosity in support of good causes wanes as our appetite to acquire more than we need prevails.

Be Firmly Fixed

We need not be a part of the virtue malaise that is penetrating and infecting society. If we follow the world in abandoning Christian-centered virtues, the consequences may be disastrous. Individual faith and fidelity, which have eternal consequences, will diminish. Family solidarity and spirituality will be adversely impacted. Religious influence in society will be lessened, and the rule of law will be challenged and perhaps even set aside. The seedbed for all that plagues the natural man will have been planted, to the sheer delight of Satan.

We need to stand tall and be firmly fixed in perpetuating Christlike virtues, even the “ity” virtues, in our everyday lives. Teaching virtuous traits begins in the home with parents who care and set the example. A good parental example encourages emulation; a poor example gives license to the children to disregard the parents’ teachings and even expand the poor example. A hypocritical example destroys credibility. . . .



*We need
to stand
tall and be firmly
fixed in perpetuating
Christlike virtues
in our everyday lives.*

Virtuous traits, especially the “ity” virtues, must never be forgotten or set aside.

Our 15-year-old grandson, Ben, is a big-time ski enthusiast, having competed in several meets and done very well. Prior to one such competition in Idaho, his parents reminded him that his grades in school would determine whether or not he would be able to compete. A condominium in Sun Valley, Idaho, was reserved, his grandparents were planning to attend, and Ben was feverishly trying to achieve the lofty academic goals both he and his parents expected. However, at the end of the day, he fell just short of his goal. Ben missed the ski meet and lost points toward qualifying for the Junior Olympics, but Ben gained a valuable appreciation for responsibility and accountability. By remaining steadfast, parents so very often suffer and agonize more than the children they endeavor to teach.

President James E. Faust suggested that integrity is the mother of many virtues. He noted that integrity can be defined “as a firm adherence to a code of moral values.” He also suggested that “integrity is the light that shines from a disciplined conscience. It is the strength of duty within us” (“Integrity, the Mother of Many Virtues,” in *Speaking Out on Moral Issues* [1998], 61, 62). It is difficult for a person to display virtuous traits if he or she lacks integrity. Without integrity, honesty is often forgotten. If integrity is absent, civility is impaired. If integrity is not important, spirituality is difficult to maintain. In Old Testament times, Moses counseled the children of Israel that “if a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (Numbers 30:2).

President Thomas S. Monson reminded us a few years ago that “most people will not commit desperate acts if they have been taught

that dignity, honesty and integrity are more important than revenge or rage; if they understand that respect and kindness ultimately give one a better chance at success” (“Family Values in a Violent Society,” *Deseret News*, Jan. 16, 1994, A12, as quoted in “Finding Peace,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 4).

You may have heard about the *Lost Battalion* of World War I, the ten *lost* tribes of Israel, or perhaps the “lost boys” in J. M. Barrie’s play *Peter Pan*. You may also be acquainted with the album by Michael McLean entitled *The Forgotten Carols*. Virtuous traits, especially the “ity” virtues, must never be forgotten or set aside. If forgotten or set aside, they will inevitably become the “lost virtues.” If virtues are lost, families will be measurably weakened, individual faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will soften, and important eternal relationships may be jeopardized.

Traits of virtue broadly practiced can loosen Satan’s firm grip on society and derail his insidious plan to capture the hearts, minds, and spirits of mortal men.

Now is the time for us to join in rescuing and preserving that which is “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy.” As we allow virtue to garnish our thoughts unceasingly and we cultivate virtuous traits in our personal lives, our communities and institutions will be improved, our children and families will be strengthened, and faith and integrity will bless individual lives.

I testify and declare that our Heavenly Father expects His children to exercise integrity, civility, fidelity, charity, generosity, morality, and all the “ity” virtues. May we have the *humility* to take the *opportunity* to act upon our *responsibility* to demonstrate our *ability* to do so. **NE**

From an October 2009 general conference address.

If you've already received your Young Womanhood Recognition, one way to keep progressing is by helping other young women with their Personal Progress. This is called mentoring, and it's easy. First, be a friend. Second, show and teach. Remember to work under the direction of your leaders, and you can be eligible to earn an Honor Bee.

Here are some ideas you can use to help another young woman:

- Study a gospel principle together, and share with her how living that principle strengthens your faith. Encourage her to live that principle or to select one that would help her strengthen her faith. (See Faith Value Experience no. 3.)
- Help plan a ward speech, music, dance, or drama festival for your ward. Specifically plan to help one young woman complete a Personal Progress requirement. (See Individual Worth Value Experience no. 5.)
- Is there a skill or talent that you could teach another young woman, like cooking, conducting music, or changing a tire? Help her find a way to display her new skill. (See Knowledge Value Experience no. 2.)

- Help another young women understand the scriptures in each value experience and bear testimony of how this understanding has made a difference in your life.

- Talk with her about the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. Each of you choose a standard to improve in your life. After three weeks, talk with each other about your progress on that standard, and then share with your families, class, or a Young Women leader what you both have done. (See Choice and Accountability Value Experience no. 2.)
- Visit with a young woman to help her identify what type of service she could give to fulfill Good Works Value Experience no. 6. Help her with planning and serve with her.
- Help a young woman with special needs in your ward to work on her Personal Progress. Be a friend to her and help her read the scriptures or plan projects.
- See page 83 of your Personal Progress book for more ideas of what you can do to keep progressing. **NE**

NEmore

For more on mentoring, read Elaine S. Dalton, “Bee a Mentor,” (*Church News*, June 19, 2010, 15; available at ldschurchnews.com).



CHECKING FOR MESSAGES

Shortly after waking up, I turn my computer on to check my e-mail. My morning continues, and just like putting on my watch, I slip my cell phone into my pocket to keep it handy all day in case someone calls or sends me a text message. Later, while eating my lunch, I check my e-mail again and spend time checking blogs and other Internet sites that help keep me in touch with friends and family. Throughout the day, when I have time, I check my e-mail and send and text messages to friends and family. Just before going to sleep, I check my e-mail one last time. Each day this pattern continues. I spend countless hours checking for messages.

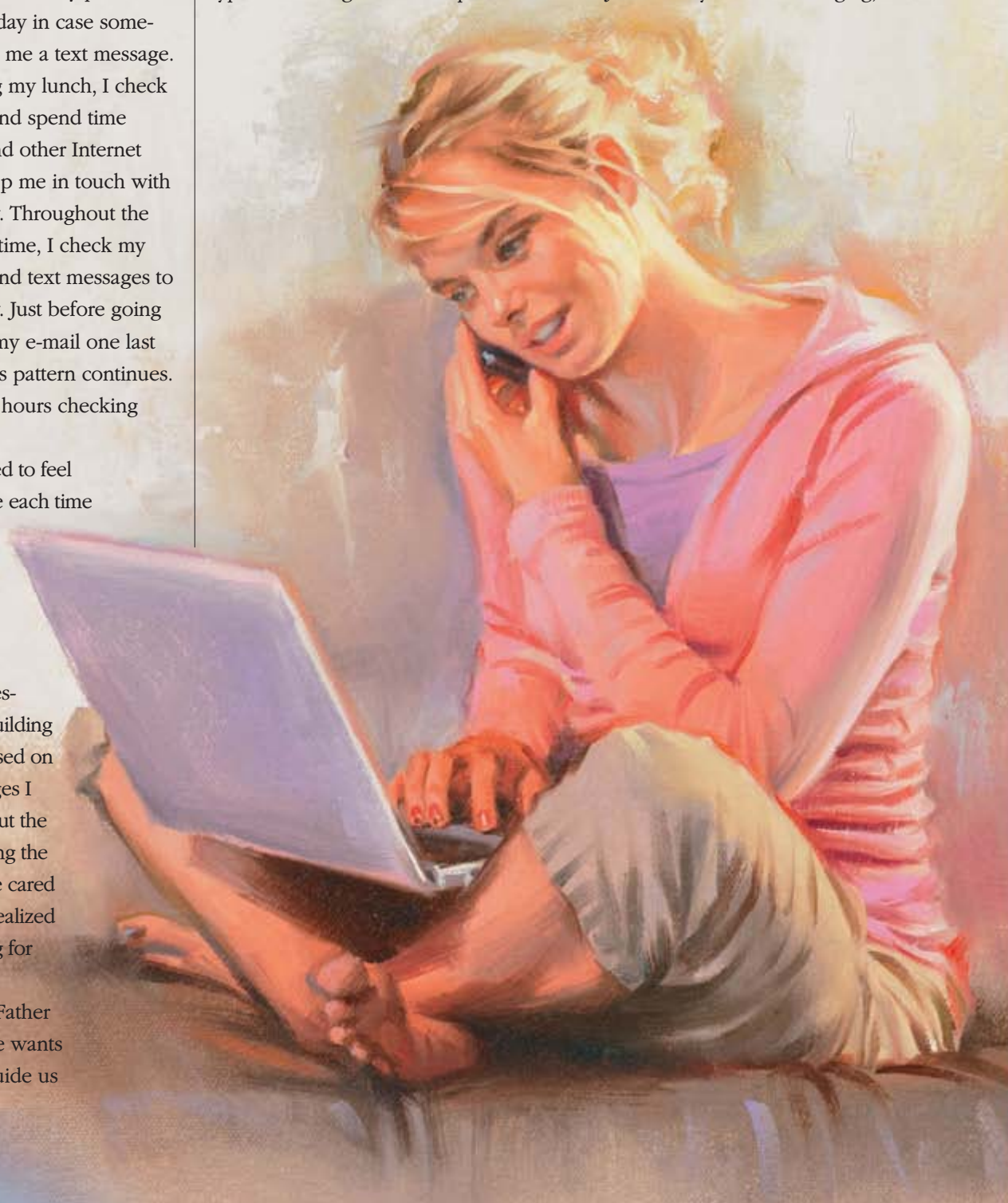
One day I started to feel depressed because each time I checked for messages, there was nothing. I realized that I had started to not only crave receiving messages, but I was building my self-esteem based on how many messages I received throughout the day. I began fighting the feeling that no one cared about me. I then realized I was not checking for the right message.

Our Heavenly Father cares about us. He wants to teach us and guide us

throughout this life so that we might live worthy to return to live with Him someday. To help us make it back home to Him, we have the Holy Ghost to lead and guide us. Through the Holy Ghost we receive guidance and direction from our loving Father. But how often do we check for those types of messages? Do we spend as

much time in sincere prayer as we do checking our e-mail? Do we read the scriptures more than we read blogs? How often throughout the day do we allow our hearts to cry out to our Father in Heaven? Surely each time we turn our hearts to Him it is much more worthwhile than any text message.

Just like any form of messaging, it



is not only about sending messages; it is also about receiving them. Are we checking for messages from our Father? We have been blessed with so many ways of receiving messages from Him. Prayer, scripture study, and quiet pondering are simple yet powerful ways that we can receive these messages.

I realized that I should spend more time checking for messages from my Father in Heaven. Each day He is waiting for a chance to remind me that I am His daughter and He loves me. He will help and guide me throughout my life, and He will never leave me alone. Those are messages truly worth receiving again and again.

Julie Ann B., Utah, USA

AVOIDING MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITIES

When I was 14 years old, my sisters and I were the only members of the Church to attend our school in England. People began to discover that I was a Mormon, and it was not uncommon to have jokes or weird looks directed at me. While I did get questions, they were limited to rumor and gossip, and I soon grew tired of the negative attention. A lot of students simply avoided me. One girl in particular seemed quite wary of me. One day I bumped into her in the hall and felt that I should talk to her, but she would not talk, and without saying anything, she rushed away. This gave me the false resolve that church and school

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE

I live in Oklahoma, where there are many missionary opportunities. One such experience happened recently with my friend and my English teacher. Our English teacher assigns different journal topics every Monday, and we can choose to read them aloud on Friday.

One week, my teacher chose the topic “If you could have someone famous or well-known raise you, who would it be?” My friend chose Brigham Young, and I chose Thomas S. Monson. We are the only Mormons in our grade, so nobody else knew who we were talking about. My friend read hers aloud, but I had no intention of reading mine. Then, I felt the Spirit prompt me that I needed to read mine.

After we both read our journal entries, our teacher started asking us questions about our Church. We talked

were two different worlds and should never meet.

A year later an American family moved into my ward, and their children attended my school. One of them, Annie, was in my year and soon became quite popular. I started seeing students from my school appearing at ward youth activities. One evening at a joint Young Men and Young Women activity, I saw the girl who had always avoided me. She was a friend of Annie’s, and she sheepishly came over to me. It turned out the reason she had avoided me was she had been



about our beliefs for about 20 minutes. Normally I would have been nervous, but I felt the Spirit so strongly. My teacher seemed interested.

The next week, I gave my teacher a copy of the Book of Mormon. I put a copy of the Articles of Faith inside, along with a brief summary of the Book of Mormon. She said that she felt ignorant because most kids can say what they believe, but they only know because their parents told them. “But you know what you believe,” she said, “and you know why.”

I felt the Spirit confirm that because I had listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, I had had a missionary experience that I would not have had otherwise.

Natalee T., Oklahoma, USA

told some outrageous stories about the Church, so she was afraid of talking to me. She ended up coming to seminary and taking the missionary discussions.

I realised that I had been wrong in keeping my two lives separate. Annie was the example that made me understand that I had missed so many opportunities for missionary work. I felt ashamed. If I had been more diligent, maybe I could have been a better example to those who might have been looking for the truth only the Church could provide.

Loran C., England

A MOMENT OF CHOICE

One cold winter morning in Wisconsin, as I was running late to early morning seminary, I came across a car that was stopped in the middle of the road. In a rush, I waited impatiently for the car to move. With the car only a few yards from the stop sign, I assumed that the driver had stopped prematurely. When the car continued not to move I passed the car and went on to the church building a few blocks away.

As I drove I wondered why the car stopped in such a strange place. I thought that perhaps the person was lost, but that didn't feel right. It occurred to me that maybe they were having car troubles. I was running late and rationalized that someone else would surely help them. To this day I could not tell you why I was so

anxious not to be late, but I can tell you, that in the moment I felt so rushed, I failed to recognize the promptings of the Spirit to stop and help that driver. It was small, nothing more than a brief thought. Seminary was a good place to be going. However, there was a choice that would have been better.

On my way home from seminary I once again was confronted by the same car sitting exactly where I had left it. This time I stopped. I got out of my car, and I looked at the driver. I was shocked and disappointed in myself for not listening to inspiration. In the driver's seat of that car was an elderly woman. My heart ached like it never had before as I realized the severity of that one missed moment. I could have offered to help her push her car to the side, helped her find a tow truck, or offered to let her sit in the warmth of the church building while we figured out what to do with her car. In the end someone else had already helped her find a tow truck that

was due to be there any moment.

There are often times I reflect on the moment that I was too rushed to recognize that opportunity to help one of my fellow sisters. The lesson was clear and as vivid today as it was on that early winter morning.

There are times in all of our lives when we fail to listen to the promptings of the Spirit. Sometimes we find ourselves distracted by things of the world, and sometimes we choose a good choice instead of the better choice. We cannot change the choices we have made in the past. What we can do is change what we do in our next moment of decision. The promptings of the Spirit are not always as forceful as the sound of thunder, they are not always as clear as the scriptures we read or the counsel of the prophets, but often these promptings come as small whispers of encouragement or seemingly inconsequential thoughts. There is nothing more disappointing than the knowledge that our selfish choice has cost us an opportunity to help one of our Heavenly Father's children. It was a lesson that was painful and one I will not forget.

Anna T., Illinois, USA

Instant Messages features personal experiences, insights into favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to us by going to **newera.lds.org** and clicking on Submit Your Material.

You can also e-mail it to **[**\[ldschurch.org\]\(http://ldschurch.org\)** or send it to:](mailto:newera@</p></div><div data-bbox=)**

New Era, Instant Messages

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Please limit submissions to 400 words or fewer.

They may be edited for length and clarity.



"Elder Frank, didn't you hear that the ward Halloween party was a costume party?"

"That's why I'm going as Elder Bates."

"And I'm going as Elder Frank."



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"Girls are like text messages. Half of the time they make no sense to me!"



RYAN STOKER

"Hi, Bishop! We brought you 10 percent of our Halloween candy!"



KEVIN BECKSTROM

"You didn't tell me that you had a curfew."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

NEmore
See a different
Extra Smile
online every
week at
newera.lds.org.

I LEARNED SOMETHING NEW

I enjoyed the article "What's the Deal with Boys/Girls?" in the April 2010 issue. As I read through what the girls wonder, it helped me understand why girls act the way they do—in a good way, of course. Under what the guys wonder, I have often found myself asking those same questions. Because of the girls' responses, I now know what to do in different kinds of situations with meeting and dating girls. Even though I have seven sisters and often get advice from them, I still learned something new from your article.

Matt F., Wyoming

PEACE AND COMFORT

Thank you for putting "General Conference Is for You" in the May 2010 issue. I really liked President Uchtdorf's talk on "love and patience." It brought me peace and comfort.

Caitlin H., Idaho

POWERFUL PRAYER

I appreciated the article "Strength to Get on My Knees" (June 2010). I have had many times in my life where I have gone through struggles and trials that are so huge that I have no idea if I can make it through. Just when I am about to give up and feel like there is no hope for me, I realize that I can get down on my knees and pray for advice and strength.

Madison G., Washington

A NECESSARY LINK

I learned recently that the road to becoming a disciple is

*I realize
that I can get down
on my knees
and pray for advice
and strength.*

tougher than anything I have ever done, not to mention being sometimes confusing and often overwhelming. That's why I am so glad for the *New Era*. An article provided a necessary link in a chain of events that deepened my faith and commitment, and my life has been changed for the better in a way I didn't even know was possible.

David Z.

TEAM SPIRIT

I read the article "Team Spirit," and I understand how they feel. I am 12 years old and play baseball. During good and bad games we have felt good and bad team spirit. A bad spirit enters when someone gets mad at another person, and it affects the whole team.



A good spirit is felt when we all get along and encourage each other. I really enjoy that feeling.

Mitchell S., Utah

HELP FOR TOUGH TIMES

Thank you for putting the story "The Miracle I Needed" in the February 2010 issue. I had surgery for scoliosis at age 12, when I was in the sixth grade. It was so wonderful to hear about someone else who went through the same thing I did. I know that Heavenly Father helped us get through a hard time in our lives. He helped us to recover fast and to come out of it stronger than we were before. Heavenly Father is by our side when we go through the trials of life. After reading that story, I realized that I am not alone.

Lexi B., Utah

I recently read the article "Wearing Millicent" in the July 2005 *New Era*. I also wore a similar back brace when I was growing up, and I had corrective surgery to fix the problem. I worried that my problems would hold me back while serving a mission. It did not, and I am now serving in the Anchorage Alaska Mission, a very physically demanding mission.

Elder Daniel L., Alaska

Editor's note: You can find articles from past issues at our Web site, newera.lds.org.

We love hearing from you. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking Submit Your Material.

Or you can e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org or write to New Era, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024.

Against the Grain

By Jessica Goodfellow

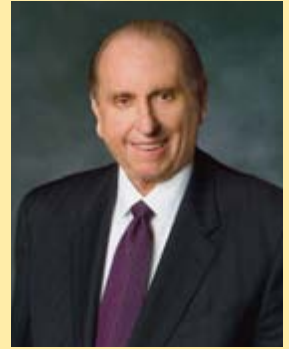
Tapered tree fingernails
scraping against the blackboard sky.
The sound is so lonely;
The scene is so real.



WHAT'S ONLINE

Why is it important to serve others?

Hear what President Thomas S. Monson has to say by going to **LDS.org** and clicking on Mormon Messages. Then look for the video, "Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?"



Want to learn more about the Church in India? If you liked this month's article about India, you may also enjoy a radio program about the Church there. Go to **radio.lds.org**, and check the schedule for Into All the World.



Heard about Mormon Messages for Youth? It's an official Church channel you can access at **youtube.com/MormonMessagesYouth**.

What about the New Era online? This month at **NewEra.lds.org** and **youth.lds.org** you'll find videos based on *New Era* articles, answers to gospel questions, cartoons, podcasts, scripture helps, Mormonads, music, and experiences from youth just like you.

