

THE

New Era

OCTOBER 2013

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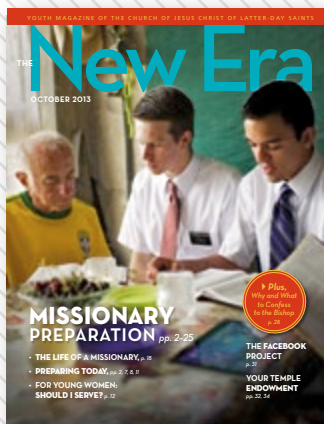
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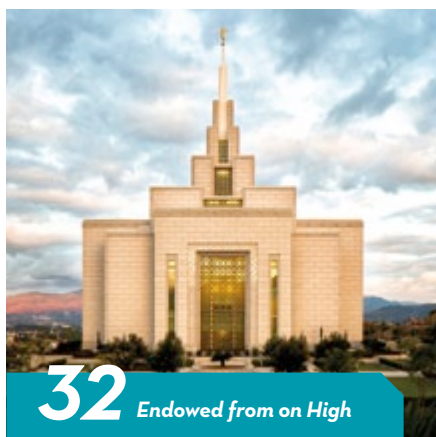
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BECOMING A **PREACH MY GOSPEL** MISSIONARY



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

*You can do this! The Lord
you represent and serve
knows you can do this.
I know you can do this.*

An Apostle is first, foremost, and always a missionary. For that reason, I am especially pleased to address you as fellow servants in this magnificent latter-day work.

WHAT IS A **PREACH MY GOSPEL** MISSIONARY?

A *Preach My Gospel* missionary is a servant of the Lord, called by prophecy and authorized by the laying on of hands, who proclaims the Savior's everlasting and restored gospel in His way (see D&C 50:13–14, 17–24; D&C 68:1).

The overarching purpose of a

missionary described in *Preach My Gospel* is to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”¹

The sacred responsibility to proclaim authoritatively the gospel and administer the saving ordinances has been in operation since Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden and will continue until “the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”²

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME PREACH MY GOSPEL MISSIONARIES

I want to discuss five basic requirements for becoming *Preach My Gospel* missionaries.

REQUIREMENT #1: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand that they serve and represent Jesus Christ.

Preach My Gospel missionaries know and understand whom they represent, why they serve, and what they are to do. Full-time missionaries are called to serve and properly set apart as servants and representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. We bear witness of His name and of the reality, divinity, and mission of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (see D&C 133:37).

We love the Lord. We serve Him. We follow Him. We represent Him.

His purposes must be our purposes. His interests should be our interests. His work should be our work. His ways should be our ways. His will increasingly should become our will.

As representatives of the Redeemer, we preach the fundamental doctrines and principles of His restored gospel simply and clearly. We do not present personal opinions or speculation. We proclaim and testify of simple restored truth in the Lord's way and by the power of His Spirit.

Preach My Gospel missionaries understand that the responsibility



to represent the Savior and to bear testimony of Him never ends. Please remember Him in all that you think, in all that you do, and in all that you strive to become, and represent Him appropriately to all of Heavenly Father's children with whom you interact now and always.

REQUIREMENT #2: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries are worthy.

An essential prerequisite to becoming *Preach My Gospel* missionaries is personal worthiness before the Savior.

Let me state several simple truths

just as clearly as I know how.

- We are authorized representatives of the Redeemer and Savior of the world.
- We are called to declare His restored and everlasting gospel.
- We cannot be stained with the spots of the world and authoritatively represent Him and act with power in His holy name.
- We cannot help others to overcome the bondage of sin if we ourselves are entangled in sin (see D&C 88:86).
- We cannot help others learn to repent if we ourselves have not learned to repent properly and completely.
- We can proclaim and preach with power only that which we are striving to become.
- We will be held accountable before God for our righteous desires and worthiness to act as His agents.

We are not required presently to be perfect. But we are commanded to be clean and to walk uprightly before the Redeemer of Israel. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42).

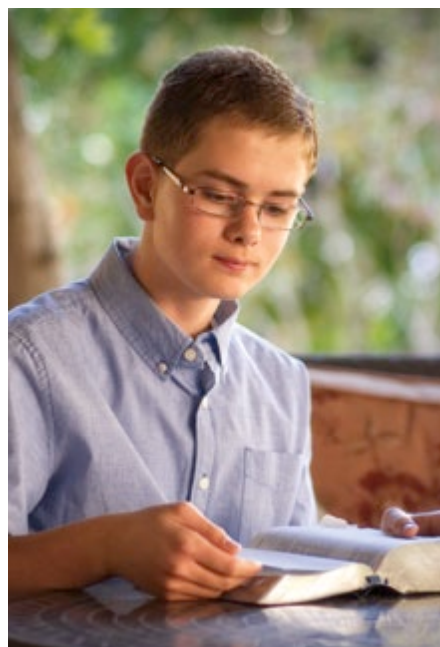
Repentance is a principle of hope and healing—not of discouragement and despair. Repentance indeed is humbling—but not frightening. Repentance is simultaneously demanding and comforting, rigorous and soothing. Repentance is a

priceless gift made possible through the Atonement of Him whom we love, serve, and follow.

Even if you have committed serious sins, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, you have been or can again be made clean and worthy.

There are youth who yet need fully to repent. The time is now. Please, please, please do not procrastinate the day of your repentance.

There are youth who have repented and are continuing to repent and who wonder if they have done all that is necessary to be accepted of the Lord (see D&C 97:8). Please remember, the Lord requires you to be clean but not perfect. The Holy Ghost operating again in your life is the surest indicator of forgiveness by the Lord because “the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24). And recognize that



the mandate to “forgive all men” (D&C 64:10) includes forgiving yourself.

Preach My Gospel missionaries are covenant-honoring and commandment-obeying disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please always remember Him and be pure and worthy to represent Him.

REQUIREMENT #3: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries treasure up the words of eternal life.

I invite you to “treasure up in your minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85). Treasuring up the words of eternal life is more than merely studying or memorizing, just as “feasting upon the word[s] of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20; see also 2 Nephi 32:3) is more than simply sampling or snacking. Treasuring up suggests to me focusing and working, exploring and absorbing, pondering and praying, applying and learning, valuing and appreciating, and enjoying and relishing.

Recall how the sons of Mosiah—four truly remarkable missionaries named Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—“had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were

men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently” (Alma 17:2).

These valiant missionaries truly treasured up continually the words of eternal life. They did not neglect or simply go through the motions of individual and companion scripture study. Spiritual knowledge and understanding penetrated deep into their own souls, and the doctrines and principles of the gospel were confirmed in their hearts as true by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As representatives of the Savior, you and I have the ongoing responsibility to work diligently and to implant in our hearts and minds the fundamental doctrines and principles of the restored gospel, especially from the Book of Mormon. As we do so, the promised blessing is that the Holy Ghost will “bring all things to [our] remembrance” (John 14:26) and empower us as we teach and testify. But the Spirit can work with and through us only if we give Him something with which to work. He cannot help us remember things we have not learned (see Alma 31:5).

Preach My Gospel missionaries treasure up continually the words of eternal life, they rely upon the virtue of the word, and they have the power of the word in them. Please always remember Him, always be worthy to represent Him, and treasure up and rely upon the virtue of the word.

REQUIREMENT #4: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand the Holy Ghost is the ultimate and true teacher.

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead, and He is the witness of all truth and the ultimate and true teacher. The lessons we teach and the testimonies we bear are preparatory to an investigator acting and learning for himself or herself.

As missionaries, one of our most important roles is to invite investigators to exercise their moral agency and act in accordance with the teachings of the Savior. Making and keeping spiritual commitments, such as praying for a witness of the truth, studying and praying about the Book of Mormon, attending Church meetings, and keeping the commandments, require an investigator to exercise faith, to act, and to change.

Regardless of how earnestly we serve, you and I simply cannot push or force truth into the hearts of investigators. Our best efforts can only bring the message of truth *unto* the heart (see 2 Nephi 33:1). Ultimately, an investigator needs to act in righteousness and

thereby invite the truth *into* his or her own heart. Only in this way can honest seekers of truth and new converts develop the spiritual capacity to find answers for themselves.

Since our responsibility is to help investigators learn by faith and by the power of the Holy Ghost, this work is never about me and it is never about you. We need to do all in our power to fulfill our missionary responsibility and simultaneously “get out of the way” so the Holy Ghost can perform His sacred function and work. In fact, anything you or I do as representatives of the Savior that knowingly and intentionally draws attention to self—in the messages we present, in the methods we use, or in our personal demeanor and appearance—is a form of priestcraft that inhibits the teaching effectiveness of the Holy Ghost.

“Doth he preach it by the Spirit of

truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:17–18).

Please always remember Him, be worthy to represent Him, treasure up His word, and allow the ultimate and true teacher, the Holy Ghost, to witness of all truth.

REQUIREMENT #5: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand teaching is much more than talking and telling.

As the Savior sat on the Mount of Olives, He declared: “Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mark 13:11).

The Savior in the early days of this dispensation instructed missionaries to “open your mouths and they shall



be filled” (D&C 33:8, 10) and to “lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; for it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:5–6).

These scriptures emphasize a most demanding and exacting pattern for preaching and helping investigators to learn truth. *Preach My Gospel* missionaries know we do not teach lessons; we teach people. We do not merely recite or present memorized messages about gospel topics. We invite seekers of truth to experience the mighty change of heart. We understand that talking and telling alone are not teaching.

Preaching the gospel the Lord’s way includes observing and listening and discerning as prerequisites to talking. The sequence of these four interrelated processes is significant. Please note that active observing and listening precede discerning and that observing, listening, and discerning come before speaking. Employing this pattern enables missionaries to identify and teach to the needs of investigators.

As we observe, listen, and discern, we can be given “in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man” (D&C 84:85)—the truths to emphasize and the answers to give that will meet the specific needs of a particular investigator.



Only by observing, listening, and discerning can we be guided by the Spirit to say and do the things that will be most helpful to those whom we serve.

Observing is a vital preparation to receive the spiritual gift of discernment. Discernment is seeing with spiritual eyes *and* feeling with the heart—seeing and feeling the falsehood of an idea, the goodness in another person, or the next principle that is needed to aid an investigator. Discerning is hearing with spiritual ears *and* feeling with the heart—hearing and feeling the unspoken concern in a comment or question, the truthfulness of a testimony or doctrine, or the assurance and peace that come by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Preach My Gospel missionaries act in faith and are guided by the Spirit to help investigators learn truth. Please always remember Him; be worthy to represent Him; treasure up His word; allow the Holy Ghost to witness all truth; and observe, listen, and discern as you testify of Jesus Christ to honest seekers of truth.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

You may read my message and believe that all the other youth can and will do what I have been describing. But you may be wondering if you can do it. Please listen. You can do this!

If I had the wish of my heart, I would take a few moments with each of you individually. I would shake your hand, draw you close, look you in the eyes, and say, “You can do this! The Lord you represent and serve knows you can do this. I know you can do this. And as His servant, I promise you will have His help. Please remember always that with His help and in His strength, you can do this!”

I love you and pray as you strive to become what you need to become, you will recognize and respond in faith to the Lord’s voice and guidance. Then you truly will become powerful and effective representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. **NE**

From a devotional address given at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 24, 2011. See the full address at lds.org/go/03PMG.

NOTES

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 142.

WHO WILL BRING THE GOSPEL TO THEM?

As President Monson taught during general conference, the answer is, “We will.”

In the priesthood session of the April 2013 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson emphasized the importance of sharing the gospel. He quoted the Savior’s instruction to His Apostles: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19–20).

President Monson also said, “The holy scriptures contain no proclamation more relevant, no responsibility more binding, no instruction more direct than the injunction given by the resurrected Lord.”

He asked, “Young men, are

you ready to respond? Are you willing to work? Are you prepared to serve?” (“Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 66).

(Young women, though not under the same mandate as young men, are also welcome to serve.)

President Monson’s invitation to serve rang true to a former mission president who remembered an experience he had years ago while traveling with a local Church leader through the countryside of France. Their train stopped briefly at a station in a small country town, and the local leader was looking out the window. The mission president asked him if he was enjoying the scenery.

“Actually,” the leader replied, “I was looking at that family.” He pointed out a young husband and wife—the man with a son in his arms, the woman

with a baby girl in hers. As the train pulled away, the leader said, “I was thinking how much they could be blessed by the Church, and I was wondering, who will bring the gospel to them?”

That experience became a constant reminder to the mission president that all families need the blessings the gospel brings. President Monson provided a four-point plan to enable Latter-day Saints to meet that need: “Search the scriptures with diligence, plan [your] life with purpose, teach the truth with testimony, and serve the Lord with love” (“Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 69).

Looking at the need that everyone has for the gospel, looking at the recent growth in the number of full-time missionaries, and looking at what the prophet has taught us to do to prepare, there is a simple answer to the question, “Who will share the restored gospel with the people of the world?”

That answer is, “We will. The members and missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will.” So, will you? **NE**



MISSIONARY PREPARATION AND DUTY TO GOD

The help you need for mission preparation may be right in front of you.

By Michael Madsen
Priesthood Department

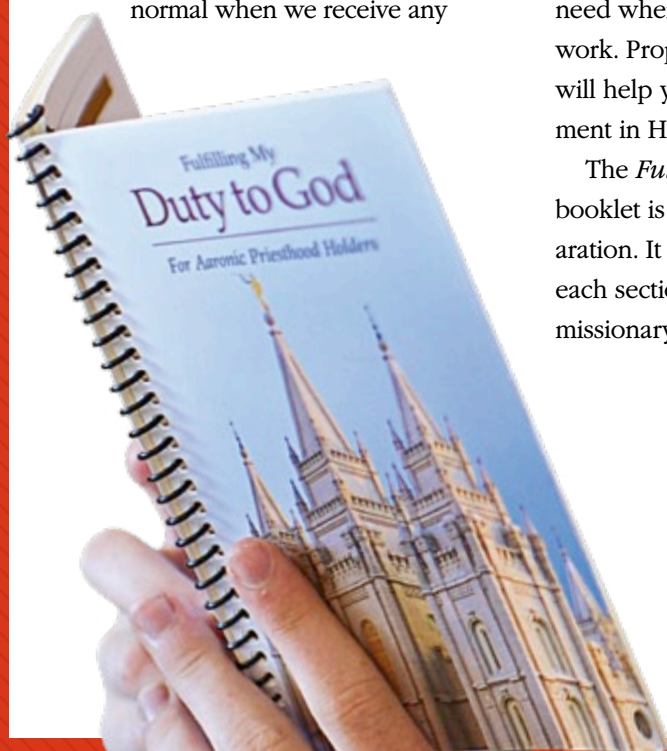
A young man I know recently left to serve a mission one week after graduating from high school. His excitement was contagious. He was willing to serve. Like so many others, he and his family had been invigorated by the chance to serve a mission at 18. However, like many other missionaries, he felt somewhat unprepared to serve.

These feelings of unpreparedness are normal when we receive any

calling from the Lord. Both Moses and Enoch expressed concerns about their calls to teach the gospel. The Lord's message to each of them was similar. He told Moses, "I will be with thee" (Exodus 3:12). To Enoch he declared, "Behold my Spirit is upon you . . . and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me" (Moses 6:34).

You will receive the help you need when you are doing the Lord's work. Proper preparation, however, will help you become a greater instrument in His hands.

The *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet is a great resource in that preparation. It contains six sections, and each section is directly related to missionary work.



A GREAT SECRET

Sometimes the best solutions are right before our eyes. This may be the case with missionary preparation. The most basic duty of an Aaronic Priesthood holder is to “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). So, what resource is right before your eyes to help you with this duty? The *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet. Since it was created to help you learn and fulfill this duty, it will not only help you be a missionary now but will also prepare you for missionary work in the future.



OBTAINING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Pray and Study the Scriptures

Duty to God invites you to *learn* about the power of the scriptures and then *act* by making a plan for personal scripture study. You begin making plans as a deacon and continue to improve on them throughout your Aaronic Priesthood years.

The outcome is a pattern of daily scripture study. Using *Duty to God*, you:

- Learn how to search the scriptures diligently.
- Teach from the scriptures long before serving a full-time mission, including using the scriptures in Sunday lessons and at home.
- Discover that you can turn to the scriptures to find answers to life's questions.
- Gain a power that comes to those who have feasted on the word of God daily.

All of this will help you *share* truths you have learned from the scriptures with others—a skill that is essential when an investigator asks you a gospel question on your mission. You can then lead them to the scriptures for the answer.

Live Worthily

Duty to God invites you to *learn* how priesthood power is tied to personal worthiness. You will *act* by making plans to live the standards contained in *For the Strength of Youth*. You will *share* with others the blessings of living the Lord's standards.

As you live the Lord's standards, you will become a beacon of light to others in this darkened world. Missionary opportunities will come to you as others see this light and want to know what makes you stand out. You will not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Romans 1:16). You will not be afraid to let your standards be known. You will be worthy to receive the impressions of the Spirit to know how and when to serve others. This is essential to your full-time missionary service as Heavenly Father guides you in His work. You will also be worthy to perform sacred priesthood ordinances.

Understand Doctrine

Duty to God lists basic doctrines of the gospel, which are the same as those found in the third chapter of *Preach My Gospel*.

You are invited to *learn* four doctrines a year and *act* by teaching these doctrines to others.

Your family and others will be blessed as you *share* these truths. You will see your own testimony grow each time you testify of their truthfulness. You will find it easy to share the gospel with others, and your confidence to teach your family and friends will grow. That knowledge and confidence will help you enter the mission field ready to share the gospel from day one. You won't be afraid to teach a lesson or ask investigators if they have any questions about the gospel, because you will have already learned and taught these principles.

PERFORMING PRIESTHOOD DUTIES

Perform Ordinances

Duty to God will help you *learn* what it means to hold priesthood power and perform sacred ordinances. You will *act* by making plans to carry them out with the dignity they deserve. This will happen as you prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament, participate in temple ordinances, and serve in your quorum to help others receive ordinances.

Performing these ordinances will prepare you to continue in priesthood service. Missionaries baptize, confirm, and confer the Holy Ghost. They give priesthood blessings to those in need. Sections in *Duty to God* help you learn the oath and covenant of the priesthood and how to perform Melchizedek Priesthood ordinances.

Serve Others

Service is at the heart of missionary work. *Duty to God* will help you *learn* what the Savior has taught about serving others. You will *act* by making plans to serve individually and with your quorum. Your family and others will be blessed as you fulfill those plans.

The outcome is a priesthood servant, someone who has found the joy that comes from putting others first. You will come to know the Savior by serving others. And you will be able to carry that love for the Savior and His children into your mission, where you'll again be able to



feel the joy of putting others first as you dedicate your life to serving others.

Invite All to Come unto Christ

Finally, *Duty to God* invites you to be a missionary now. You will *learn* what the Lord has taught about your duty to share the gospel as an Aaronic Priesthood holder, and you will even write down specific names of people you could share the gospel with.

One of the best ways to prepare for a mission is to share the gospel during your youth. As you do so, you will feel the Spirit prompt you to know what others need and what to say. You will be guided in your efforts and feel the joy that comes to those who find the restored gospel. Those you invite to come unto the Savior may even be members of your own family.

So, as you create a plan for missionary preparation, remember how much *Duty to God* can help you. Each of the first five sections helps prepare you for the sixth—to invite all to come unto Christ, both now and in the future as a full-time missionary. Consider inviting your father or another priesthood holder to work on *Duty to God* with you. Together you will find that the principles and activities not only prepare you for a mission, but they also prepare you to be a priesthood servant for life. **NE**

MISSIONARY PREPARATION

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS.



FOR YOUNG WOMEN: MAKING THE MISSION DECISION

Will a mission be right for you? If so, how will you know?

By Brittany Beattie

Church Magazines

An unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for missionary work is sweeping the entire earth,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“Catch the Wave,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 45). You’ve felt that wave, and you’ve likely wondered, “Will I serve a full-time mission?”

But you shouldn’t worry about deciding now whether to serve a full-time mission in the future. Instead, remember the First Presidency’s counsel to “take advantage of your time in Young Women by preparing to receive the sacred ordinances of the temple, to become a faithful wife and mother, and to strengthen your home and family” (*Young Women Personal Progress* [2010], 1). Let that counsel influence your goals, and let your enthusiasm for the wave of missionary work be focused on sharing the gospel as a member missionary today.

Then when you’re old enough to consider a full-time mission, you can decide based on your situation at the time. After all, a lot can change in your late teens and early twenties to influence your choice, including opportunities for marriage and motherhood, education, and other service. So when that time arrives, how will you know if a full-time mission is right for you? Here are some things to think about.



HOW WILL MY ANSWER COME?

As with praying about any question, there is great value in understanding and following the principles in Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9 and 8:2–3—study it out. Counsel with your parents and priesthood leaders, decide what you think is best for your circumstances, and then ask Heavenly Father to either confirm your choice or help you know it's not the right decision. Be open to His will and timing for you, even if the answer is not what you'd hoped or expected (see Bible Dictionary, "Prayer").

Some answers might include:

- Yes, you want to serve, and now you're called to the work (see D&C 4:3).
- Yes, even though you never thought you'd serve a full-time mission, it feels like it's Heavenly Father's plan for you at this time in your life.
- Yes, it will be right to serve in the near future, so prepare diligently, but wait a little longer for the right timing.
 - No, it's not right at this time, but it may be in a few years.
 - No, Heavenly Father has a different plan for you, even if serving a full-time mission is something you'd like to do.
 - No, you don't want to serve a full-time mission, and you don't need to.
 - No response at all—perhaps this is one of those times when Heavenly Father is leaving the decision up to you because He trusts your choice.

Advice from an RM

A young woman asked a returned sister missionary about her decision to serve and what she did to prepare. Watch the interview at [lds.org/go/03Advice](https://www.lds.org/go/03Advice).

If you receive the last response, remember this advice from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"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. . . . 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).

I WON'T TURN 19 FOR SEVERAL MORE YEARS. SHOULD I BE PREPARING TODAY FOR A FULL-TIME MISSION?

This question might be easier to answer if you think more about preparing to share the gospel than about preparing to serve a full-time mission. If you're preparing today to be better at *sharing the gospel*, then you'll be wonderfully prepared if you do serve a mission. But even if you don't serve a mission, you'll still be a blessing to those around you right now as you perform member missionary work to help bring others to the gospel or help rescue those who have become less active. Your preparation will also help you teach your children if you're blessed to become a mother in the future.

As you prepare to better share the gospel today, consider studying *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004; available at [lds.org/go/03Preach](https://www.lds.org/go/03Preach)). This book is not just for full-time missionaries; many Church leaders have encouraged every member to read it (see, for example, Elder L. Tom Perry, "The Past Way of Facing the Future," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 75–76).

TRUST IN THE LORD

"Trust in the Lord
with all thine
heart; and lean not
unto thine own
understanding.

"In all thy ways
acknowledge
him, and he shall
direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5–6



DO I NEED TO SERVE A MISSION?

President Thomas S. Monson has made it clear that "missionary work is a priesthood duty. . . . We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service" ("Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 5).

There is no requirement for young women to serve a mission, so you don't need to feel guilty for choosing not to be a full-time missionary. Follow the Spirit as you plan for and live your life, and Heavenly Father will provide many opportunities for you to serve His children in your home, community, and the world, whether that includes full-time missionary service or not.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS I SHOULD CONSIDER SERVING?

If your desire to serve a mission comes mainly because you've heard that you gain a strong testimony, that you may get to visit cool places, or that you might learn a foreign language—in short, that you know a mission will bless *your* life—then a mission may not be the right option for you yet. That motivation would definitely lead you to receive great blessings, but there's an even better motivation for serving a mission: to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59).

The First Presidency taught: "Every missionary has an important role in helping 'to bring to pass the

immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39)" (*Preach My Gospel*, v). If *that* gets you excited, then you're getting to the heart of a missionary's purpose.

WOULD I EVEN MAKE A GOOD MISSIONARY?

Perhaps you're shy or feel like you're not a scriptorian. Does that mean you shouldn't serve a mission? Not at all. To you, President Monson has said: "Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to the call to serve. Remember that this is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. The Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it" ("The Lord Needs Missionaries," *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 4).

The qualities that will help you be a successful missionary include following and teaching with the Spirit, loving others, obeying the commandments, developing Christlike attributes, working hard, and serving others (see *Preach My Gospel*, 10–11). These qualities will not only bless you if you decide to serve a mission, but they'll also help you serve the Lord in your home and in the Church throughout your life. Remember that you'll have divine help to develop these gifts of the Spirit when you pray for them and work toward them (see D&C 46:28). **NE**

SOCIAL-MEDIA INVESTIGATOR

By Elder Brayden Prestwich

One day my companion and I were leaving an apartment building when we ran into a 19-year-old young woman named Grace.

We said hello, introduced ourselves, and asked if we could discuss our message further. Because she'd just met us, Grace wasn't willing to give us her phone number. But thinking on our feet, we decided to give her a Mormon.org pass-along card and quickly wrote our Facebook profile names on it.

To our surprise, Grace added us on Facebook and began eagerly asking us questions through Facebook Chat about who we were and what we believed. My companion and I turned these first conversations into discussions of the Restoration. We actually ended up teaching almost all of the *Preach My Gospel* lessons to her through Facebook, which was unusual even for us. Later we also taught her the lessons in person.

After a few weeks, we invited Grace to participate in a Church meetinghouse tour. We felt the Spirit strongly that day as we used the pictures hanging on the stake center's walls to teach her the gospel. After the

tour, Grace gave us her phone number. We continued to maintain daily contact with her through Facebook, texts, and in-person lessons.

Many members of the ward, including the ward mission leader, fellowshipped Grace, helping her feel like she belonged. One member who accompanied us to the meetinghouse tour helped Grace feel comfortable, came to other lessons, and invited her to watch general conference with us in his home.

Shortly after Grace attended Sunday meetings for the first time, my companion and I felt prompted

to invite her to be baptized. She said yes! Because of our daily contacts and invitations, she'd gained a testimony of the Book of Mormon and of living prophets for herself, and she chose to be baptized.

I'm grateful for social media and the support of members—both of which made all the difference in Grace's conversion. **NE**

Elder Brayden Prestwich is currently serving in the Pennsylvania Philadelphia Mission.





CHURCH-SERVICE MISSIONS: REAL SERVICE, REAL SACRIFICE

By Nichole Eck

Serving a full-time mission is an important responsibility for priesthood holders—one that all priesthood holders should *prepare* for—and a wonderful opportunity for young women. Yet even after being diligent about that preparation, not everyone may be able to complete a full-time proselyting mission due to medical or other reasons.

If you're unable to complete a full-time proselyting mission but are still worthy and willing to serve, there's good news for you: you can fulfill the call to serve by becoming a young Church-service missionary.



BUILDING THE KINGDOM

"Men and women of mission age who are unable to serve a proselyting mission can counsel with parents and leaders to consider options for a service mission. While service missions vary in terms of assignment and length depending on the missionary's abilities, they involve real work, real service, and real sacrifice that make a difference in building the kingdom of God on earth."

Elder Adrián Ochoa of the Seventy, "Ye Are the Light of the World," *Ensign*, Sept. 2012, 30.

SERVING AT HOME

Church-service missions offer a variety of service opportunities that are tailored to fit the specific needs and abilities of each missionary. Almost all young Church-service missionaries live at home and serve locally in some of the following ways:

- **Online:** teaching the gospel, providing computer support, creating web content, testing programs
- **Welfare facilities:** working at distribution centers, canneries, bishops' storehouses, Deseret Industries, or employment resource centers
- **Facilities:** helping with building and landscape maintenance and repair
- **Seminaries, institutes, and mission offices:** working in an office, at a reception desk, or with computer support
- **Family history:** indexing and providing patron support, document preservation, and system support

If you want to serve but don't live within reasonable commuting distance of one of these opportunities, then your bishop and stake president may help you arrange to

Even if health conditions keep you from serving a full-time proselyting mission, you can still be called to serve.



"ON THE TEAM"

"We . . . recognize that there are some who have hoped all their lives to serve missions, but for health reasons or other impediments beyond their control, they cannot do so. We publicly and proudly salute this group. We know of your desires, and we applaud your devotion. You have our love and our admiration. You are 'on the team' and you always will be, even as you are honorably excused from full-time service."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "We Are All Enlisted," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 46.

give extended service within your community at places like libraries, senior centers, food banks, and hospitals. In rare cases, you can serve away from home while temporarily living with a grandparent, step-parent, aunt and uncle, or sibling who lives near a Church operation.

GETTING STARTED

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Church-service missionary, consider these steps:

- Talk with your local priesthood leader, or email YCSM@ldschurch.org for more information.
- Prayerfully consider assignments to determine one that is consistent with your time, abilities, and health.
- Meet with your bishop or branch president to discuss your decision and start the Church-service missionary application process.

To watch a video about a Church-service missionary, visit lds.org/go/03YCSM and select "Opportunities for Young Adults." **NE**

Nichole Eck lives in Utah, USA.

ADVICE FROM A CHURCH-SERVICE MISSIONARY

By Elder Teague Chubak

I grew up in the Church, and my parents did their best to provide me with the things I needed to gain a strong testimony, such as learning how to pray and how to study the Book of Mormon and Church magazines. When I was close to missionary age, it wasn't a question of *if* I would go—it was only a question of *when*. So when the news came from my bishop that I did not meet the medical requirements to serve a full-time mission, I was heartbroken.

Often I prayed asking why I could not fulfill my desire to be a missionary. My loving mother would remind me that a service mission was still an option, but my reply was always, "That doesn't count." The months went by, and even though I was old enough to serve, I remained at home. Each day, the plea "every member a missionary" rang through my mind until I eventually decided to look into a Church-service mission.

I browsed through the options and came across one that stood out to me. Through prayer I received the firm approval of the Spirit. When I talked with my bishop about it, he told me that the Lord had saved me for this Church-service mission rather than a full-time proselyting mission. I must admit that I agree with him now. The experiences and blessings surpass anything I could ever have imagined.

Soon I will complete my Church-service mission, and I want the youth of the Church to know that a mission changes lives, even if it's a Church-service mission. If a health problem or other situation keeps you from entering the full-time mission field, it does not mean the Lord does not want your service. It just means that He needs you somewhere else.

Take it from a Church-service missionary.

Elder Teague Chubak lives in Utah, USA.



MISSION LIFE

The breadth and depth of a missionary's experience are defined by his or her purpose: to invite others to come unto Christ.

The alarm clock's steady, rhythmic buzz cuts through the quiet apartment. 6:30 again—the start of another day. Another day of studying, praying, planning, working, teaching, helping, and serving. Another day to cherish. Another day as a missionary.

When each of the more than 75,000 full-time missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arises each day, many different activities and experiences may await him or her—lessons, visits, and meetings, plans that go smoothly and plans that fall through, acceptance and rejection, and a lot of hard work and prayer.

Throughout it all, **the common thread of mission life is a missionary's purpose:** “Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end” (*Preach My Gospel* [2004], 1).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LESLIE NILSSON, CODY BELL, BYRON WARNER, AND DEL BENSON; DETAIL OF CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO., INC.





“When missionaries have internalized the purpose of bringing people to Christ through the principles and ordinances of the restored gospel, they will understand that **missionary work is not a program, it is a cause**—the cause of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They will understand that they are not salesmen or technicians but divinely authorized and commissioned teachers of righteousness. They will understand that the world has no access to atoning grace and salvation but through them and the Church they represent, The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They will understand what they and this work are all about, and they will be up and about their Father’s business. As the sons of Mosiah, they will teach ‘with power and authority of God’ (Alma 17:3).”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2008.

To see how a missionary’s purpose permeates all areas of his or her life, take a look at some of the things missionaries do in a typical week.

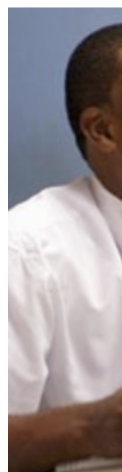


► PLANNING SESSIONS

Missionaries have a two- to three-hour goal-setting and planning session once a week and a shorter session at the end of each day. As with everything they do, their daily and weekly planning sessions are focused on their purpose. Their planning is based on more than just a schedule; it's based on prayer, inspiration, and a concern for the needs of others as they come unto Christ. For instance, missionaries plan visits with investigators to teach and follow up, they plan visits with members to help them share the gospel with others, and they plan activities centered around finding, teaching, baptizing, and confirming people.

► PRAYER

Prayer becomes second nature to missionaries. They pray individually every morning and night and carry a prayer in their hearts throughout the day. They pray as companionships when they plan, study, teach, and eat together. They teach people how to pray. They pray with investigators and members. They know that their success hinges on having the Spirit with them and that "the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14).





"I frequently say to missionaries in the field, 'You make or break your mission every morning of your life. You tell me how those morning hours go from 6:30 a.m. until you are on the street in your mission, whatever time it is; you tell me how those hours go, and I will tell you how your day will go, I will tell you how your month will go, I will tell you how your year will go and how your mission and your life will go.'"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, seminar for new mission presidents, June 26, 2011.



"Meaningful goals and careful planning will help you accomplish what the Lord requires of you. As you care for the people in your assigned area, you will account to Him and to your mission leaders."

Preach My Gospel, 137.

► DAILY PERSONAL AND COMPANIONSHIP STUDY

It is essential for missionaries to study daily—one hour by themselves, one hour as a companionship, plus, for some, an extra 30–60 minutes for language study. They focus on the scriptures and the doctrines of the lessons in *Preach My Gospel*.



"The Lord deserves our very best, and we cannot give that to Him without good, careful planning.

"If you plan well, you will have promptings, elders and sisters, telling you the things you should do, and you'll have some promptings telling you things you should not do. The power of this work is when we get to the point in our relationships with Heavenly Father that we know the voice of the Spirit, and we know it so well that we know exactly what we should do."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, devotional address at the Provo Missionary Training Center, June 25, 2002.





► TEACHING PEOPLE

Whether they're in a home, on the street, at church, or online, missionaries teach and testify of the doctrines of the restored gospel, help people feel and recognize the Spirit, and invite people to make commitments to do the things that will help them become converted, including studying the Book of Mormon, praying to know the truth, repenting of sins, keeping the commandments, and attending church.

The basic teachings missionaries share with people are found in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*. Missionaries study and internalize these doctrines and principles so that they know what to teach and so that they can follow the Spirit and adapt their teaching to the needs of each person.



► MAKING FOLLOW-UP VISITS WITH PEOPLE

When people have agreed to make a commitment to do something, missionaries try to follow up with them frequently—daily if possible. Missionaries encourage them, answer questions, resolve concerns, promise them that God will bless them, and offer any other help they can so that they will follow through with their commitments. For instance, missionaries might read from the Book of Mormon together with a person who has committed to read it but has not yet done so. Other commitments can be very hard for people to keep, such as the commitment to quit smoking or quit drinking alcohol. Missionaries give them support and offer them many ideas for overcoming the addictive behavior.





► CHURCH MEETINGS

Missionaries know that attending church several times before being baptized provides investigators a better chance of remaining active in the Church afterward. At church, investigators feel the Spirit, and missionaries introduce them to Church members and help them become familiar with what goes on in Church meetings.



"Change can be hard. Your role is to help strengthen people in their resolve to change. You should do all you can to help people keep their commitments. . . .
". . . You have not finished your ministry until people are living these commitments, or in other words, until they have repented (see 3 Nephi 18:32)."

Preach My Gospel, 200.



► TRANSPORTATION

To get from point A to point B in their day-to-day work, missionaries use whatever mode of transportation is available to them. In many places, that means walking. In other places, there are more options, such as bicycles or public transportation. Some missionaries are even given cars to drive. Often, however, missionaries don't just travel from one place to another as efficiently as they can. Instead, they may choose a mode of transportation that allows them opportunities to share the gospel with people they may meet as they travel, because missionaries should "talk with as many people as [they] can each day" (*Preach My Gospel*, 156).



► PREPARATION DAY

One day a week is set aside as missionaries' preparation day. It's not really a day off; it's more like a day to do all of the things they don't have time to do on any other day—like writing family, doing laundry, cleaning, shopping, and getting a haircut. They also participate in some cultural and recreational activities. But the purpose of this day is to help the missionaries be more productive, focused, and prepared during the rest of the week. And it's not even a whole day, actually. They go out and engage in normal missionary activities from 6:00 p.m. until the end of the day.



► DISTRICT MEETINGS AND ZONE CONFERENCES

Every week missionaries in the same local area meet for a district meeting for 60–90 minutes. One of the elders is the district leader and conducts the weekly meeting. The missionaries learn from one another through training, discussing challenges, and sharing testimonies and experiences. They also talk about how their investigators are progressing.

Every three months missionaries in several districts hold a zone conference, which is held under the direction of the mission president. Many of the missionaries will have to travel to these meetings, which are usually longer than the district meetings and can cover a wide range of topics.





"The purpose of our missionary work is to help the children of God fulfill a condition prescribed by our Savior and Redeemer. We preach and teach in order to baptize the children of God so that they can be saved in the celestial kingdom instead of being limited to a lesser kingdom. We do missionary work in order to baptize and confirm. That is the doctrinal basis of missionary work."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Why Do We Do Missionary Work?" *New Era*, Sept. 2009, 2.

► WORKING WITH MEMBERS

Church members and missionaries work together in a number of ways, and missionaries devote a good deal of attention to fostering good relationships with the members wherever they serve. Working with bishops and ward mission leaders, missionaries help members share the gospel, and they visit and strengthen those who are not active in the Church. As every missionary learns, "Local Church leaders and members are your best allies" (*Preach My Gospel*, 217). To see how members and missionaries work together, go to HasteningTheWork.lds.org.

► BAPTISMS AND CONFIRMATIONS

When a person accepts the missionaries' invitation to be baptized, it is a moment of great joy. That joy is multiplied when that person, having overcome all obstacles, is actually standing in the waters of baptism, entering into a sacred covenant. Then they can be confirmed as members of the Church and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

► SERVING OTHERS

Missionaries are encouraged to participate in some sort of community service activity each week, as approved by the mission president. In addition, they are encouraged to listen to the Spirit at all times "to recognize opportunities for small, simple acts of kindness that [they] can offer to God's children" (*Preach My Gospel*, 168). They serve out of a love for all of God's children and a desire to help them, but they also are mindful of people who may want to know more about their message as a result of this service. **NE**



Find Out More

To learn more about preparing for missionary service, with videos, resources, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit lds.org/go/03Prepare.

How the **BOOK OF MORMON** TRANSFORMS YOU

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

A sincere and ongoing study of the Book of Mormon will bring you great blessings and change your life.



You may have already read the Book of Mormon—the whole thing from cover to cover. You’ve recognized the Spirit as you’ve read it, and you know it’s true. So now what? If you have a testimony of the Book of Mormon, you might ask why you need to keep reading it regularly

on your own, especially if you already read the scriptures with your family and in seminary. Good question, to which there are some good answers. And if you haven’t yet read the Book of Mormon, take a look. You may find these same answers apply to you too. Here are three ideas for starters:

A FEW REASONS FOR STUDYING THE BOOK OF MORMON

1. If you stop reading the Book of Mormon now, you'll miss out on opportunities to learn the doctrines, stories, and narrative of the Book of Mormon. They're really important to know when serving a mission or for any service you'll give in your home and at church.
2. The prophets have counseled us to study the Book of Mormon.¹ For example, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "A man would get nearer to God by abiding by [The Book of Mormon's] precepts, than by any other book" (in the introduction to the Book of Mormon).
3. Regular study of the Book of Mormon is one of the best ways to strengthen your faith and draw nearer to the Lord. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, "The Book of Mormon is both clear in doctrine and full of invitation to come to the Savior."² Your knowledge, faith, and testimony will increase as you live its principles and strive to come unto the Savior.

AN EVEN BETTER REASON

But there's another much more profound reason: studying the Book of Mormon regularly will transform you.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, "There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called 'the words of life' (see D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance."³

As you study the Book of Mormon with a sincere heart, you'll become more fully converted. You'll desire to repent and be clean, and you'll feel the Holy Ghost. Because the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, you'll find that feeling the Holy Ghost more prominently in your life changes you spiritually (see 3 Nephi 27:20; Moses 6:64–65). Your heartfelt study will enlighten you, broaden your mind, and enlarge your soul (see Alma 32:28–36). And as you come to understand the doctrines of the Church better, you'll be able to resist temptation not just because you know it's wrong, but also because your attitudes and behavior will have

changed such that you have less and less desire to do wrong.⁴

You will feel as the Nephites did who repented as a result of King Benjamin's teachings, "because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2).

That kind of change is at the heart of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and it's what leads to happiness. That's a pretty good reason to study the Book of Mormon, don't you think? **NE**



EVEN MORE BLESSINGS

Many additional blessings come from sincere study of the Book of Mormon. What blessings have other prophets said will come? Search [conference.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/conference) to find out. Then share what you find, or leave a testimony of your own experiences at [lds.org/go/03Book](https://www.lds.org/go/03Book).

NOTES

1. For example, see Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Testimony, a Covenant, and a Witness," *Ensign*, Oct. 2011, 80; Tad R. Callister, "The Book of Mormon—a Book from God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 74.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Why the Book of Mormon?" *New Era*, May 2008, 8.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, Oct. 2011, 57.
4. See Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17: "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior."



**By Elder
C. Scott Grow**
Of the Seventy

Helping you to repent is a special part of a bishop's calling. Your conscience will tell you when you need to talk to him.

You may wonder why you are taught to confess to your bishop or branch president when you have committed serious sins. You may say to yourself, “Isn’t repentance a personal thing between me and the Lord? If I have stopped my wrong behavior and have confessed it to God, why do I need to talk with my bishop?”

Why the Bishop and Not Someone Else?

Many youth feel more comfortable confessing their mistakes to their parents or youth leaders. Although your parents and leaders can provide necessary support and counsel, the Lord has declared that the bishop is a common judge in Israel (see D&C 107:72, 74). He has the responsibility to determine the worthiness of the members of his ward. By ordination and righteous living, the bishop is entitled to revelation from the Holy Ghost regarding the members of his ward, including you.

The bishop can help you through the repentance process in ways your parents or other leaders are unable to



WHY & WHAT

DO I NEED TO CONFESS TO MY BISHOP?

provide. If the sin is serious enough, he may determine that your privileges in the Church should be restricted. For example, as part of your repentance process, he may ask you to refrain from partaking of the sacrament or exercising the priesthood for a period of time. He will work with you and determine when you are worthy again to resume those sacred activities.

Your bishop will counsel you on what to do to strengthen your ability to resist temptation. He may encourage you to study a doctrinal topic,

such as repentance, and then to share with him what you have learned. He may ask you to visit with him each week to report how you are doing in removing yourself from tempting situations.

When Should I Talk to Him?

You may be thinking, “That all sounds good, but how can I know if what I have done is serious enough that I need to talk to the bishop?” The short answer: “Your conscience will tell you.” When you feel the sting

of conscience, act immediately (see Alma 34:31–34).

Regarding repentance, King Benjamin taught, “I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them” (Mosiah 4:29). So rather than giving a detailed list of things that you must confess to your bishop, let me share some principles that will help you make that decision.

What Do I Need to Confess?

I know that you have tried to be obedient, but maybe you have made some mistakes—even some serious mistakes. Most of the mistakes people make can be resolved through personal prayer and sincere repentance. Some mistakes, especially those regarding immorality, require confession to the bishop before you can receive the Lord’s forgiveness.

As you think about mistakes you have made, you may be feeling guilty, unsettled, unhappy, or even miserable. If you are experiencing any of those feelings, then you probably need to talk with your bishop about those mistakes.

Don’t try to excuse yourself or rationalize your way out. You may be thinking, “It would be too embarrassing to tell the bishop what I have done. He thinks I am a better person than that. He will be shocked if I tell him what I did. He won’t like me anymore.”

I promise you he will not condemn

you. As a servant of the Lord, he will be kind and understanding as he listens to you. He will then help you through the repentance process. He is the Lord’s messenger of mercy to help you become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

The Lord has said: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43).

When you confess and forsake your sins, the Lord will forgive you. You will not have to account to Him for those sins when the time comes for you to be judged.

What If I Don’t Confess?

Sometimes a person will stop doing wrong but never confess, when it is needed, to his or her bishop. As a consequence, the person continues to carry the burden of sin alone, instead of letting the Savior take away the burden.

Let me give you an example. One evening a few years ago, I was interviewing adults for renewal of their temple recommends. A middle-aged woman came in for her interview. She had been married in the temple and was active in the Church all her life.

I sensed a deep sadness in her soul. As the interview progressed, I received a spiritual impression. I said

to her, “Sister, I have the impression that you made a serious mistake when you were a teenager that you haven’t confessed to a priesthood leader. Would you be willing to tell me about it?”

She immediately began to cry. She told me that was true, but she had always felt too embarrassed to confess it to a bishop. As she confessed what she had done, she shared sufficient detail for me to make a determination of her worthiness.

The confession of her sin to a priesthood leader marked the end of her repentance process rather than the beginning. She had unnecessarily carried the burden and sorrow of that sin for more than 30 years.

Because she had completed the final step of repentance, her guilt was swept away. I would occasionally see her after the night of that interview. Her countenance became bright, and she was happy.

I want you to know that I do not remember her name. The Lord can remove such memories from bishops. What I do remember is that through confession to her priesthood leader, a middle-aged woman was relieved of feelings of guilt that she had carried far too many years.

Please don’t make that mistake. If you have feelings of guilt but are not sure if you need to confess to your bishop, go see him. Let him help you. Don’t risk carrying an unnecessary burden through your life, which will



leave you feeling miserable. Through your confession to the bishop and your repentance, the Lord will lift that burden from your soul (see Isaiah 1:18).

Why Do I Need to Repent?

Jesus Christ paid the price of the sins of all mankind through His atoning sacrifice. He invites you to repent and avoid additional sorrow and suffering. “Repent, lest . . . your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I. . . .

“Wherefore, I command you again to repent, . . . and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these

punishments of which I have spoken” (D&C 19:15–17, 20).

I testify that through His suffering, Jesus Christ already paid the price for your sins. You can be forgiven insofar as you repent. Don’t try to pay the price for your sins. No amount of your own suffering will redeem you; it is only through the Atonement that you receive forgiveness.

May you exercise faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. I testify in the name of Jesus Christ that through repentance, including confession to your bishop when necessary, you will become clean. In addition, through the Savior’s grace—His enabling power—you can be strengthened in your ability to resist temptation in the future. Thus, you will have peace of mind and happiness in this life, and you will inherit eternal life in the world to come. **NE**



OUR GREAT PHYSICIAN

“The Savior is often referred to as the Great

Physician. . . . Guilt is to our spirit what pain is to our body—a warning of danger and a protection from additional damage. From the Atonement of the Savior flows the soothing salve that can heal our spiritual wounds and remove guilt. However, this salve can only be applied through the principles of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, and consistent obedience. The results of sincere repentance are peace of conscience, comfort, and spiritual healing and renewal.

“Your bishop or branch president is the spiritual physician’s assistant who is authorized to help you repent and heal.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign* May 2013, 44.

The Facebook *Project*

A simple plan on social media had a big impact.

By Mandalyn Ferguson

As I looked at my list of Facebook friends one day, I decided to try something new. I'd been thinking about individual worth. I'd gained a testimony that we are all sons and daughters of God and are dearly loved. We all have talents and the right and responsibility to use them. When I looked at my peers and neighbors, I wanted to remind them of their unique worth.

And thus the Facebook Project began.

I decided that every day I would send messages to five people on my friends list and tell them what I like about them. It was a simple goal. I was expecting to merely write a simple sentence or two to each person. And I wasn't expecting anything more than a simple thank-you in return.

But as I prayed about it to Heavenly Father each morning, I felt inspiration—and my messages became at least a paragraph for each person. Each person is unique and important, so it wasn't difficult to find people's talents and gifts, especially with God's help.

I was overwhelmed by people's responses! I cannot count how many people said, "That made my day!" Some people said that my message helped them through

a trial or changed their perspective. Some of the people I had been most nervous about sending a message to were the most grateful for it. It made me realize that a lot of people struggle with recognizing their self-worth or with feeling hopeful in the deteriorating conditions of today's world, and a kind, specific comment can mean a lot to them.

I've learned a lot from this project. For one thing, people are a lot different from what they may seem to be on the outside. They all have trials and need help. I've also learned how readily God will help you when you want to help others. If you have a righteous goal, then He will assist you.

Helping others recognize their self-worth has helped me recognize my own. I know that my experience with this has helped me and a lot of other people too, and I am forever grateful to Heavenly Father. **NE**

Mandalyn Ferguson lives in Utah, USA.



ALL ARE BLESSED

"Every covenant servant of [the Savior] . . . will receive His guidance by the Spirit as they bless and serve others for Him. And they will feel His love and find joy in being drawn closer to Him."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "'Come unto Me,'" Ensign, May 2013, 25.

Facebook is a trademark of its owner.

ENDOWED

from on High

MAKING Important Covenants

Mission calls and engagement rings are exciting, but sometimes the hustle and bustle of preparing for a mission or a wedding can overshadow a vital, saving ordinance that occurs around the same time: the temple endowment. The endowment is a bestowal of heavenly power and knowledge.¹ It is literally a “gift.”² It gives us strength and allows us to “gain a glimpse of what it will be like to live in [God’s] presence as we feel the peaceful atmosphere of the temple.”³ The endowment is not just a step to take before a mission or marriage; it’s a vital and glorious part of our eternal journey.

If your endowment “is to be the great blessing in your mission and life that it is intended to be, then it must be more than just another item on a checklist of things to do before you enter the mission field”⁴ or marry in the temple. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said that each temple ordinance “is not just a ritual to go through, it is an act of solemn promising.”⁵

Here’s what three people had to say about their special experience receiving their temple endowment.

Your temple endowment is more than just a step on the path toward a mission or marriage. It’s a saving ordinance.



I received my mission call in January to the Cape Verde Praia Mission! I’m really excited about my mission, but I was just as excited to be able to go through the temple and receive my endowment.

Both my bishop and my stake president reminded me that the temple is not merely a stepping-stone to the mission. The covenants

I make in the temple are literally vital for my salvation; a mission is not.

I prepared to go to the temple by focusing on my baptismal covenants, reading the booklet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, reading my scriptures daily, and praying a lot. I felt like I was about as prepared as I could have been, without actually knowing specifically what was going to happen.

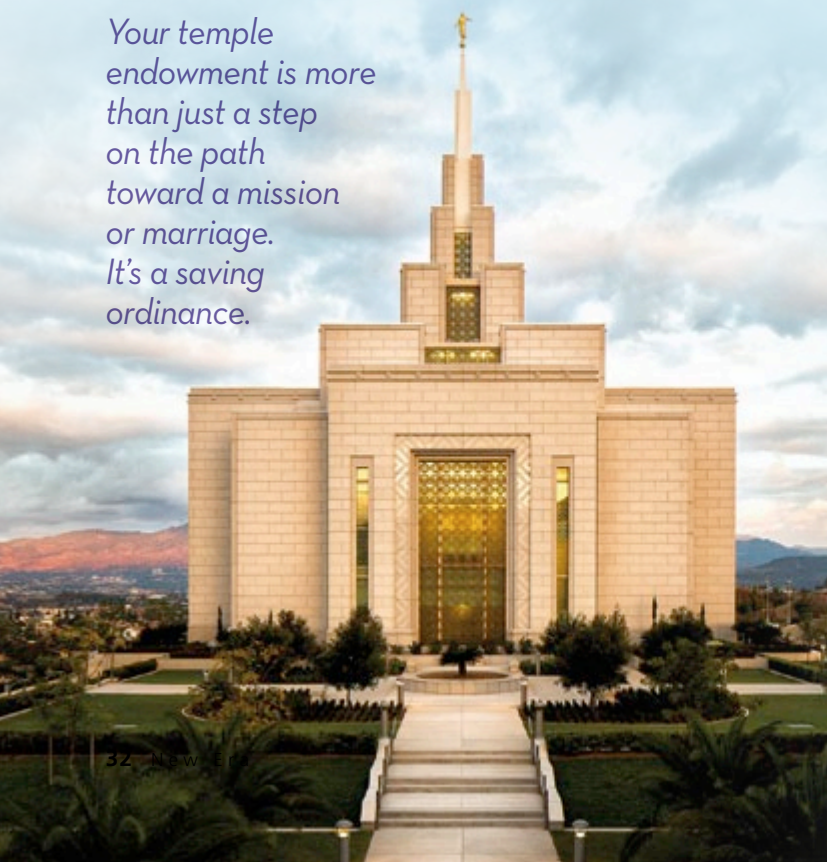


I feel like I’ve been preparing for my endowment my whole life. I wasn’t really nervous about it, even though I still didn’t know what to expect. I had my parents, other family members, and temple workers escorting me the whole time, so I was never alone.

Before I went to the temple, I got the same advice from a lot of people: Don’t worry about trying to learn or remember it all the first time, don’t stress about the symbolism, and don’t worry if you don’t understand everything; just focus on feeling the Spirit. That’s just what I did, and my first time in the temple was a very good experience. The Spirit was so strong.

The things that happen in the temple are different from the way we worship outside the temple. But the Spirit is the same, and that’s the most important thing. When we’re worthy and prepared to be there, we can truly feel God’s presence in His house. I’m so grateful that I’ve been able to receive my endowment and make those important covenants. I look forward to going back again and again.

Allie Bradford, 20, Utah, USA



PARTAKING of Eternal Blessings



Receiving my endowment was the most meaningful experience I've had thus far in my life. As I entered the celestial room, I was overcome with a sense of happiness. My parents are divorced, but when I entered the celestial room, they were both able to be there with me. I felt Heavenly Father's love for me and for my parents.

The endowment session itself was unforgettable. I've come to understand that Christ is central to everything we do. The covenants we make in the temple are focused on Him. The endowment ceremony is focused on Him. Even the temple structure and decor are designed to teach us about Christ. Symbols of Him are everywhere in the House of the Lord.

It's not a coincidence that we're instructed to take upon ourselves the name of Christ and include Him in our everyday lives. Becoming a Christlike individual is our goal here in this mortal, trial-filled world. The temple is a place to exhibit Christlike love, learn about Him, and more fully become the Christ-centered person He hopes and longs for us to become.

The endowment, aside from being one of the most beautiful experiences in my life, is a necessity in order to fully comprehend how we can return to our Father in Heaven. The endowment has given me the power and knowledge essential to partake of eternal blessings.

Ryan Montgomery,
18, Oregon, USA



FEELING the Spirit More Abundantly



Before I went through the temple, I didn't know exactly what to expect. I read the booklet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* and took a temple preparation class. That helped me be more prepared for receiving my own endowment. When I went to the temple for the first time, I was not nervous like I thought I would be, because I felt peace. The temple workers were all very friendly and made sure I knew where to go the whole time I was at the temple.

During the endowment, I made covenants with my Father in Heaven and in return was promised many beautiful blessings and gifts of knowledge. Like other ordinances, including baptism, the endowment ordinance is very symbolic. Before I went through the endowment session, a temple worker told

me that I may have many questions by the end of the session. Because there are so many symbols, it's impossible to understand everything at once. That's why I think it's so important to return to the temple as often as possible.

Since I've been to the temple, I've felt the Spirit more abundantly in my life. I've felt the words that I heard in the temple sink into my heart, and I know that if I do all that I covenanted with my Heavenly Father to do, then I will be blessed. This ordinance has helped me understand how much Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each individual person, because we are taught in the temple how to be happy.

Ashley Tuft, 20, Texas, USA

NOTES

1. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (2002), 29–31.
2. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 171.
3. "Frequently Asked Questions," temples.lds.org.
4. F. David Stanley, "The Most Important Step," *New Era*, June 2000, 20.
5. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 638.

Symbolism AND TEMPLE *Preparation*

EVERYTHING
IN THE TEMPLE
POINTS US TO
CHRIST WHEN WE
ARE PREPARED TO
LEARN THROUGH
SYMBOLISM.

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

After I received my mission call, my parents and I traveled to the Mesa Arizona Temple so I could receive my endowment. As we prepared to climb a set of stairs that led to the temple's ordinance rooms, I saw on a wall above a doorway the Savior's words: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). The Spirit immediately bore witness to me that I was in a sacred place doing a sacred work.

I didn't understand all the symbolism in what I saw and heard that day. But I felt the Spirit as I made covenants and received further light and knowledge essential for my eternal progress.



MESA ARIZONA TEMPLE

Symbolism and the Gospel

The temple is “a house of learning,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “There we are taught in the Master’s way. His way differs from modes of others. His way is ancient and rich with symbolism.”¹

This symbolism (using one thing to stand for or remind us of another thing or idea) has been central to the ordinances of the gospel since Adam and Eve sacrificed the firstlings of their flocks (see Moses 5:5–7). During His life, the Savior also taught in parables, which, according to President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, are “a verbal way to represent symbolically things that might otherwise be difficult to understand.”²

Just as symbols were used anciently to teach profound truths, Elder Nelson said, symbols likewise are used to teach in the temple today. “It is necessary, therefore,” he added, “that we ponder the symbols presented in the temple and see the mighty realities for which each symbol stands.”³

The Importance of Preparation

In order to appreciate and clearly understand these symbols, we must prepare ourselves. President Packer called the ordinances and ceremonies of the temple simple, beautiful, and sacred, and he said, “Preparation for [temple] ordinances includes

preliminary steps: faith, repentance, baptism, confirmation, worthiness, a maturity and dignity worthy of one who comes invited as a guest into the house of the Lord.”⁴

For Church members who will be going to the temple for the first time, Elder Nelson has recommended that they study the following sections in the Bible Dictionary: “Anoint,” “Covenant,” “Sacrifices,” and “Temple.” He also suggested a study of Exodus 26–29, Leviticus 8, and the books of Moses and Abraham.⁵ As we become familiar with these materials, we will be better able to understand the symbols and teachings in the temple.

“If you will go to the temple and remember that the teaching is symbolic,” said President Packer, “you will never go in the proper spirit without coming away with your vision extended, feeling a little more exalted, with your knowledge increased as to things that are spiritual.”⁶

Symbolism and the Savior

Just as coming unto Christ is central to the gospel, so temples are also central to helping us come unto Christ. Elder David E. Sorensen of the

Seventy (served from 1992 to 2005) taught that temples “symbolically and literally remind us and teach us about Christ and His Father. . . . Our temple worship today includes many symbolic references to Christ, from the spires on the outside that point our minds heavenward, to the white clothing we wear inside the temple.”⁷

The temple ordinances themselves also inspire us to come unto Christ, because those essential ordinances of



SYMBOLIC TEACHING

“Before going to the temple for the first time, or even after many times, it may help you to realize that the teaching in the temples is done in symbolic fashion.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 31.

exaltation point us to the Atonement.⁸ “All temple ordinances are centered in Jesus Christ and His divine mission. . . . Each ordinance is calculated to reveal to us something about Christ and our relationship to God.”⁹

Returning Often

Trying to understand temple symbolism has been called “the starting place for meaningful temple worship.”¹⁰ That worship includes establishing “the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of [our] membership.”¹¹ We do that as we keep the sacred covenants we make there and as we “hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow.”¹²

During the years following my mission, I attended the temple often in the area where I attended college. But I did not get to return to the Mesa temple until I went with the young woman I married for time and all eternity. As we knelt at the altar, I was reminded of my visit several years earlier—grateful for symbols and sealings found only in the house of the Lord. **NE**

SYMBOLS THAT YOU SEE



Oxen: If you’ve performed baptisms for the dead, then temple symbolism isn’t new to you. No doubt you’ve noticed that temple baptismal fonts rest on the back of 12 oxen. The 12 oxen symbolize two things: the tribes of Israel and the strength and power on which God’s work rests.¹³ Understanding what the oxen—and other temple symbols—represent makes our vicarious work more meaningful.



White Clothing: You’ve also noticed that everyone in the temple wears white, which is another symbol. White clothing symbolizes purity, worthiness, and cleanliness and that we are all equal before Heavenly Father.¹⁴



“Mirrors of Eternity”: When you attend a celestial marriage or a family sealing in the temple, you’ll notice mirrors on each side of the sealing room. These mirrors reflect images back and forth that seem to go on forever. This enduring reflection symbolizes our divine nature and destiny, reminding us that temple ordinances and covenants unite us eternally in God’s presence.¹⁵

The full meaning of some temple symbols, such as those you’ll see during the temple endowment ceremony, may not be so easily interpreted. But through frequent

attendance and with help from the Spirit, you will increase your ability to learn through temple symbolism, and your appreciation for the temple and its symbolic teachings will grow.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 33.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 32.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 47.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” 30.
5. See Russell M. Nelson, “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple,” 47.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” 32.
7. David E. Sorensen, “Small Temples—Large Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 65.
8. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 35.
9. David E. Sorensen, “Small Temples—Large Blessings,” 65.
10. “Preparing for Your Temple Endowment,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1988, 16.
11. Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter: Fourteenth President of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1994, 5.
12. Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter,” 5.
13. See Edward J. Brandt, “Why Are Oxen Used in the Design of Our Temples’ Baptismal Fonts?” *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 55.
14. See *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002), 16–18.
15. See Gerrit W. Gong, “Temple Mirrors of Eternity: A Testimony of Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 37.



Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
"Followers of Christ," April 2013 general conference

COME, FOLLOW ME



Becoming More Christlike

This month your Sunday lessons will focus on becoming more Christlike (see lds.org/youth/learn and page 40). One lesson asks, "How can I become more Christlike?" As you discuss the topic in your family, classes, and quorums, you can use the May 2013 *Ensign* or conference.lds.org, because "all of the messages of this conference help us follow in the footsteps of our Savior, whose example and teachings define the path for every follower of Jesus Christ" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Followers of Christ," *Ensign*, May 2013, 96). In his talk, Elder Oaks also shares how Christ set the example for us in:

- Baptism.
- Keeping the commandments.
- Praying.
- Serving in God's kingdom.
- Loving one another.
- Forgiving others.
- Helping the poor and needy.

To learn more about how Christ kept these commandments—and thus how we can—visit lds.org/go/03Follow.



The Work of Redemption

Another way to become more like Christ is to help in His work—in bringing others to Him. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Inasmuch as we follow Christ, we seek to participate in and further His redemptive work. . . .

"While the most important aspects of redemption have to do with repentance and forgiveness, there is a very significant temporal aspect as well. . . .

"This kind of redemptive work means helping people with their problems. It means befriending the poor and the weak, alleviating suffering, righting wrongs, defending truth, . . . and achieving security and happiness at home" ("Redemption," *Ensign*, May 2013, 110). See the full talk at lds.org/go/03Redeem or watch a short video highlight at lds.org/go/03Video.

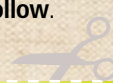


Share These Cards Online

This month as you talk about becoming more Christlike, you might want to use these cards in your classes and quorums, at family home evening, on social media, or hung in your locker or bedroom. Download or share them online at lds.org/go/03Cards.



Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
"Redemption," April 2013 general conference



“What do I say to nonmembers who ask why some members of the Church aren’t living our standards?”

It would be wonderful if every Church member lived the gospel fully. They would not only enjoy more blessings in their lives but also be great examples to those around them. But we’re mortal, so we all fall short to some degree. The main reason that some live the gospel more fully than others is that we are each at different points in our conversions and in the strength of our testimonies. We each have different trials and different resources and people to help us.

Nonmembers might not understand terms like “conversion” and “testimony,” but they will understand that each person can choose how to live. You can explain that Heavenly Father intended it to be that way. He gave us our agency so we could grow spiritually by choosing the right. But Heavenly Father also knew that everyone—except Jesus Christ—would make mistakes, so He provided a Savior for us. Because of the Atonement, we can repent, be forgiven, learn from our mistakes, and move forward in life.

You can also explain that we do not judge those who are not following the standards of the Church. Instead, we try to help them, understand them, and be patient with them. While we do not tolerate sin, we do not condemn the sinner (see John 8:11). Repentance is still possible, for all of us. **NE**

Search the Scriptures



The answer to the question can be found in the scriptures. When people don’t keep the commandments, we should avoid being judgmental (see Matthew 7:1). Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” However, it is true that members of the Church should try to be obedient.

Madison M., 13, Texas, USA

Teach about the Atonement



When people say things like that, rather than finding fault with the member who isn’t following the rules,

I use it as an opportunity to teach about the Atonement. I tell them that just because we are Mormons doesn’t mean we are perfect and that we have the Atonement so we can repent of our sins and fix those mistakes. This usually opens the door to many more questions.

Jayde H., 16, Oregon, USA

Church Teaches Us to Do Good



Like everyone else, members of the Church experience challenges and temptations. All of us have weaknesses,

but it does not mean that this Church is not true. This is the Church of

Jesus Christ, which is helping people to know the true gospel and to receive exaltation. It's the natural man who disobeys the commandments (see Mosiah 3:19), and it's not the fault of the Church. The Church teaches us to do good works. But all of us have a choice.

Lavinia S., 19, Bulacan, Philippines

Standards Are for Our Happiness



This question really hits home for me because I know some individuals who have made choices that have taken them

away from the gospel. The Lord gives us commandments for our happiness and to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). The Lord wants us to return to Him; however, He wants us to make our own choices. That is why some individuals do not live our standards. The standards help me personally because I know that Heavenly Father has given them to me so that I can return and live with Him and be happy. They are proof of His love for me.

Morgane D., 18, Languedoc-Roussillon, France

Pray for Them and Visit Them

Members who do not live our standards might not have a testimony centered on Jesus Christ. We should pray for them, that they will seek the guidance of the Spirit and that

they will be able to gain their own testimony. We should visit these people and help them to come unto Christ.

Andrea C., 13, Lima, Peru

Be an Example



This Church is vital to help us fulfill the commandments of our Heavenly Father and to live with Him again. But just because someone belongs to the Church does not mean that he or she is always going to be a good person. Look at our world today, full of wickedness and abominations, even though the world is filled with people who decided to follow Jesus Christ in the premortal life. I think the best thing we can do is set an example for our friends.

Kaden S., 15, Utah, USA



SEE OTHERS AS THEY CAN BECOME

"We have the responsibility to see individuals not as they are but rather as they can become. I would plead with you to think of them in this way."

President Thomas S. Monson, "See Others as They May Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 70.

Live Our Standards



Just like any other organization or religion, there are some people who are more dedicated or less

dedicated. We just have to live our standards the best we can and hope and pray others will too.

Maren S., 16, Arizona, USA

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"I'm trying to control my thoughts, but there are so many temptations. How can I have cleaner thoughts?"

Send your answer and photo by November 15, 2013.

Go to newera.lds.org and click "Submit Your Work."

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

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



FOLLOW IN HIS *Footsteps*

Becoming like the Savior is a gradual, lifelong process, and you can begin by taking small steps every day.

By Melissa Zenteno
Church Magazines

The scriptures encourage us to become like Jesus Christ and “to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). But taking that first step can be difficult—especially when you don’t know how to begin.

You’ll find help in *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*. You might think it’s just a handbook for full-time missionaries, but it’s actually a great tool that can help you get started on your goal to become like the Savior. Chapter 6 is designed to help you understand and apply nine specific Christlike attributes.

Here are some suggestions for how to use *Preach My Gospel* and the scriptures as you seek to develop Christlike attributes:

- To begin, go to the Attribute Activity at the end of chapter 6 in *Preach My Gospel* (page 126). This activity can help you determine which attributes are currently your spiritual strengths and which ones you need to work on.

- After finishing the activity, prayerfully choose an attribute to focus on. Consider reading the section in chapter 6 about that attribute.
- Set specific, measurable goals that will help you develop this attribute. Give yourself a time frame to work on your goal. Then evaluate your progress. For example, if you're trying to be more charitable, you might set a goal to say positive things about your brother or sister three times each day for a week. At the end of the week, you would evaluate how you did with your goal and make adjustments that will help you continue to improve.
- *Preach My Gospel* provides scriptures to study with each attribute. You could prayerfully study the scriptures listed and write down the impressions you receive as you read.
- Ask Heavenly Father for help in

developing a Christlike character. Ask for specific help such as, "Please give me the strength to overcome my anger when my siblings take my things." The more specific your prayers, the easier it will be for you to recognize the Lord's answers.

Becoming like our Savior, Jesus Christ, is a gradual process and a life-long pursuit. Sometimes it may seem more difficult than advanced physics. But don't despair. The Lord promises us: "He [or she] that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24). As we receive, study, and apply light and truth and continue to follow God each day, we can be assured that we will become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ. **NE**



DAILY TASKS

Small, daily actions are footsteps along the path to become like our Savior. Consider these additional activities to help you develop Christlike attributes:

- Read scriptures listed in the Topical Guide or Guide to the Scriptures that relate to the attribute you are seeking to develop.
- Pray daily for the desire to change and the strength to improve.
- Keep a journal to document your progress.
- Talk to your parents. Let them know your goals so they can help you.



SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
Becoming More Christlike

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout October, you'll be studying about how to become more Christlike. After reading this article, prayerfully choose an attribute to work on this week or month. You could set a goal and then evaluate your progress. Were you more charitable or more obedient or more patient, for example? How did your goal to be more Christlike help you overcome difficulties? Consider sharing your experience with other youth, with your family, or online at lds.org/go/03Footsteps.



By Elder
Adrián Ochoa
Of the Seventy

Want to feel better and more confident physically and emotionally? Regular exercise will help.



**BE STRONG,
BE HEALTHY,
BE SMART,**

I recently read an interesting concept about exercising. I read that if you get up early in the morning, put on your exercise clothes, and think, “I will just wear this, go outside for a walk, and if I feel good, I will start jogging,” you will likely get a good workout before you even realize it. Coming up with a simple plan like this can help you develop good exercise habits and care for your body. For many people, getting started and being consistent are the most difficult parts. If you remember that exercise blesses not only your body but also your mind and intellect, it will help you have the desire to become more physically fit. As you exercise, you will become an energized person who feels strong, confident, alert, and secure.

I remember the story of a bird that started to trade his feathers for worms. It was easy to get food that way, and the bird thought he had plenty of feathers. As he continued to trade his feathers, the bird enjoyed not having to get up early to hunt for worms anymore. He could sit in his nest all day and never have to move a muscle.

Eventually, however, the bird got too used to this and realized he could no longer fly because he had lost his vital feathers.

This can happen to anyone who falls into the trap of bad habits, lazy routines, or use of addictive substances. In *For the Strength of Youth* we read that these things “harm your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. They damage relationships with family and friends and diminish your feelings of self-worth. They limit your ability to make choices for yourself.”¹ Being active and eating right help us to avoid these bad habits. If the bird had continued to fly and hunt, he never would have lost his feathers. Similarly, if we “flap our wings” and exercise regularly, we develop the ability to avoid tendencies that harm and degrade us.

Just as some individuals struggle with physical health, others struggle with emotional health. Life can be difficult, and sometimes we may have feelings of anxiety, depression, or lack of self-esteem. But remember that for both physical and emotional health, exercise and hard work help

to maintain a positive perspective. Taking care of your body also blesses your mind and helps you to remember that you are a child of God and can be confident and happy. Our emotional, physical, and spiritual sides are all linked together. *For the Strength of Youth* teaches: “Your emotional health is also important and may affect your spiritual and physical well-being. Disappointment and occasional sadness are part of this mortal life. However, if you have prolonged feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, or depression, talk with your parents and your bishop and seek help.”²

Why do we find people around us who seem to be more energetic and joyful? One main reason is habits. If we observe our body from a spiritual perspective and understand that it is “a temple, a gift from God,” we will love it and keep it sacred.³

To me, *sacred* means clean, nourished, and strong. One of the ways Heavenly Father helps us keep our bodies sacred is by giving us the Word of Wisdom. *For the Strength of Youth* explains: “When you are obedient to [the Word of Wisdom], you

remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life. You gain the blessings of a healthy body, an alert mind, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost. You will be prepared to serve the Lord. Never let Satan or others deceive you into thinking that breaking the Word of Wisdom will make you happier, more popular, or more attractive.”⁴ As you follow the Word of Wisdom, remember that you are taking care of both your body and your mind and that it allows you to “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge” (D&C 89:19).

Instead of being a bird lazily trading feathers, put on your tennis shoes and be active. Exercise consistently. Enroll in your favorite sport or make friends with whom you can run or do other recreational activities. As you do physical things, you train not only your body but also your mind. Exercise strengthens emotional health too. Remember that the most important thing is not how fast or athletic you are—it is how consistent you are. As you exercise regularly, you’ll not only be happier but you’ll also become stronger, healthier, and smarter. **NE**

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 27.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 27.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 25.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 25.

*Don't be like the
lazy bird that traded
its feathers for worms.*



Just SMILE and SAY NO

One summer, I participated in an internship on an island in Bicol, Philippines. The view of the ocean was wonderful, and I looked forward to each morning.

I dreaded the evenings, however. That's when the people in the camp would start drinking and having parties. Invitations to such parties were frequent, and my fellow interns and I had to attend, since not attending would be disrespectful.

The first party was a welcoming party for new interns. I was afraid to attend, because I was pretty sure that they would offer us drinks and I wasn't sure how to decline. I called a friend in my home ward, and he gave me some wonderful advice that boosted my confidence.

When the party began, they offered us drinks but, fortunately, did not compel us to drink. Since my fellow interns accepted my stand of not drinking, refusing the next offers to drink was now easy for me—until one night. During one of the parties, the president of the company came. He was carrying a bottle of *lambanog* (a local wine made from coconut).

Soon after his arrival, I saw him pouring some of the wine. He then said, "You must learn how to drink" and gave the glass to one of the interns. She quickly drank it.

My heart began to pound heavily. It would soon be my turn. I was whispering silently to myself, "I will not drink it. I will not drink it." Then

I had turned down offers to drink, but now the president of the company was offering me a glass of wine.

I saw the president extending the glass of wine to me. I didn't know what to do. My fellow interns were looking at me, waiting to see what I would do. I smiled at the president and humbly said, "Sorry, sir, but I do not drink."

I knew he was disappointed. He asked why I didn't drink. I said, "I am a Mormon."

He said, "I haven't heard of that religion. It sounds like a type of food." Everyone laughed.

I smiled too, not because of his joke but because I knew I had done the right thing.

No one ever offered me a drink again. But still the ridicule did not cease, even from my own friends. One even said that I was lying and that it's unimaginable that members of the Church do not drink. During this time I felt the pressures that come to members of the Church.

My stay on that island taught me a lot of lessons, not just academically but spiritually. I learned that mockery may never cease, but the Spirit of the Lord will always guide you to do what is right. **NE**

Hazel Marie Tibule lives in Metro Manila, Philippines.





RYAN STOKER

"Mount Rushmore cost taxpayers millions of dollars. If it were up to me, I would have made their faces into Pez dispensers instead."

American History



RANDY GLASBERGEN

King Lamoni ponders a recent acquaintance.



KEVIN BECKSTROM



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



NEVER ALONE

I was having a difficult time in school one year. I was shy and didn't make friends easily. One evening, I decided to go for a walk to find some relief.

I found a secluded corner and spent some time pondering and praying about what I wanted. Feeling as if no one understood me, I desperately longed to have someone in my life who could see me for what I was inside, for what I could be. I wanted someone who knew all my faults yet

still loved me. I wanted someone who realized that I was (and still am) trying so hard to be better. I didn't want to feel so alone all the time.

I don't know how long I was there, but I poured my heart and soul out to Heavenly Father. I cried until I didn't think I could cry anymore. Then I stood up and started walking back home. As I was walking, I looked down at my shadow. Instead of the usual one shadow, I had two. It wasn't a miracle or anything; it was just the effect of multiple streetlamps. But when I saw those two shadows, the

thought came into my head: "You are never alone. You'll never walk alone." I know now that this thought came from the Holy Ghost and that this experience was a blessing to comfort me. That one simple thought reminded me that things would work out and that Heavenly Father knows me perfectly.

Since that day, there have been many more instances where those exact words have reminded me of what God has already told me. For example, once when I asked a priesthood holder to give me a blessing of comfort after the death of

a friend, without knowing about my previous experience, he told me in the blessing, “You are never alone.” The exact same words! It was such a sweet and gentle reminder to trust Him and remember that everything will be all right.

Through prayer and the Holy Ghost, Heavenly Father can always be with me, so I always have someone I can rely on. Because of these wonderful experiences, I know of God’s great love for me.

Whitney H., Utah, USA

FAITH, NOT FEAR

One night after a conversation with a close friend, I was feeling fearful about the future. The more I thought about life, the more uncertain and worried I felt. These feelings stayed with me until the next day when I flipped through a hymnbook while at a Church meeting. I came across a hymn I’d never heard before: “When Faith Endures” (*Hymns*, no. 128). I read:

*I will not doubt, I will not fear;
God’s love and strength are always near.
His promised gift helps me to find
An inner strength and peace of mind.
I give the Father willingly
My trust, my prayers, humility.
His Spirit guides; his love assures
That fear departs when faith endures.*

The lyrics calmed me, and my worries faded instantly. Through the words of a hymn, I learned to trust in the plan that Heavenly Father has lovingly designed for each of us. As I strengthen my faith, I am able to overcome anything, including fear.

Susan S., South Africa

FROM CORN MAZE TO CONVERSION

Two summers ago I heard someone talk about missionary work for those who aren’t serving a full-time mission. The speaker told us how important members of the Church are for the Churchwide missionary effort. He asked us to make a focused effort to help the missionaries in our wards by bringing a friend to Church activities and Sunday meetings. I decided that I would pray for missionary opportunities and make an effort to act on the promptings I would be given.

I started my first week of school and met a new guy named Chris, who had moved from across town. Chris was really cool and we soon became friends. One day I invited him to a combined youth activity at a corn maze. On the drive to the corn maze, Chris started asking questions about the Church. As I answered his questions, he asked me how I knew so much. I told him that we learn about the gospel in Church meetings and in seminary. To my surprise, Chris asked when seminary was. I told him it was every morning at six. I thought for sure that he would not be interested in waking up that early, but he surprised me again by asking me to pick him up on my way there.

Chris began attending seminary and church. He also started to meet with the missionaries. And a year later he was baptized. I had the opportunity to baptize Chris, and it was an amazing experience that I will never forget. I believe this would not have happened if I had not prayed for missionary opportunities. Heavenly Father knows each of us, and He helps us if we ask for it.

Taylor P., Montana, USA





**By Elder
Robert D. Hales**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO UNLOCK THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

Tithing is a test of faith with eternal blessings. It is one of the basic ways we **witness our faith** in the Lord and our obedience to His laws and commandments. Tithing is one of the commandments that qualifies us, by our faith, to enter the temple—the house of the Lord.

The strict observance of the law of tithing:

- Not only qualifies us to receive the higher, saving ordinances of the temple, it allows us to receive them on behalf of our ancestors.
- Develops and **tests our faith**.

By sacrificing to the Lord what we may think we need or want for ourselves, we learn to **rely on Him**. Our faith in Him makes it possible to keep temple covenants and receive eternal temple blessings.

- **Fortifies our faith**, and that faith sustains us through the trials, tribulations, and sorrows in our life's journey.

- Teaches us to **control our desires** and passions for the things of this world.

- Encourages us to be honest in our dealings with our fellowmen.

- Helps us **learn to trust** that what we have been given, through the blessings of the Lord and our own diligent efforts, is sufficient for our needs.

- Prepares us to live the higher law of consecration—to **dedicate and give** all our time, talents, and resources to the work of the Lord.

To those who faithfully and honestly live the law of tithing, the Lord promises an abundance of blessings. Some of these blessings are temporal, just as tithes are temporal. But like the outward physical ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, the commandment to pay tithing requires temporal sacrifice, which ultimately yields great spiritual blessings.

The temporal and spiritual blessings of tithing are specifically tailored to us and our families, according to the Lord's will. But to **receive them**, we must obey the law upon which they are predicated (see D&C 130:20–21).

Would any of us intentionally reject an outpouring of blessings from the Lord? Sadly, this is what we do when we fail to pay our tithing. We say no to the very blessings we are seeking and praying to receive. If you are one who has doubted the blessings of tithing, I encourage you to **accept**

the Lord's invitation to “prove [Him] now herewith” (Malachi 3:10). Pay your tithing. Unlock the windows of heaven. You will be abundantly blessed for your obedience and faithfulness to the Lord's laws and commandments. **NE**

Adapted from an October 2002 general conference address.



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/03Tithing.

HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

“My family went through a tough economic time, where I was the only person earning money, and it wasn't much. But I knew paying tithing would bring blessings to my family. Each time, I paid the amount, knowing I had done something right. Now I can see the blessings, and I thank my Heavenly Father for the sacred promise of tithing.”

Marilyn R., Texas, USA

“We all get at least one blessing from paying tithing, and I think it's overlooked: a Church that can build meetinghouses and temples as well as fund activities. Without tithing, none of this would happen.”

Weston P., Colorado, USA



WHETHER OR NOT

THE INVITATION

IS ACCEPTED AS YOU

INVITE OTHERS TO

“COME AND SEE”

[JOHN 1:39],

YOU WILL FEEL

THE APPROVAL OF THE LORD

AND, WITH THAT APPROVAL,

AN ADDED MEASURE OF

FAITH

TO SHARE YOUR BELIEFS

AGAIN AND AGAIN.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
April 2013 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE

Learn more
today at
[lds.org/go/
YouthRole](https://lds.org/go/YouthRole).



YOUR ROLE IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

It's inspiring to witness how the Lord is moving His work forward at an unprecedented rate. But you're more than just a witness—you're an active participant. And your time to participate is now.

.....

As you work to fulfill your important roles, check out a website that's been designed just for you. At lds.org/go/YouthRole, you'll find articles and study helps to learn more about:

1. Priesthood service (a section with ideas for both young men and young women).
2. Temple ordinances.
3. Missionary preparation (full-time and member-missionary).

These three items may seem unrelated, but your participation in them will be much more effective once you realize how they're connected in one united work—the work of salvation. As you study what that means for you, the website will help you find answers to questions such as these:

- What happens inside temples?
- How do men and women work together to accomplish the work of the priesthood?
- How do I prepare for life as a missionary?
- How do I learn and teach by the Spirit?

Plus! What's the value of a full-time mission? Watch a short video with personal experiences at lds.org/go/03Value.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS