

THE New Era

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The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

To subscribe:

By phone: Call 1-800-537-5971 to order using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express.

Online: Go to store.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

By mail: Send \$8 U.S. check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

To change address:

Send old and new address information to: Distribution Services P.O. Box 26368

Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

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POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY

FACILITIES: Send address corrections to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.



ON THE COVER: Strength and Guidance for Anxious Times, p. 2. Photograph by Christina Smith

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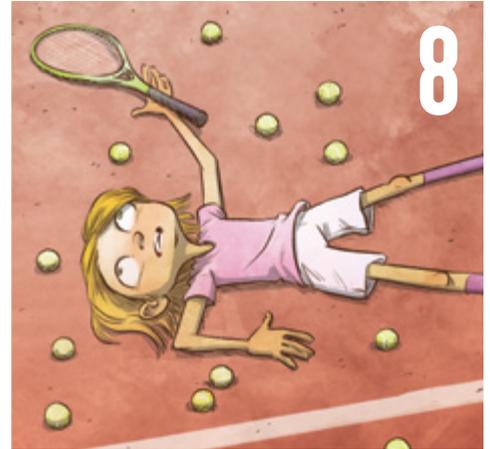
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By President Dallin H. Oaks
First Counselor in the
First Presidency



STRENGTH AND GUIDANCE FOR ANXIOUS TIMES





Our most reliable prevention of anxiety in eternal terms is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We live in challenging times. Day-to-day stresses and uncertainty, as well as wickedness, are all around us. As a result, Church leaders have noticed an alarming increase in the amount of anxiety experienced among young people.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, wants you to know that there is help for dealing with this problem and any other problem you may face in mortality.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPARISONS

No one knows for sure what has caused such great increases in anxiety. One suggested cause is an increased use of technology. Some of this is motivated or caused by what has come to be called FOMO, which means the “fear of missing out” on something.

A related possible cause is the way technology allows teens and others to constantly compare themselves and their lives with those of their peers. Such constant comparison enhances anxiety and depresses self-esteem.

How? What most people post on the internet are only their significant achievements and their emotional highs. This allows viewers who concentrate on such postings to compare the highs of their peers as if they were constant, compared with their own ups and downs, which suffer by comparison. Such comparisons are contrary to the scriptural teaching that we are not required to run faster than we have strength (see Mosiah 4:27). Our loving Savior will judge us individually, not according to the performance of our peers.

STRENGTH THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Whatever the uncertainties about the causes of anxiety, we who have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ understand that the most reliable prevention of anxiety in eternal terms is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We begin with personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. He has called us His friends, and He has promised to give us strength to overcome the inevitable challenges of mortality. We rely on the hope and assurance that come from His gospel. Our faith causes us to trust in its Author. His strength is sufficient to sustain us, and His promises are sure. We go forward with “faith in every footstep”—to use the words of a great song. You are marvelous examples of that faith. You are sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father who loves



**ALL WILL BE WELL
IF WE GET ON
AND STAY ON THE
COVENANT PATH.**



you, who shares your concerns, who listens to your prayers, and who honors your service.

THE GIFT OF GUIDANCE

The restored gospel gives us the perspective to understand the purpose of life and the role of opposition. It teaches us and gives us direction to grow toward the eternal destiny established by a loving Father in Heaven.

There is great power in the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Our unshakeable faith in that doctrine guides our steps. It enlightens our minds and empowers our actions. This guidance and enlightenment and power are among the greatest gifts we have received from our Heavenly Father. By understanding and conforming our lives to that doctrine and through the principle of repentance, we keep ourselves on the path toward our

eternal destiny—reunion and exaltation with our loving heavenly parents.

We were placed here on earth to progress toward our destiny of eternal life. The doctrine of the restored Church of Jesus Christ gives us a unique perspective and different values to guide our mortal decisions. It sets us apart from those who lack that eternal perspective. It allows us to be steadfast and immovable against the winds of untruths and the earthquakes of mortal adversities.

THERE IS A PLAN

We live in stressful times. For some young people, the stresses are financial, including the loss of employment or home security. For others, the stresses are associated with painful separations from those they love, caused either by divorce of parents or other threats to personal security.

We also have the challenge of living in a godless and increasingly amoral generation. We are confronted by a culture of evil and personal wickedness in the world as more and more publicized voices deny or doubt the existence of God. More and more support the idea that all authority and all rules of behavior are man-made and can be accepted or rejected as one chooses, each person being free to decide for himself or herself what is right and wrong.

My dear young brothers and sisters, we are surrounded with evil influences, but we do have Divine assurances that all will be well if we get on and stay on the covenant path. I hope you know why your Church leaders and teachers give you the teachings and counsel we give. We love you, and our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love you. Their plan for us is the “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). That plan and Their commandments,



ordinances, and covenants lead us to the greatest happiness and joy in this life and in the life to come. As servants of the Father and the Son, we teach and counsel as They have directed us by the Holy Ghost. We have no desire other than to speak what is true and to encourage you to do what They have outlined as the pathway to eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

YOU HAVE A CHOICE

We go forward by making choices, and our teachings are intended to help you with those choices. Many choices are between good or evil, but more frequently they are choices between two goods.

Over 10 years ago I gave a talk titled “Good, Better, Best.” In that talk I said that “just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the

time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives. . . . We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best.”¹

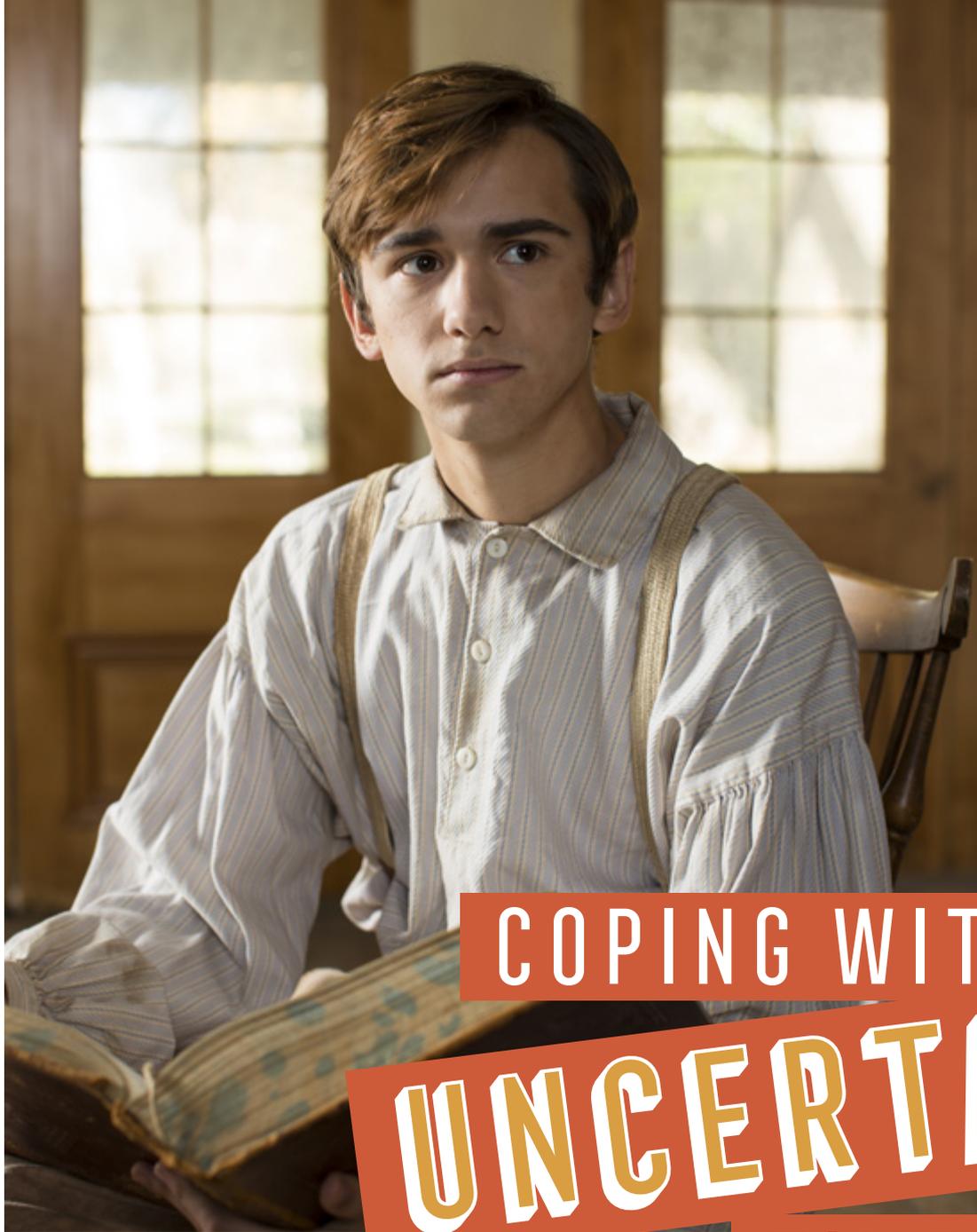
I want nothing more than for you to make the choices that get you on, and keep you on, the covenant path. That is the path that our Heavenly Father desires for all of His children. We have a Savior who has assured us of immortality, and who suffered for our sins and has experienced all the anxiety and stress of mortal life that He will know how to succor, or help, us as we seek to return to our heavenly parents to live the life that They live. **NE**

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 2007 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104, 107).

WE GO FORWARD BY MAKING CHOICES. . . . MANY CHOICES ARE BETWEEN GOOD OR EVIL, BUT MORE FREQUENTLY THEY ARE CHOICES BETWEEN TWO GOODS.

Young Joseph Smith studying the Bible. Taken from Church History Museum exhibit



COPING WITH UNCERTAIN TIMES

WE ARE BLESSED WITH RESTORED TRUTH THAT CAN HELP US NO MATTER WHAT WE'RE GOING THROUGH.

By Sam Lofgran
Church Magazines

We've had a crazy last few months, haven't we? During 2020, because of COVID-19, we've seen schools go online or get canceled; many businesses closed, and people lost their jobs; Church meetings got cancelled, and temples were closed; and many of us were confined to our homes.

It's been a difficult time for many of us and for many different reasons. I think the hardest thing for me has been the amount of uncertainty I've felt—will I still have my job? Will we have school in a classroom or online next semester? Will I get sick? Will anyone I know or love die? How long will all this last?

The week before the April 2020 general conference, when many of us were in the midst of quarantine, I reread the account of the First Vision. What stood out to me was how Joseph Smith felt before he went to pray. I tried to imagine myself in his situation—having a huge question but not knowing where to find the truth.

I saw that Joseph was experiencing a lot of confusion and uncertainty—just like me. While our situations were very different, I really identified with the sense of confusion, uncertainty, and “great uneasiness” that he felt (Joseph Smith—History 1:8).

Reading about his feelings before he went to the Sacred Grove made me think about how glorious it must have been for him to receive such a clear answer to his question. He didn’t have to wonder anymore. He *knew*.

The First Vision didn’t just bring peace and hope to Joseph regarding that one question—it has blessed all who have heard the gospel and strive to live it. Reading Joseph’s experience made me think about the ways the Restoration has blessed me personally when I am going through trials or have questions.

BLESSINGS OF THE RESTORATION

One blessing we’ve received is the Book of Mormon. We have added scripture that teaches us so much about Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, the plan of salvation, the Holy Ghost, and so many other amazing truths that bring us peace about our future and comfort during difficulty.¹

Because of the Restoration, we also have the priesthood, through which God blesses us constantly, especially when we are sick, hurt, or in need of extra comfort. Through priesthood ordinances, we make covenants that help us stay close to God. We can repent, be baptized, and be cleansed of our sins. We receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, who can do so much for us—guide us, comfort us, teach us. We then have the opportunity to remember Jesus Christ and renew our covenants when we

partake of the sacrament. And we get to participate in temple ordinances, such as the endowment and temple sealings, through which Heavenly Father gives us extra protection, blessings, and knowledge and makes it possible for us to live eternally with Him and our families.²

The Restoration also teaches us that we can receive revelation—not only personal revelation for ourselves but also guidance from living prophets and apostles. President Russell M. Nelson has said that Apostles “point the way as we make our way through the heart-wrenching maze of our mortal experiences.”³

There are so many other ways that the Restoration has blessed us—I’m sure a few other things have come to your mind. Joseph’s vision, and everything that came afterward, really has given us more access to peace and to hope.

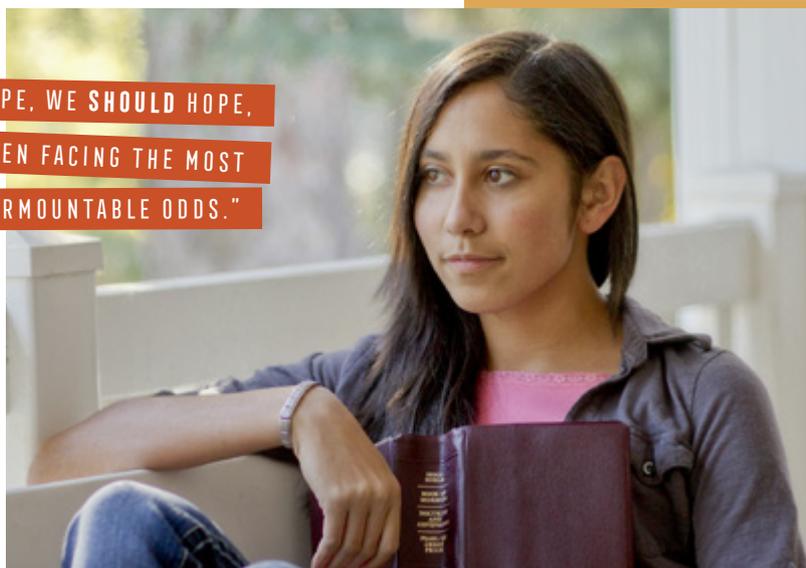
Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Because the Restoration reaffirmed the foundational truth that God does work in this world, we *can* hope, we *should* hope, even when facing the most insurmountable odds.”⁴

Throughout our lives we will continue to encounter challenges, confusion, and uncertainty. But we are blessed with restored truth that will help us no matter what we are going through. **NE**

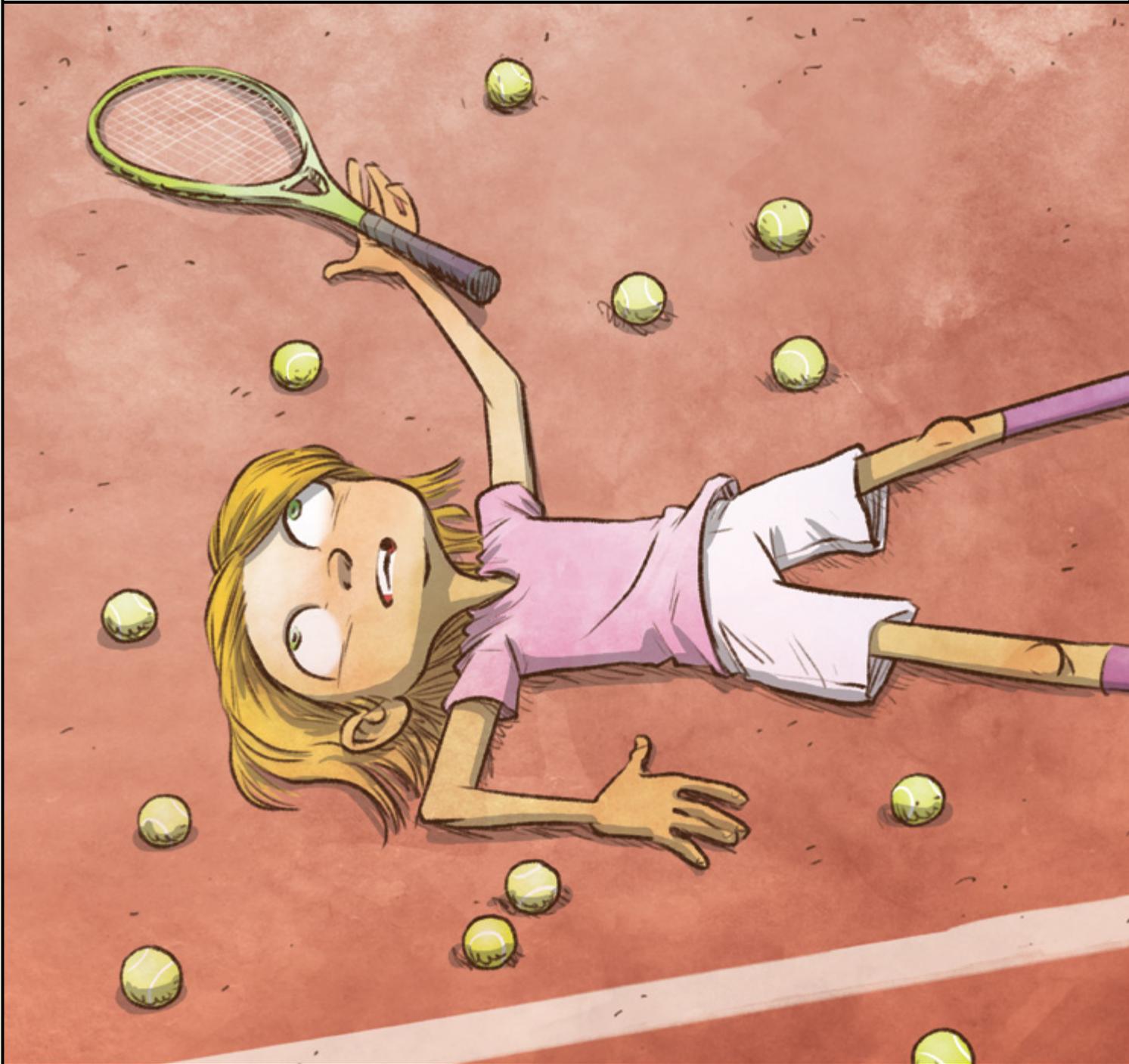
NOTES

1. See Ulisses Soares, Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 32–35).
2. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Melchizedek Priesthood and the Keys,” Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 69–72).
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” Apr. 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 90).
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, April 2020 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 83).

“WE CAN HOPE, WE SHOULD HOPE,
EVEN WHEN FACING THE MOST
INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS.”



ARE YOU YOUR OWN
WORST ENEMY?



TRY THESE TIPS FOR befriending yourself instead of putting yourself down.

By Amanda Dunn
Church Magazines

The day I played tennis for the first time was also the day I vowed never to set foot on a tennis court again. My friend had offered to teach me how to play, and I thought it sounded like fun. I'd seen him and some other friends play before, and it didn't look that hard.

I was right: tennis wasn't hard—it was *impossible*. From the get-go, my hold on the racket felt awkward, I didn't know how to stand, and I kept hitting the ball either too hard or too soft—that is, on the rare occasions when I actually hit the ball.

My friend tried teaching me some techniques, but no matter what I did, I wasn't improving. On top of that, the sun was scorching hot, and I was sweating in my poor outfit choice of a gray shirt and thick black pants. An hour into it, I couldn't handle it anymore.

"I can't do this." I told my friend as I sunk down onto the court. "I am the least athletic person in the world!"

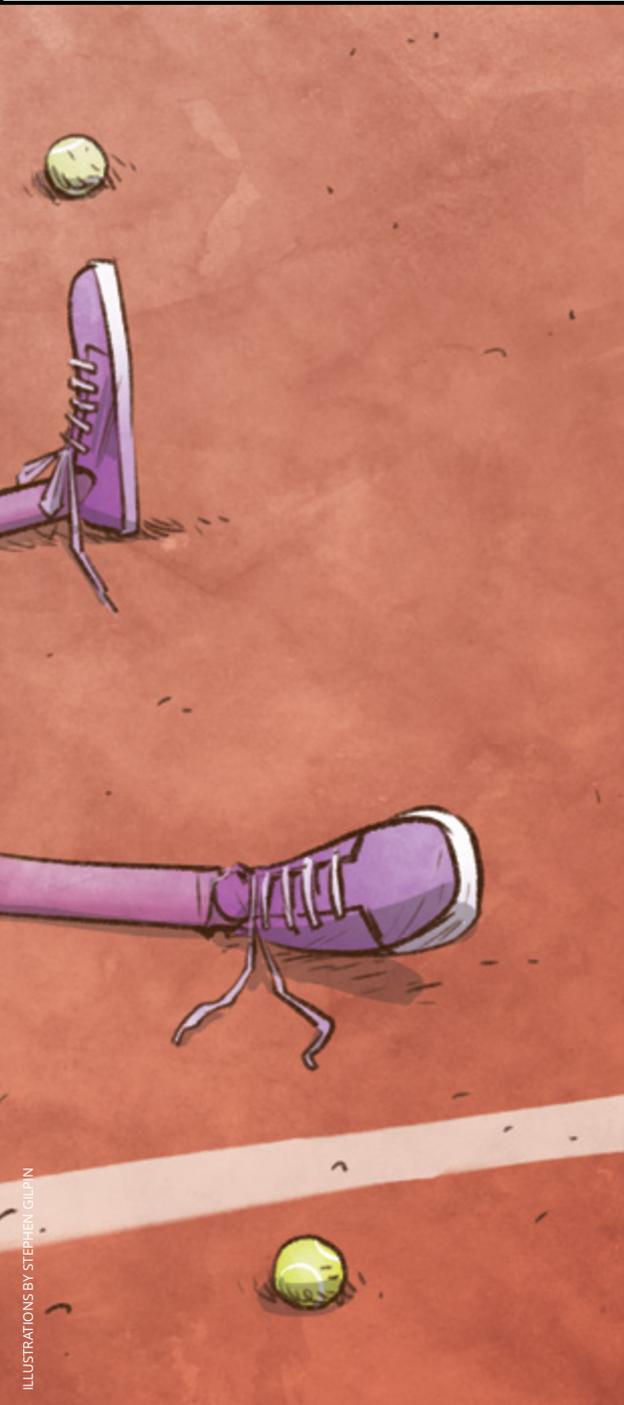
He came and sat by me. "It's OK," he said. "We don't have to keep going. But you can hardly beat yourself up because you aren't Serena Williams your first day on the court. You're just learning."

BE YOUR FRIEND, NOT YOUR ENEMY

We went home, but I thought about that day a lot after that. My friend was right—I *was* just learning. He had been patient with me, so why couldn't I be patient with myself? Eventually, I broke my vow and decided to try tennis again. Guess what? I even hit a few balls over the net! So I kept at it. Now it's one of my favorite hobbies!

Sometimes we develop a negative self-image because we are the ones who have to live with our own flaws and failures. But Heavenly Father doesn't want us to treat ourselves badly or give up—He wants us to care for ourselves just like a friend would.

As we acknowledge the ways we sometimes treat ourselves like enemies, we can learn how to combat self-rivaling behaviors and be kinder to ourselves with the help of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



Here are descriptions of four types of self-enemies—impatient, fearful, comparative, and natural. Take a look at each one and see if they sound familiar. If you are your own worst enemy in any of these ways, try to become your own best friend instead by following each friendly tip.



DON'T DEMEAN YOURSELF

“As children of God, we should not demean or vilify ourselves, as if beating up on ourselves is somehow going to make us the person God wants us to become. . . . I would hope we could pursue personal improvement in a way that doesn’t include . . . demolishing our self-esteem. That is *not* what the Lord wants for Primary children or anyone else who honestly sings, ‘I’m trying to be like Jesus.’”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2017 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 40).

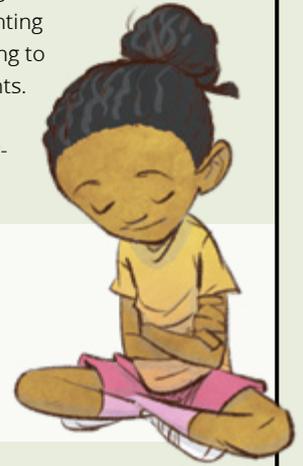
THE IMPATIENT ENEMY

VS.

THE PATIENT FRIEND

If you are an impatient enemy to yourself—just like I was that day on the court—you think if you don’t get something right the first time, you’ll never get it right. You feel like you should be doing everything perfectly right now and don’t want to wait to give yourself time to grow.

If you’re a patient friend to yourself, you tell yourself what my friend told me—you’re just learning! You recognize that learning means you’ll make mistakes, but you can improve. You also recognize that part of learning is repenting when you sin and striving to keep the commandments. You accept that it takes time to become the person you want to be.



A FRIENDLY TIP

Try slowing down as you say your morning and nighttime prayers. Spend a little extra time talking to God. Ponder what you want to say to Him, and listen to what He tells you through the Spirit.

THE FEARFUL ENEMY

VS.

THE REASSURING FRIEND

If you are a fearful enemy to yourself, you worry excessively about the future. You might be afraid to talk about what you believe or to share your talents. You struggle making decisions and maybe even fear you’ll never be good enough for Heavenly Father.

When you are a reassuring friend to yourself, you dispel fear with faith. You seek peace about the future when you pray. You share your talents, even if you’re still developing them. You know Heavenly Father loves you and will help you make good decisions through the Holy Ghost.



A FRIENDLY TIP

Consider the blessings you see in your life now. Thank Heavenly Father for them. Write them down. Remember things you’re already doing well when you ponder ways to improve.

THE COMPARATIVE ENEMY

vs.

THE CONFIDENT FRIEND

If you are a comparative enemy to yourself, you are frequently concerned with what everyone else is doing. You compare your appearance, testimony, talents, and status to the people around you. It's hard for you to recognize what makes you unique and special to Heavenly Father.

As a confident friend to yourself, you're more concerned with being a better *you* than you are with being more like others. Jesus Christ is your ultimate example, and you know God sees wonderful potential in you. You congratulate others on their abilities and accomplishments without demeaning your own.



A FRIENDLY TIP

Try standing in front of the mirror and looking at yourself for one minute each morning for a week. Imagine what Heavenly Father sees in you—beyond your appearance or status. To really boost your self-confidence, stay off social media for that whole week.

THE NATURAL ENEMY

vs.

OUR ETERNAL FRIEND

If you give in to the natural man, you are being an enemy to yourself by hindering your own spiritual progress. The natural man or woman is someone who gives in to passions and appetites of the flesh instead of listening to the Spirit (see Guide to the Scriptures, "Natural Man"). King Benjamin taught that "the natural man is an enemy to God" (Mosiah 3:19).

The adversary wants us to feed natural desires and ignore our divine identity. But God knows our worth and always roots for us—even when we don't. He loves us and sent His Son so that we could repent.

Jesus Christ loves us and is our Friend. Because of Him, each of us can "[put] off the natural man and [become] a saint" as we listen to the Spirit (Mosiah 3:19). We can overcome our impatient, fearful, or comparative behaviors—even if that takes time.

A FRIENDLY TIP

Learn about Jesus Christ and follow His example each day. Remember His sacrifice and how that reflects your worth. Think how He would treat you, and treat yourself that way.



CONCLUSION

We aren't perfect. We sometimes feel scared, embarrassed, or unsure. Conditions around us can make things harder, like the hot sun did when I tried to learn tennis. In fact, with everything going on in life, it can sometimes seem impossible to just get along with ourselves.

But through Jesus Christ, we can find strength and hope, conquer our weaknesses, and become more like Him. And since He is our Friend, we become more like Him when we are friends to ourselves too. **NE**

CALL THE CHURCH

WASH

NAMM

COME
FOLLOW
ME

SCHEMATA



Using the full name of the Church seemed simple, but it turned out to take more effort than I expected.

By Lauri Ahola

When President Russell M. Nelson spoke about using the correct name of the Church, his message was very clear to me: “It is the command of the Lord. . . . To remove the Lord’s name from the Lord’s Church is a major victory for Satan” (“The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 87, 88).

Committed to using the Church’s full name, I waited for the next opportunity to claim my membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sure enough, that opportunity came. “You Mormons are such kind people,” someone told me.

“Well, thank you,” I answered. “As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we believe we’re all brothers and sisters.” Then the conversation continued with him and everyone else talking about the kindness of “Mormons.”

Although I had done my part in saying the full name of the Church, my friends and associates still viewed me as part of the “Mormon Church” and not necessarily as a follower of Christ, let alone as a member of Christ’s restored Church.

WAS IT WORTH THE TROUBLE?

Over the next several interactions about my faith, I found it awkward to say the full name of the Church multiple times in the same conversation. Everyone I spoke to seemed to give me odd expressions. And they continued to use the term “Mormons.”

I wanted to make my interactions feel more natural. But this turned out to be more difficult than I expected, particularly with individuals I didn’t want to offend. I didn’t want to be embarrassed or lazy about living my faith, but I also

didn’t want to come across as harsh, since many of these people had previously called me “Mormon,” with me accepting it. I also heard many members of the Church still calling members of the Church “Mormons.”

I found myself asking whether using the full name of the Church was really *that* important in the grand scheme of things. The “Mormon” brand, after all, is quite positive in the minds of many people—being a “Mormon” had often been an asset to me. But in revisiting President Nelson’s talk, I was impressed that this really is that important, even if it did cause some awkwardness in conversation. So I recommitted myself.

COME, FOLLOW ME—3 NEPHI 27

“Ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

“And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.”

3 Nephi 27:7-8

A CHANCE TO TESTIFY OF CHRIST

One day I was visiting a friend at a church of another faith. Someone came up to me and with a bright smile asked if I was a Mormon. “Yes, I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” I said.

He started asking me several questions, each beginning with: “Does the Mormon Church believe . . . ?”

And each time, I began my answer with the phrase: “In the restored Church of Jesus Christ, we believe . . .”

This banter went back and forth several times. When he noticed that I wasn’t

accepting the title “Mormon,” he asked me point-blank, “Are you not Mormon?”

So I asked him if he knew who Mormon was—he didn’t. I told him that Mormon was a prophet, a historian, and a military general in the ancient Americas. I am honored to be associated with a man who was so dedicated to the service of God and others.

“But,” I continued, “Mormon didn’t die for my sins. Jesus Christ is my God and my Savior. He is my Redeemer. And it is by His name that I want to be known at the last day, and it’s by His name that I hope to be known today.”

I felt the assurance of the Spirit supporting me in this short testimony to my

new acquaintance. After a few seconds of silence, he said, “So, you’re a Christian?”

“Yes, I’m a Christian,” I responded, “and a member of Christ’s restored Church.”

Seeking to follow the instruction of the prophet seemed simple, but it turned out to take more effort than I expected. I’m still not perfect at following everything I’m asked to do, but I make sure to use the full name of the Church.

I’m grateful for the Spirit that I feel when I get to testify to others about my Savior and my membership in His Church. **NE**
The author lives in Virginia, USA.



Get in
the loop!

MESSAGES

PEOPLE

GOSPEL LIVING: Circles

Is the Circles tab a mystery to you? Do you only use it to let your class know you'll be at the activity this week? Circles can do so much more!

ACTIVITIES

CONTENT

People

The app automatically creates groups of people—circles—for you based on your membership information. It gives you a circle for your family, your Sunday School class, your quorum or Young Women class, and, depending on your calling, your presidency.

Messages

The most basic function of Circles is messaging. Simply type out your message and tap [send]. Your message then goes out to everyone in that circle.

Content

Share the inspiring content you find in Discover with your circles. Tap on a tile, then tap [share]. Choose [share in app], and you will be able to choose which circle you would like to send the content to.

Activities

If you have a family outing or a quorum or class activity coming up, you can create and share that event using Circles. Create a new Activity in Today, and then tap [share]. Choose [share in app], which will take you to Circles. Then you can send your Activity as a message that will show up on the calendars of everyone in that circle.

HARD QUESTIONS,

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

During my senior year in high school, a classmate named Brian began asking me questions about the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith. I quickly realized, however, that Brian wasn't sincere. He just wanted to make fun of my beliefs.

Brian would usually ask a snide question about the Church or the Prophet, watch my reaction, and then walk away. Some of his questions caught me off guard, but had he given me the chance, I could have answered most of them.

At the time, I didn't appreciate Brian's questions. But after graduating, I realized that he had done me a favor. College studies and mission service were just around the corner. Thanks to Brian, I was better prepared for the questions I would soon face and the questions I would soon ask.

I learned that the older I got, the more difficult the questions became. Fortunately, I had learned where to find answers—even for the hard questions.



REAL ANSWERS

If we have the courage to ask, accept, and act, we have the promise that Heavenly Father will answer.



ILLUSTRATION BY DEAN MACADAM

WHERE DO WE FIND ANSWERS?

When you have a hard question about the gospel, about life, about your future, or about anything else, where do you go for answers? Your peers? Siri? The internet? As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have better sources.

Elder Marcos A. Aidukaitis of the Seventy has said that Heavenly Father will help us find answers, but we have to seek them in the way He has prescribed. “It requires more effort than to just search the Internet, but it is worth it,” he said.¹

Nephi has some great counsel. He tells us that “the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

We learn the words of Christ by reading the scriptures, praying, and listening to the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. We also come to understand Christ’s words through counsel from our parents, guidance from local Church leaders, and teachings of living prophets.

One person who asked hard questions in the Old Testament was the queen of Sheba. She doubted that Solomon was as wise as she had heard, but she went to see him anyway.

“When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions . . . ; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

“And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing

hid from Solomon which he told her not" (2 Chronicles 9:1–2; see also 1 Kings 10:1–3).

Likewise, we may wonder if a Church leader, a passage of scripture, or a prayer really can lead to an answer. And we may have difficulty even asking certain questions. But if we have the courage to ask, accept, and act, we have the promise that Heavenly Father will answer.

"Our Father in Heaven expects us to study it out first and then pray for guidance as we seek answers to questions and concerns in our personal lives," said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then-Second Counselor in the First Presidency. "We have our Heavenly Father's assurance that He will hear and answer our prayers. The answer may come through the voice and wisdom of trusted friends and family, the scriptures, and the words of prophets."²

CAN I BE FORGIVEN?

One of the hardest questions we may have is whether we can be forgiven, especially when we keep making the same dumb mistakes. This question also has an answer. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, that answer is *yes!* But just as Christ's Atonement is central to "the gospel of repentance" (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1), so confession is essential to the process of repentance—especially of serious sins. We must confess all of our sins to our Heavenly Father, and we must confess serious sins to the bishop.

Confession to your bishop is not fun. You might think it's easier to confess to a friend, parent, or youth leader instead. But your bishop is the one the Lord has



called to determine your worthiness and to help you repent. He knows that Church members, young and old, make mistakes. No matter how hard it is, go talk to him. He won't be mad at you or make you feel bad. He's your friend and will help.

Elder Jörg Klebingat of the Seventy has said that Satan "will seek access to your heart to tell you lies—lies that Heavenly Father is disappointed

in you, that the Atonement is beyond your reach, that there is no point in even trying, that everyone else is better than you, that you are unworthy, and a thousand variations of that same evil theme."³

The adversary will also try to convince you that repentance is too hard, that you might as well keep committing sin, and that it's easier not to believe in the Church. Don't be fooled. Remember, "God loved us, so he sent his Son."⁴



“Honestly acknowledge your questions and your concerns, but first and forever fan the flame of your faith, because all things are possible to them that believe,” said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁵

“IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU”

At the end of my senior year, I finally mustered the courage to turn the tables and ask Brian a question.

“If Joseph Smith was a false prophet, if he didn’t see the things he claimed he saw, and if he didn’t believe the things he taught,” I asked, “why did he seal his testimony of those things with his blood?”

Brian had no answer. He looked surprised and responded simply, “I didn’t know that.” He never asked me another insincere question about the Church, though I would have answered any sincere ones he may have had. When he signed my yearbook just before we graduated, he apologized.

Sooner or later, we all face hard questions. That’s part of learning, growing, and proving ourselves. But we’ll find answers if we look to the Savior, who has told us, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7; see also Luke 11:9). **NE**

- NOTES**
1. Marcos A. Aidukaitis, Apr. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 110).
 2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” Apr. 2011 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 75).
 3. Jörg Klebingat, Oct. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 34).
 4. “God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son,” *Hymns*, no. 187.
 5. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2013 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 95).

IS THE CHURCH TRUE?

Questions about the truthfulness of the Church take many forms: Was Joseph Smith really a prophet? Is the Book of Mormon true? Do I have to keep all the commandments? Does Heavenly Father really want me to wait until I’m 16 to date?

If the answer to the first three questions is yes (which it is), then waiting

to date until you’re 16 is God’s will communicated to you by prophets. You don’t need a testimony of every aspect of the gospel to know that—or the truthfulness of other prophetic guidelines. And having a testimony won’t necessarily erase all your questions. So, don’t be ashamed of your questions, and don’t be afraid to voice them, but be faithful as you look for answers.

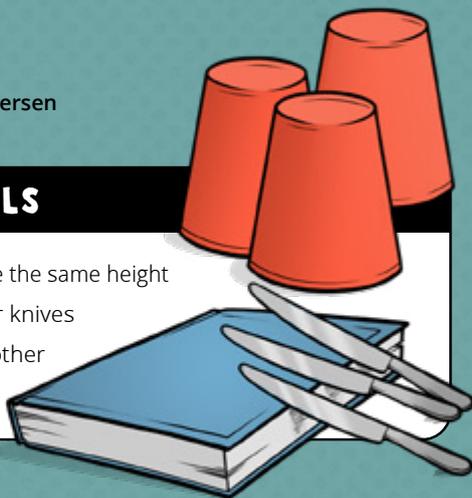
SHARP SUPPORT

When you feel like falling, try lifting instead.

By **Natasha Andersen**
Church Magazines

MATERIALS

- 3 cups that are the same height
- 3 metal butter knives
- A book or another heavy object



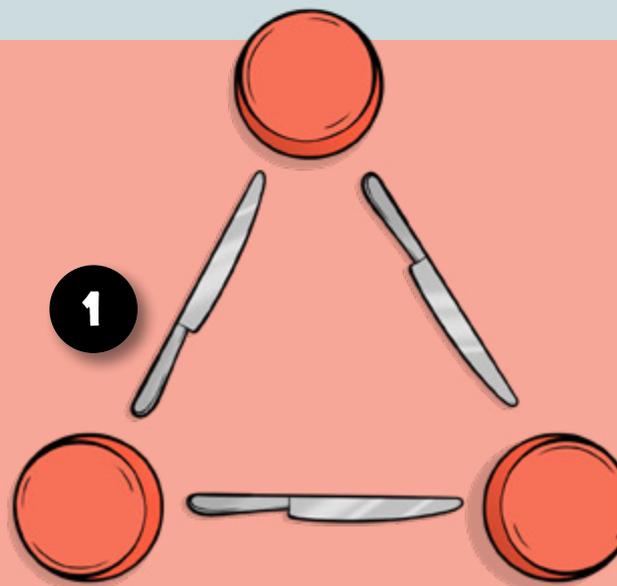
Imagine coming home from a bad day at school. You've been stressed about everything from your grades to your performance in your last basketball game, and you drop on the couch, too exhausted to move a muscle.

But then you remember your mom needs help with dinner. And your little sister could really use someone to help her with her reading too . . . but it's so hard to serve when you just want to take a break—when you might even feel that you *deserve* a break!

So how do you serve when you're having trouble even juggling your own challenges? In this object lesson, you'll show your family how supporting and serving each other helps lift *everyone* up.

WHAT TO DO

1. Set the three cups in a triangle with each one a knife-distance apart from the other two.
2. Challenge family members to try to set up the knives on top of the cups in a way that will support the book in the air without resting it on the cups or using any other materials.
3. After everyone has tried to make it work, demonstrate the way to do it: Rest the handle of one knife on top of one cup and point it toward the middle; do this with each knife, interlocking the tips to form a triangle by weaving in an over-under pattern. This may take a few tries, so you'll want to practice beforehand. You can also have family members help out—sometimes it takes more than two hands to get it right!
4. Now try balancing the book on top. (For fun, you can try balancing even heavier objects on top to see how much weight it can sustain.)



SOLID SUPPORT

After you've connected the knives and set the object on the platform, explain that when each knife is balanced both on top of and underneath the two other knives, the pressure is distributed so it pushes *up and down* on each knife. This pressure keeps the knives in place and lets them support the weight of a heavy book.

Have a family member read Mosiah 18:8–10. Explain that the knives represent each of us as members of the Church. The knives aren't long enough to reach the edges of the triangle on their own—they need to be connected to hold the book up. When we were baptized, we covenanted that we would serve God and keep His commandments. One way we do this is by bearing one another's burdens. If we stay connected to others by building relationships and serving each other, we'll all be able to support and lift each other—even when we feel the pressure of our own challenges.

Sister Reyna I. Aburto, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, has said, "Because of [your

struggles], you may have the ability to feel more compassion toward others."¹ Having compassion will help you understand others better and know how to serve them. And remember, some of the best types of service can be as simple as lending a listening ear or helping someone with their homework.

LOOKING OUTWARD

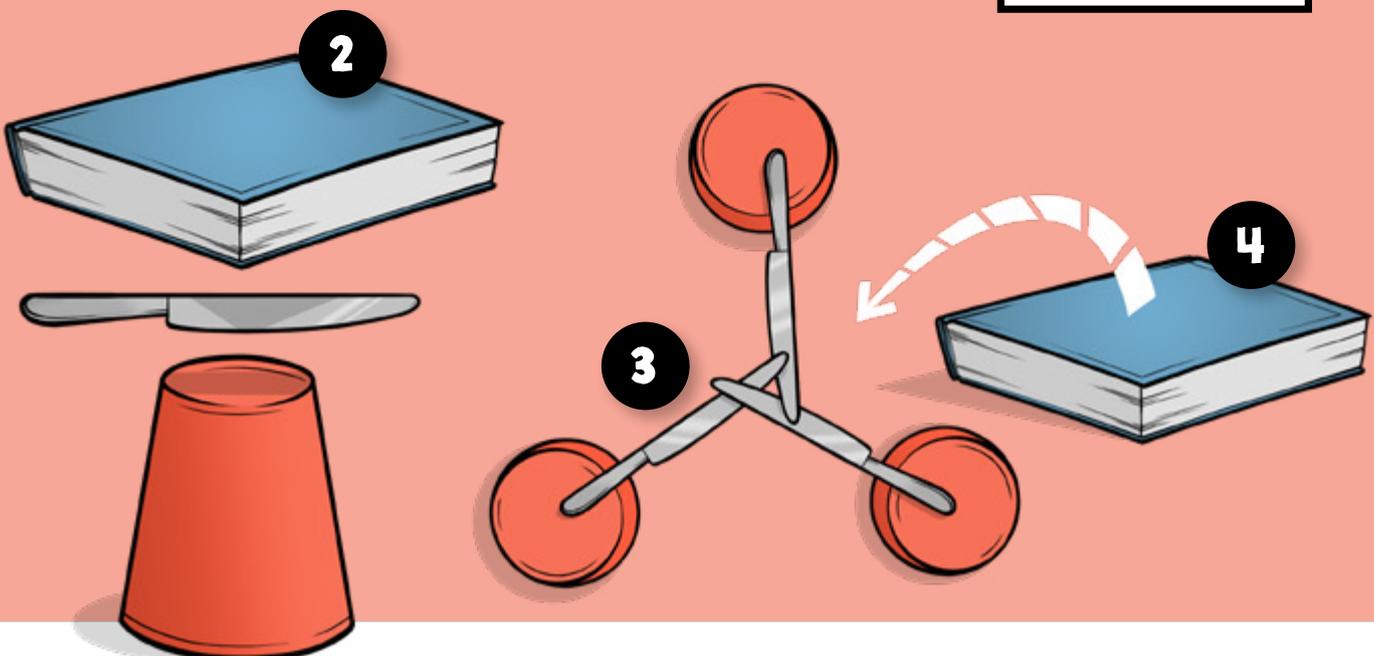
Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "[Christlike] character is demonstrated by looking and reaching outward when the natural and instinctive response is to be self-absorbed and turn inward."² So when you're tempted to collapse inward, try looking around to see who you can help. Lifting them up might just lift you up too. **NE**

NOTES

1. Reyna I. Aburto, Oct. 2019 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 59).
2. David A. Bednar, "A Christlike Character," *New Era*, Oct. 2017, 2.

CAUTION

Be careful when handling the butter knives—they can sometimes be a little sharp.



MARTA'S DAILY



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LESLIE NILSSON

SERVICE

This mom and daughter work hard to live the gospel together. And Marta is able to live it by serving her mom in unique ways.

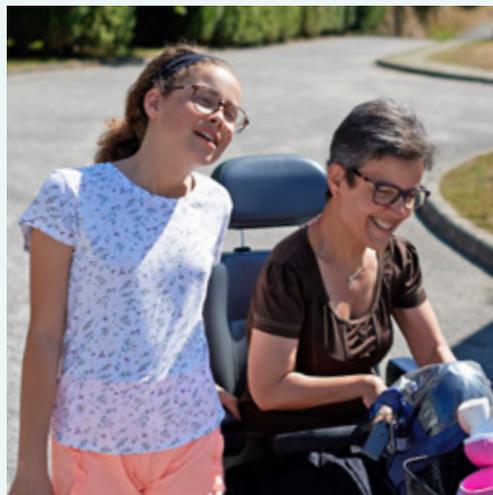
By Sam Lofgran
Church Magazines

Marta is an 11-year-old from Portugal, and like many girls her age, she likes to spend time with her friends, eat food, and play with her dolls. She also enjoys spending time with her mom. But living with her mom means that Marta lives a bit differently than other kids.

Marta's mom, Sonia, was born with a motor deficiency that makes it difficult for her to walk. She isn't completely paralyzed, but she does need a walker to get around. She isn't able to dress herself, bathe herself, or get herself into bed. This makes it hard for her to live alone. Marta has been able to serve Sonia for the last few years by helping her with things that she can't do by herself.

"I keep my spaces clean so my mom can get around easier," says Marta. "I also take breaks from playing so I have time to check on my mom and see if she needs help. If I'm playing and she calls, I'll go quickly because it could be something urgent."

But Sonia tries to let Marta live as normally as she can. If Sonia doesn't need any help, she makes sure that Marta gets time to play with her friends.





LIVING THEIR FAITH

Marta has the opportunity to live the gospel each day by serving her mom. She takes on a lot of responsibilities that other kids don't usually have. For instance, she wakes up early to help her mom get ready for work before school. Without Marta's help, Sonia wouldn't be able to get around or go to work every day.

Marta and Sonia also attend church together. Sonia was baptized when she was eight years old, so Marta has grown up in the Church. Sonia teaches Marta about the importance of the gospel every day. One way she does this is by having many pictures of Jesus Christ in their home.

"I know that God lives and that Jesus Christ is real," Sonia says. "And I want everyone who comes to my house to know that faith is very important to me. It's also important for me to teach this to Marta so that she grows up with this knowledge of Jesus Christ."

Marta has taken what her mom has taught her and continues to learn more about the gospel on her own. One way she likes to learn is by reading the scriptures, which helps her establish a stronger relationship with Heavenly Father and the Savior. "As I read the scriptures, I feel that Christ is at my side," she says.

FINDING COMFORT

While it can be difficult to have so much responsibility, going to church each week helps Marta find the comfort she needs to keep helping her mom. "When they say the prayers at the start and end of sacrament meeting, it's so peaceful" she says. "When I'm there, sometimes I feel like Heavenly Father is telling me that I'm a good person and that I have to continue to be a good person to help my mom."





Whenever she feels this way, she is reminded how grateful she is for her mom. She feels that Heavenly Father has sent angels to support her. “I think that He strengthens me to wake up and be happy and proud of the mom I have,” Marta says.

One of the lessons that Sonia and Marta have learned together is that life isn’t easy or perfect—for anyone. Sonia says, “None of my difficulties make me sad. I know that God gave me this flesh and blood and bones this way because I am special, and God told me I could do it. I do my best. I can do more, but today I’m feeling OK with myself. I am proud of what I do, what I have, and what I will do tomorrow.”

Marta also realizes that things will work out all right, even though life can be difficult at times as she takes care of her mom. She sees that everyone has different challenges. “No one’s life is perfect,” she says. But even with her own personal challenges, Marta still finds good things in every situation—the relationship she has with her mom is one example. “My mom has a physical limitation, but mentally and emotionally she is very intelligent. We’re really good friends.”

LOOKING FORWARD

So what’s in the future for Marta and Sonia? Marta says, “I want to stay close to my mom, and of course I want to get married, have kids, and have a family. But in the future, if I can, I want to buy a house for both my family and my mom because I wouldn’t want to be far from her for even a day!”

Sonia feels optimistic about the future as well and will always be grateful for Marta’s companionship and love. “It’s amazing having a beautiful daughter. It’s very nice to have Marta in my life. She is a gift from God. He prepared Marta to stay here with me.” **NE**



SCRIPTURE doodles

I always seemed to get distracted when I was reading the scriptures. It was time for something to change.

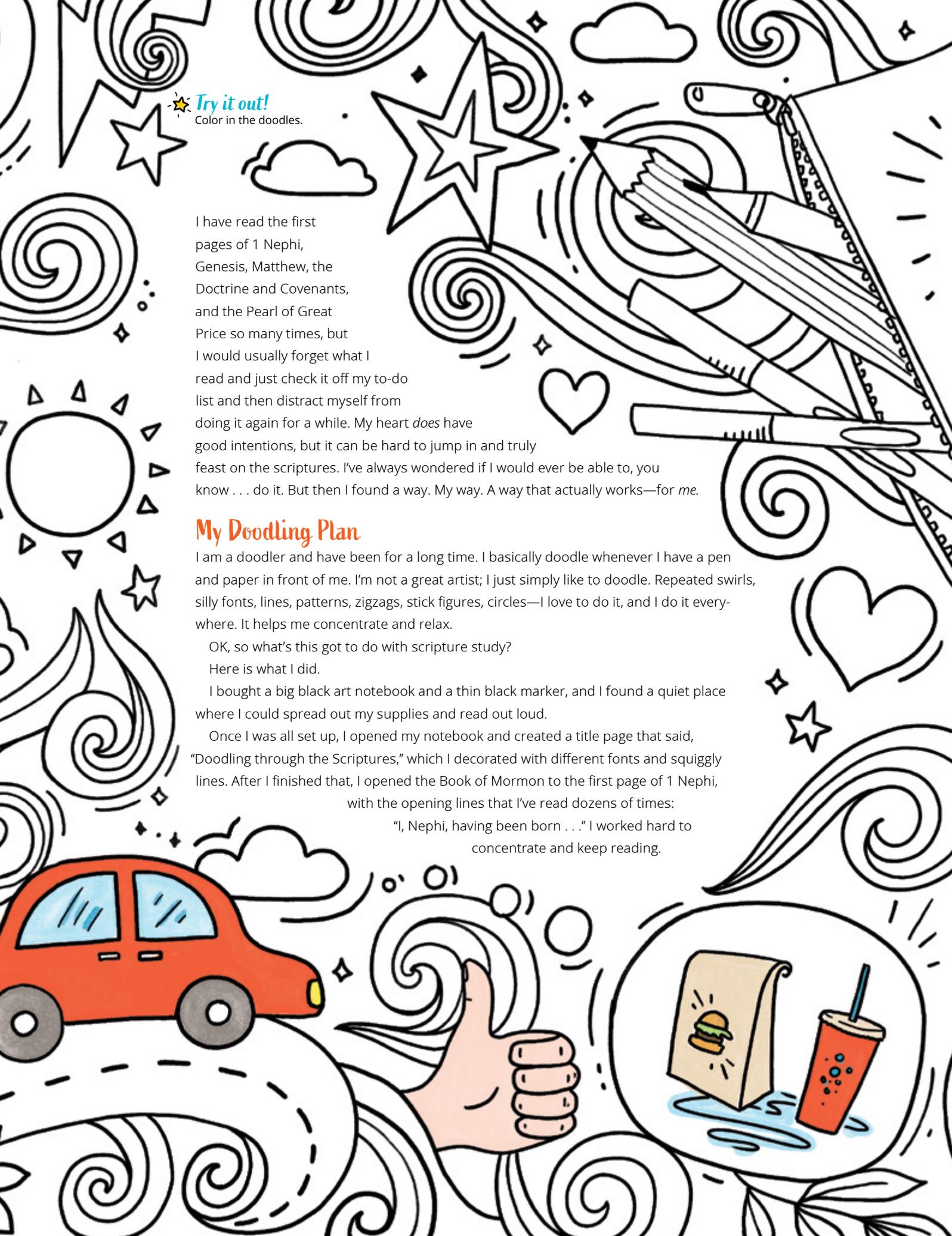
By Jennifer C. Edwards

Sometimes when I'm reading scriptures, my brain likes to skip away to someplace else. It isn't that I don't want to read—it's just that when I try, my mind wants to wander.

For example, when I read in 1 Nephi about Lehi dwelling in a tent, my mind wanders away to Young Women camp. Then that reminds me of when Boy Scout camp was accidentally scheduled at the same place and at the same time, and how they had to load the boys back up and move them. Then *that* reminds me of when I moved to another town, the car ride there, that hitchhiker we bought food for on the way, and so on and so on.

The next thing I know, I've read a full page but don't remember anything. So I move on to read about Lehi's dream, and it begins all over again.

ILLUSTRATION BY LONI HARRIS



Try it out!
Color in the doodles.

I have read the first pages of 1 Nephi, Genesis, Matthew, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price so many times, but I would usually forget what I read and just check it off my to-do list and then distract myself from doing it again for a while. My heart *does* have good intentions, but it can be hard to jump in and truly feast on the scriptures. I've always wondered if I would ever be able to, you know . . . do it. But then I found a way. My way. A way that actually works—for *me*.

My Doodling Plan

I am a doodler and have been for a long time. I basically doodle whenever I have a pen and paper in front of me. I'm not a great artist; I just simply like to doodle. Repeated swirls, silly fonts, lines, patterns, zigzags, stick figures, circles—I love to do it, and I do it everywhere. It helps me concentrate and relax.

OK, so what's this got to do with scripture study?
Here is what I did.

I bought a big black art notebook and a thin black marker, and I found a quiet place where I could spread out my supplies and read out loud.

Once I was all set up, I opened my notebook and created a title page that said, "Doodling through the Scriptures," which I decorated with different fonts and squiggly lines. After I finished that, I opened the Book of Mormon to the first page of 1 Nephi, with the opening lines that I've read dozens of times:

"I, Nephi, having been born . . ." I worked hard to concentrate and keep reading.

As I read, I paid attention to words that would jump out or pictures that were in my head. I took the time to draw what stuck out to me. Sometimes, it was a border around the entire page using Nephi's name. Or I would put several different pictures and words in circles. Or I would write down one verse I particularly loved or even just one word.

This method allowed me to be free and play with the words. No one was timing me, grading me, or judging my drawings. I just tried to have fun, relax, and concentrate.

But wait, didn't it take *forever* to get through the Book of Mormon this way?

Well, yes. Some days, I wouldn't even get through a page. But it was worth the time.

What I Learned

As I read and doodled, I found things that relate to me personally. For example, why didn't Laman and Lemuel just turn around and go back to Jerusalem and quit whining? (I doodled this with stick figures looking mad and pointing at Nephi, who looked happy.) While drawing this, I thought about this question. Laman and Lemuel came along but were crabby.

I thought about when my parents ask me to do things

I don't want to do. I go along, but I sure

make everyone else miserable along the way. I thought, "Do I sometimes act like Laman and Lemuel?" I wrote that question and my answer on the page, along with more doodles.

While I sat and pondered and read, I had feelings of calm, warmth, and safety come over me repeatedly, and I knew the book was inspired and true. And now, I have this art journal that I can use as a reference forever to help me remember that I received this witness that the Book of Mormon is true.

Taking the time to make lines, scrolls, or boxes around words and stick figures while reading would stop me in the moment and allow me to think, ask questions, and feel closer to the people in the scriptures. My mind would still wander, but it usually wandered to think about the messages, the people, or the Spirit that I felt while I quietly doodled.

I discovered how to make my study meaningful, and now I can't wait for scripture study each day. For the first time in my life, the scriptures feel personal. Who knew that doodling could help me receive a testimony that the scriptures are true! **NE**

The author lives in Connecticut, USA.

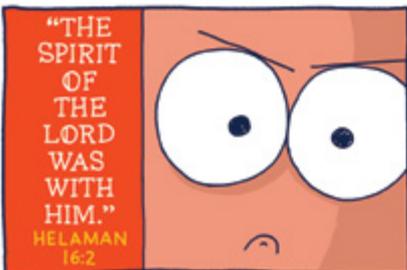
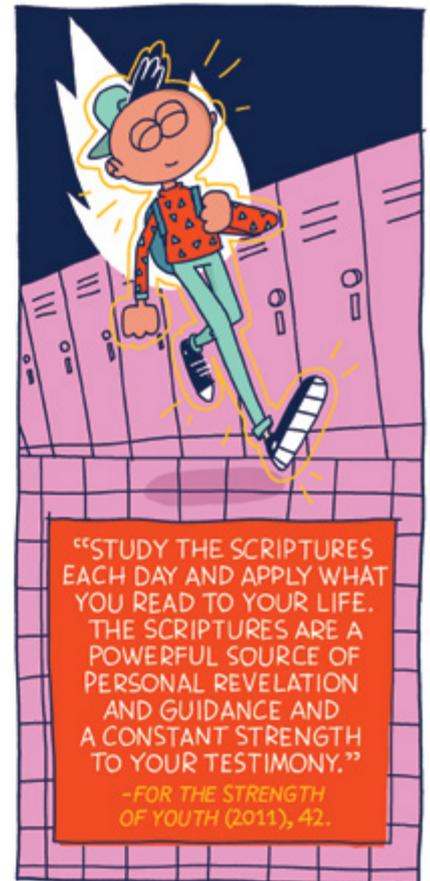


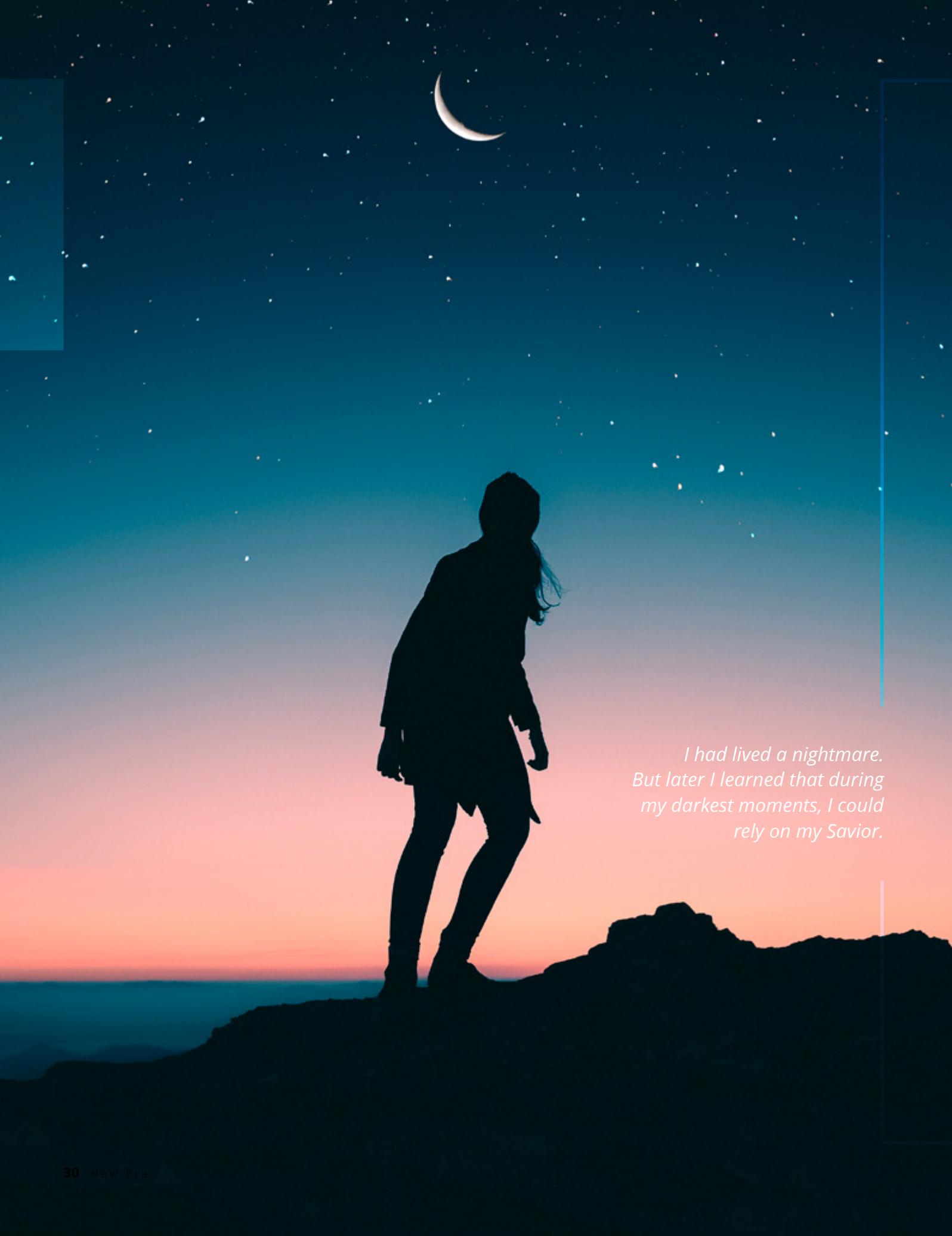
STANDING FIRM WITH SAMUEL

WORDS: SAM LOFGAN

ART: MIKE GROVER

MAN, SAMUEL THE LAMANITE IS SO COOL! HE DIDN'T GET HIT WITH A SINGLE STONE OR ARROW!





*I had lived a nightmare.
But later I learned that during
my darkest moments, I could
rely on my Savior.*

How I Found Healing from Sexual Abuse

Name withheld

My nightmare began when I was only seven and my mom remarried. We really liked my new stepfather. He was kind and fit in well with our family. I felt really safe around him. Everything was great until one day, when everyone else was busy, he sexually abused me.

I didn't understand what he had done to me. I felt scared, confused, and so ashamed. But I was too afraid to tell anyone. I thought it would ruin my family's newfound happiness and that no one would believe me anyway. So I decided to stay silent.

He had only hurt me that one time, but the memory of the abuse always weighed on my mind. I eventually became so paranoid that someone would see through my pain and uncover my secret that I tried to hide the truth by becoming good friends with my stepfather. He was especially kind to me, and I actually started liking him again.

But then things got worse. When Mom started working at nighttime, my stepfather began regularly abusing me. I felt so helpless. I wanted to speak up, but my stepfather was well liked, and I thought everyone would side with him. So at night when I was alone, I begged God to help me keep my secret.

Speaking Up

One day the abuse finally stopped. I had no idea why. Though he was no longer hurting me, I always felt dirty and ashamed. I hated myself. Sometimes I even debated whether death would be easier than my reality. I still wanted to speak up, but I was afraid of what the truth would do.

Then one Sunday at church when I was 14, I listened to a lesson about making big decisions. My teacher encouraged us to fast and pray and promised that God would strengthen us to do the right thing. After church, I kept thinking about what she had said. I wondered if I asked, would God really help me speak up?

The next day I fasted for courage to tell Mom about the abuse. I couldn't focus during school because all I could think about was how she would react. By the time I got home, I felt extremely sick. I again prayed for strength, but I didn't feel prepared to tell her.

That evening, I approached Mom when she was cooking dinner. I didn't know what to say, but when I looked into her eyes, I found the courage to just start speaking. Once I

began, everything I had been hiding for years spilled out.

Mom and I just sat on the couch and cried together. Afterward, we contacted our branch president and called the police. My stepfather was held accountable for what he had done to me, and I was given the protection I needed—I would never have to see him again.

The Path to Healing

During that time, it was difficult retelling my experience to the authorities and having friends ask where my stepfather was, but with my family's support, I was no longer alone. Together, we rallied around a new family theme: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Our extended family also offered their love and support and, over time, we began healing together.

Mom and I both attended professional counseling, which was a big help! My counselor was exactly what I needed. She helped me understand all the emotions I was feeling and helped me cope with my bad memories. I never realized

how much I was hurting until I started feeling whole again.

I didn't think the pain would disappear just because I spoke up, but I also didn't realize how much time (and patience) it would take to heal. For so long, I had felt worthless. I had to relearn to love myself.

I found the most peace as I turned to my Savior and my Heavenly Father. Recognizing that They knew exactly how I felt gave me strength and hope. I relied on Them during the darkest moments. Over time the memories began to fade, and I really felt peace through the Savior's love.

One of the most rewarding parts of the healing process was recognizing that I did have a bright future. When I was being abused, I couldn't even

imagine having a normal life. I felt permanently broken. But through help and healing, I found things to look forward to. I began telling my story to other girls who were hurting, and I even decided to serve a mission. Sharing my testimony with others strengthened me.

I'm not defined by what my stepfather did to me. He forever changed my life, but I'm choosing to use my experience to help others. Some days are still hard, but through everything, the Lord has strengthened me, and I know He will continue to help me. I've transformed from a victim into a survivor. **NE**



If You're a Victim of Abuse

What Is Abuse?

Abuse is the neglect or mistreatment of others (such as a child, an elderly person, a disabled person, or anyone else) in such a way that causes physical, emotional, or sexual harm. It goes against the teachings of the Savior.

"The Church's position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form" (*General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [2020], 38.6.2). Abuse violates the laws of God and may also be a violation of the laws of society.

Different Types of Abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE: Deliberately aggressive or violent behavior by one person toward another that results in bodily injury.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Unwanted sexual activity or contact, with offenders using force, making threats, or taking advantage of victims who are not able to give consent. All sexual activity between an adult and a child is abuse regardless of consent.

VERBAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE: A pattern of behavior in which one person deliberately and repeatedly attacks someone in nonphysical ways, such as harsh words, intimidation, manipulation, or humiliation. This causes a lowered sense of self-worth and dignity. Though it is not physical, this kind of abuse harms a person's overall mental and emotional well-being.

How to Get Help

The Lord expects us to do all we can to prevent abuse and to protect and help those who have been victims of abuse. No one is expected to endure abusive behavior. Whether it is happening now or happened long ago, you can find resources to help you at abuse.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

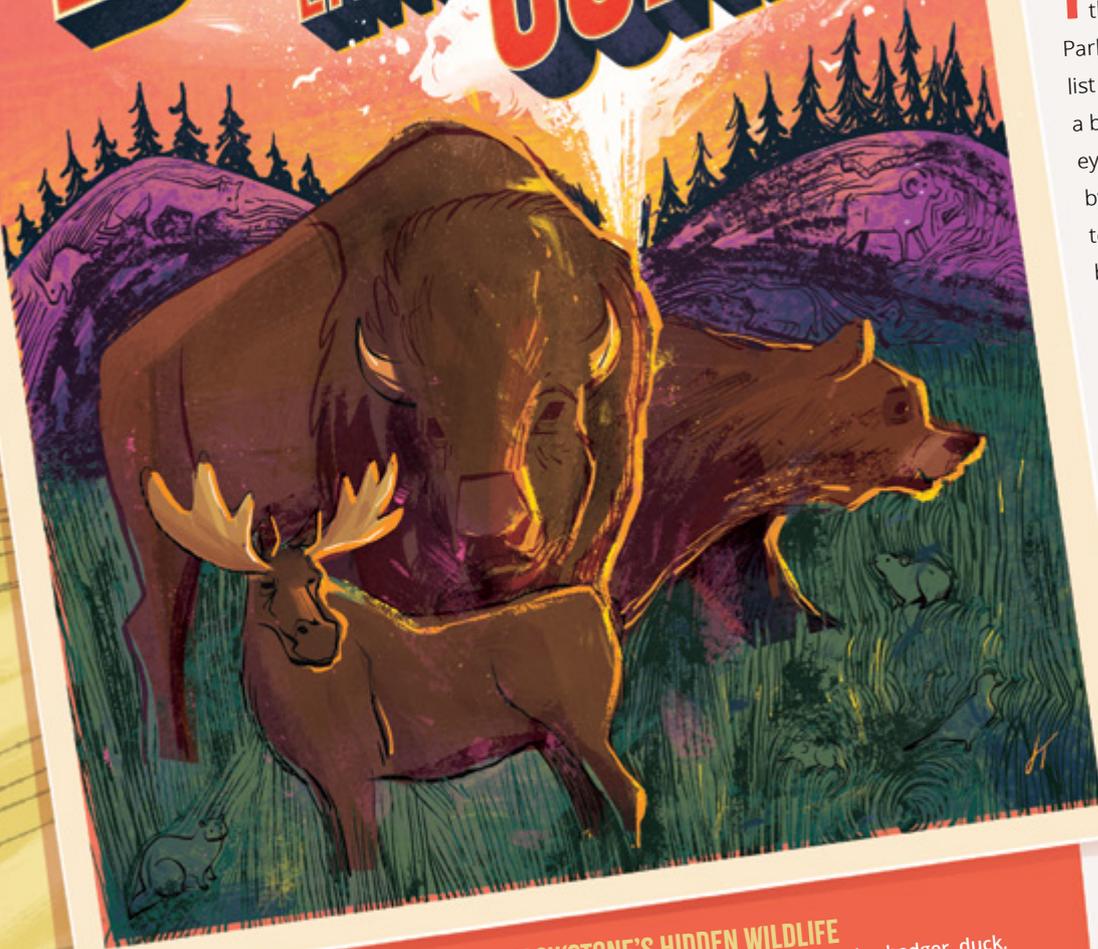
Get Help Right Now

"If you are currently being abused or have been in the past, find the courage to seek help. . . . Seek the support of someone you can trust. Your bishop or stake president can give you valuable counsel and help you with the civil authorities. . . . Do not fear—for fear is a tool Satan will use to keep you suffering. The Lord will help you, but you must reach out for that help."

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 42.



BIG GOALS LITTLE GOALS



SEE YELLOWSTONE'S HIDDEN WILDLIFE
What to look for: eagle, rabbit, bobcat, bighorn sheep, rattlesnake, badger, duck, porcupine, fox, 5 fish, mink, pika, shrew, and 5 birds.

SMALL GOALS MAKE UP BIG GOALS

Choosing a goal can be a lot like my experience of looking for animals at Yellowstone. Sometimes we tend to just focus on the biggest or most noticeable goal. Or something really fast or impressive.

But good, useful goals come in all shapes and sizes, and they're often smaller than we expect. It might be easy to pick a big goal like "I want to eat healthier." If we look closer, we'll be able to see less obvious goals that make achieving the bigger goal easier, like "learn how to cut a bell pepper," "figure out how portion sizes work," or "practice reading nutrition labels." If we only focus on the big goals, we miss out on a lot of the smaller goals that help us achieve the bigger goals.

Goals can come in all shapes and sizes.

By Nichole Eck, with LeAnn Hunt

The first time my family drove through Yellowstone National Park, I had three things on my list of must-see wildlife: a bison, a bear, and a moose. I kept my eyes glued to the window, and by the time we left, I'd been able to spot two of the three—not a bad score!

It was only after talking to the park rangers and reading a book on Yellowstone ecosystems that I realized all the other amazing wildlife I had missed out on. I could have spotted a lot of other cool animals if I had just taken a closer look and explored a little more. Big-horned sheep and bobcats, badgers and minks, pikas and shrews, fish and birds of all sorts.

The bison, bear, and moose were the easiest to spot and the most fun to snap pictures of, but by ignoring the smaller animals surrounding them, I missed seeing all the other beauty right under my nose.

SAMPLE TYPES OF GOALS

Here are seven types of goals you might not have considered before and some examples of how to use them as spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social goals.



EXPLORATION GOALS: Sometimes we want to explore new things to learn what we want or like.

- **Spiritual:** Try listening to audio recordings of conference talks in addition to reading them.
- **Physical:** Try a new sport like badminton.
- **Intellectual:** Learn to program a simple computer game to see if you like programming.
- **Social:** Try out a new after-school club.



GOALS FOR EXPERIMENTING: Sometimes we want to test something out to see if it works for us.

- **Spiritual:** Do you notice a difference if you pray before scripture study?
- **Physical:** Does having a healthier lunch at school make you less tired in the afternoon?
- **Intellectual:** How much faster do you finish your homework if you turn off your phone?
- **Social:** Do you like going to stake dances?



INFORMATION-GATHERING GOALS: Sometimes we need to find out more information about a goal before we start.

- **Spiritual:** Read about the temple recommend questions before your first interview.
- **Physical:** Research some workouts you can do from home.
- **Intellectual:** Look up the requirements of a college you want to attend.
- **Social:** Ask your friend what they like and don't like about learning to play the piano.



GOALS FOR STARTING (OR STOPPING) A HABIT:

Sometimes we want to start a good habit or stop a bad one. (These don't have to be daily habits.)

- **Spiritual:** Stop checking your phone during church and seminary.
- **Physical:** Walk for 10 minutes each day listening to your favorite music.
- **Intellectual:** Start reviewing your study notes whenever you're on a school bus.
- **Social:** Stop interrupting people around you when they're talking.



PRACTICE GOALS: Sometimes we want to practice something to improve it.

- **Spiritual:** Practice bearing your testimony in front of groups of people.
- **Physical:** Practice a special soccer move.
- **Intellectual:** Practice conducting music.
- **Social:** Practice talking to adults.



PROBLEM SOLVING GOALS: Sometimes we choose goals to solve a problem in our lives.

- **Spiritual:** If you keep forgetting to bring your scriptures to church, try storing them by your neckties in your bedroom.
- **Physical:** If you don't feel prepared for your big hike coming up, go on a long walk this weekend to practice.
- **Intellectual:** If you keep forgetting your homework, try putting a reminder on the doorknob to your room to help you remember.
- **Social:** If you don't have any friends in the town you just moved to, learn the names of everyone in your Sunday School class.



IN-PROGRESS GOALS: Sometimes we set goals to improve the goals we are already doing. For these examples, imagine you are already participating in a sports team.

- **Spiritual:** Pray for your team members to be safe.
- **Physical:** Show up on time to practice.
- **Intellectual:** Learn more about the rules of your sport.
- **Social:** Encourage your teammates more during games. **NE**

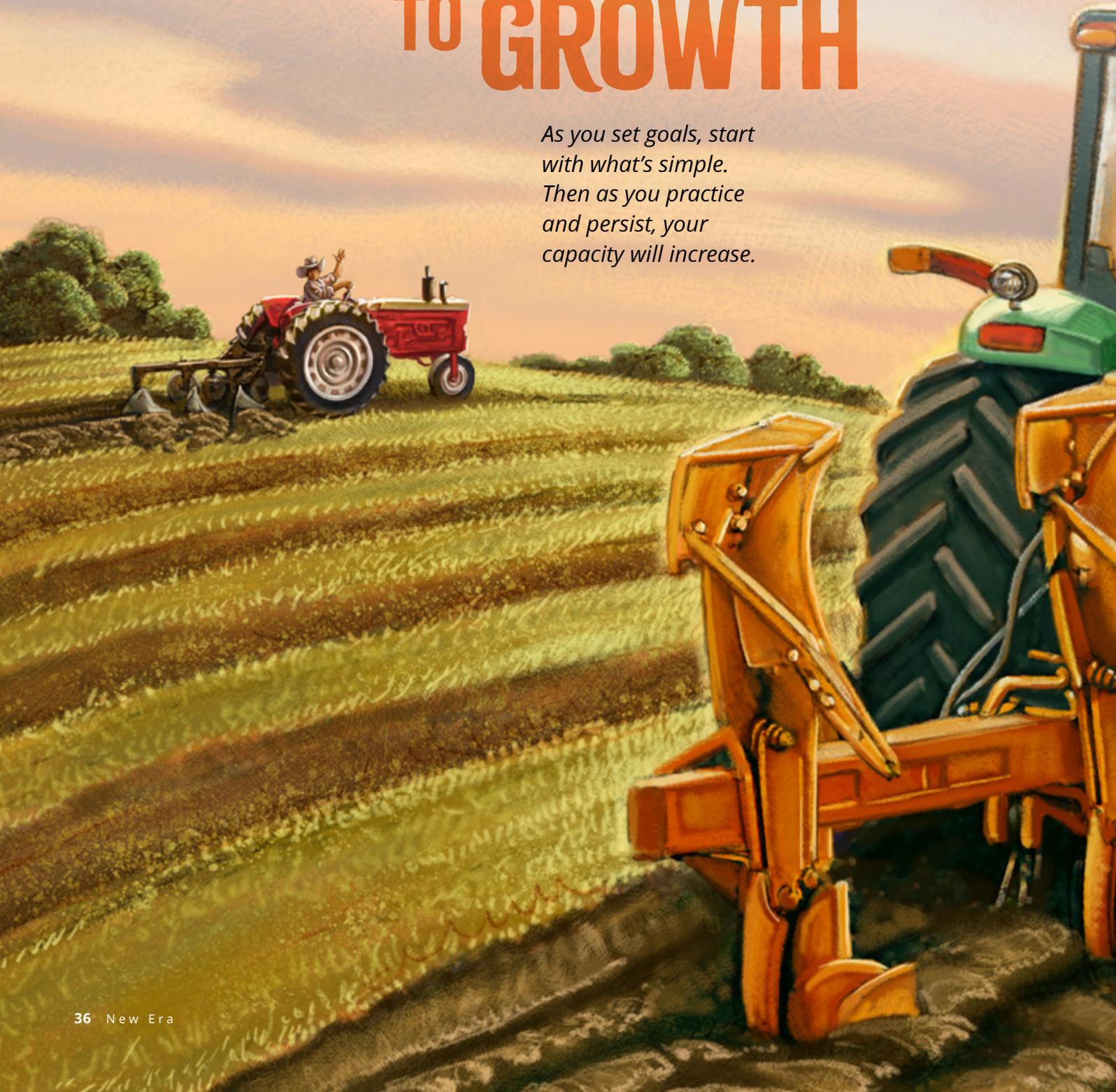
Nichole Eck lives in Utah, USA, and LeAnn Hunt lives in Arizona, USA.



By Elder Vern P. Stanfill
Of the Seventy

GOALS ARE A GATEWAY TO GROWTH

*As you set goals, start
with what's simple.
Then as you practice
and persist, your
capacity will increase.*



I grew up on a ranch. And as anyone who has lived on a ranch can tell you, there is plenty of work to do. We ran a lot of large machinery, but my first job was to drive a small, three-wheeled tractor to drag a harrow over the fields. A harrow is an implement with lots of circular disks, used to smooth the dirt after a field has been plowed.

Once I was comfortable harrowing the fields, there was bigger machinery to run, with more moving parts—and with more challenges if something went wrong. As I progressed from operating simple machinery to operating more complicated machinery, I

eventually became confident running each type of machinery. I even learned to make repairs when something broke down.

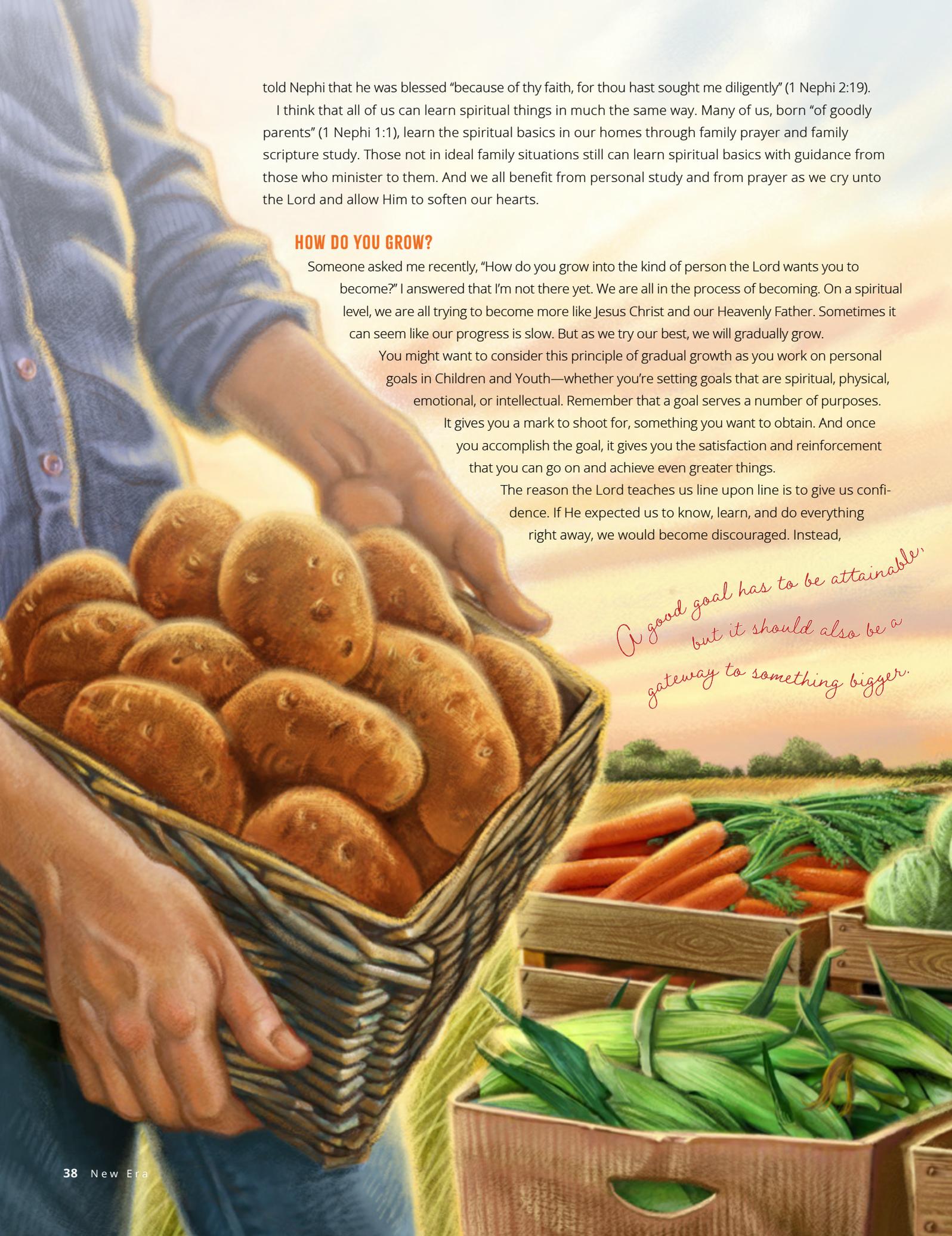
I think there's a principle here that's as true in life as it is on the ranch. Whatever you want to do in terms of personal development (in athletics, music, drama, science, or cooking—it doesn't matter), start with what's simple. Then as you learn more, as you practice and persist, your capacity will increase. You will be able to do more and more.

BECOMING IS A GRADUAL PROCESS

The Lord teaches us “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30). This means that it's a gradual process to become what we want to be. And it may take even longer to become what the Lord wants us to be. It's a process we see often in the Book of Mormon. Nephi, for example, learned principles he needed to know—but he did not learn them all at once.

He was a good young man, but he still needed to be instructed as he went along. First of all, he learned the basics—faith, obedience, prayer, and so forth—from his mother and father (see 1 Nephi 1:1). He learned to search the scriptures, pray for guidance, and listen to the prophets, including his father, Lehi. Nephi said he had “great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father” (1 Nephi 2:16). The Lord then





told Nephi that he was blessed “because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently” (1 Nephi 2:19).

I think that all of us can learn spiritual things in much the same way. Many of us, born “of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1), learn the spiritual basics in our homes through family prayer and family scripture study. Those not in ideal family situations still can learn spiritual basics with guidance from those who minister to them. And we all benefit from personal study and from prayer as we cry unto the Lord and allow Him to soften our hearts.

HOW DO YOU GROW?

Someone asked me recently, “How do you grow into the kind of person the Lord wants you to become?” I answered that I’m not there yet. We are all in the process of becoming. On a spiritual level, we are all trying to become more like Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. Sometimes it can seem like our progress is slow. But as we try our best, we will gradually grow.

You might want to consider this principle of gradual growth as you work on personal goals in Children and Youth—whether you’re setting goals that are spiritual, physical, emotional, or intellectual. Remember that a goal serves a number of purposes.

It gives you a mark to shoot for, something you want to obtain. And once you accomplish the goal, it gives you the satisfaction and reinforcement that you can go on and achieve even greater things.

The reason the Lord teaches us line upon line is to give us confidence. If He expected us to know, learn, and do everything right away, we would become discouraged. Instead,

*A good goal has to be attainable,
but it should also be a
gateway to something bigger.*

he lets us grow from understanding to greater understanding:

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (Doctrine and Covenants 50:24).

This ability to increase in capacity reminds me of my experience running the machinery on the ranch. You learn one principle, and that gives you confidence to learn the next principle and then live it. That’s the Lord’s way of teaching us how to achieve great things. After you accomplish your first goal, you set another goal. Each goal becomes a gateway to new opportunities for service and growth.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD GOAL?

A good goal has to be attainable, but it should also be a gateway to something bigger, something more important. And of course, the greatest gateway is the one that places us on the path back to our Heavenly Father. When you find yourself on that path, you will be happy.

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “I believe that one important key to happiness is to learn how to set our own goals and establish our own plans within the framework of our Heavenly Father’s eternal plan. If we focus on this eternal path, we will inevitably qualify to return to His presence.”¹

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: “What is essential is that our labors in the workplace of the Lord have caused us to *become* something. For some of

us, this requires a longer time than for others. What is important in the end is what we have become by our labors.”²

WHAT ABOUT FAILURE?

Failure may be a part of that process. Sometimes working to achieve a goal may teach us something entirely unrelated to that goal. For example, when I was a missionary in southern France, it was fairly difficult. I learned life lessons about doing hard things to accomplish difficult goals and how failing to reach a short-term goal did not always mean failure in the long term. What I learned on my mission far exceeded my original goal of learning how to do missionary work.

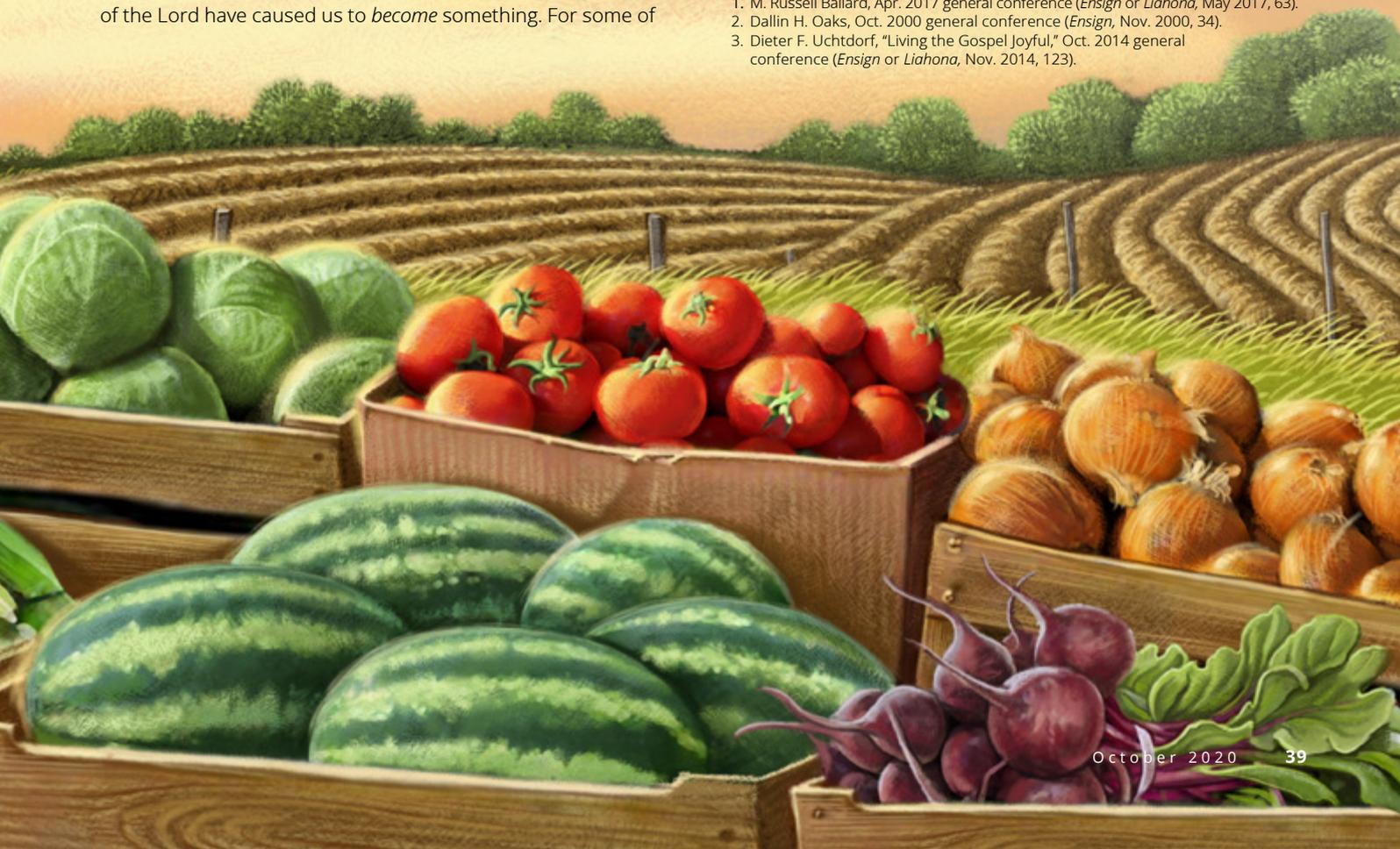
YOU ARE KNOWN

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then-Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said that Heavenly Father “loves you not only for who you are this very day but also for the person of glory and light you have the potential and the desire to become.”³

As I look at the youth of the Church, I am amazed at your potential and capacity. Your Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to be happy and return to Him. When times are difficult, He knows what you’re struggling with. He will lift you up, love you, and encourage you to do better. His love for you never ceases. He rejoices in even your smallest successes, and He is particularly pleased when you grow in ways that bring you closer to Him. **NE**

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, Apr. 2017 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 63).
2. Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 2000 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 34).
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Living the Gospel Joyful,” Oct. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 123).



CONNECT



NORTH CAROLINA



1
TEMPLE
in Raleigh,
North Carolina.



CHRISTMAS TREES

Over 4 million Christmas trees are grown and sent around the world each year.



THE TALLEST LIGHHOUSE

in the United States
is at Cape Hattaras
(193 ft).



GARRET W.,

18, North Carolina, USA

WHEN I WAS SET APART to serve in the California San Bernardino Mission as a full-time missionary, my family was right there with me. This picture is of me hugging one of my brothers after I got set apart. It's been a journey to get to this point, but I'm so grateful for the changes I've seen in myself and in my family.

My second-to-last year of high school, I got in a serious car crash. Before that I just wasn't doing the things I should. But after the wreck, my viewpoint really shifted. My life could've been taken right then and there, and I did not want it to end like that. My bishop helped get me on the right path: reading the Book of Mormon daily and preparing to serve a mission.

Running track is my sport, my passion. After the wreck, I was out for the season, and I wondered what I even had left. But I turned to the Lord, and as I did, I had a phenomenal season the next year. There were still struggles, but what changed is instead of doing it for myself, I did it for the Lord.

Just seeing how many blessings can come from the fulness of the gospel was what changed me. Getting all of that happiness and joy, I want to spread it around the world. I'm longing for people to have the joy that I have every day because of the gospel. And that's why I'm serving a mission: to help "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).



KAILEY T.,

18, Georgia, USA

I love competing in DECA! DECA is a career-technical student organization that prepares students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. My friend and I competed against 43 other teams in the Hospitality Services Event and placed 1st in the state. I also love service. Through service we can bless the lives of so many people and be spiritually strengthened.



CLARA S.,

15, Colorado, USA

Multiple times this year, I have had questions or doubts, so before I went to bed I would pray for answers. Often, the next morning my seminary teacher addressed my question without me even having to ask it. Going to seminary can be seen as a sacrifice, but I believe that it can help answer prayers. Heavenly Father knows what we need to hear, and he can provide us with that through seminary.

BABE RUTH

hit his first professional home run on March 7, 1914.



BILTMORE ESTATE

The largest privately-owned home in the United States.

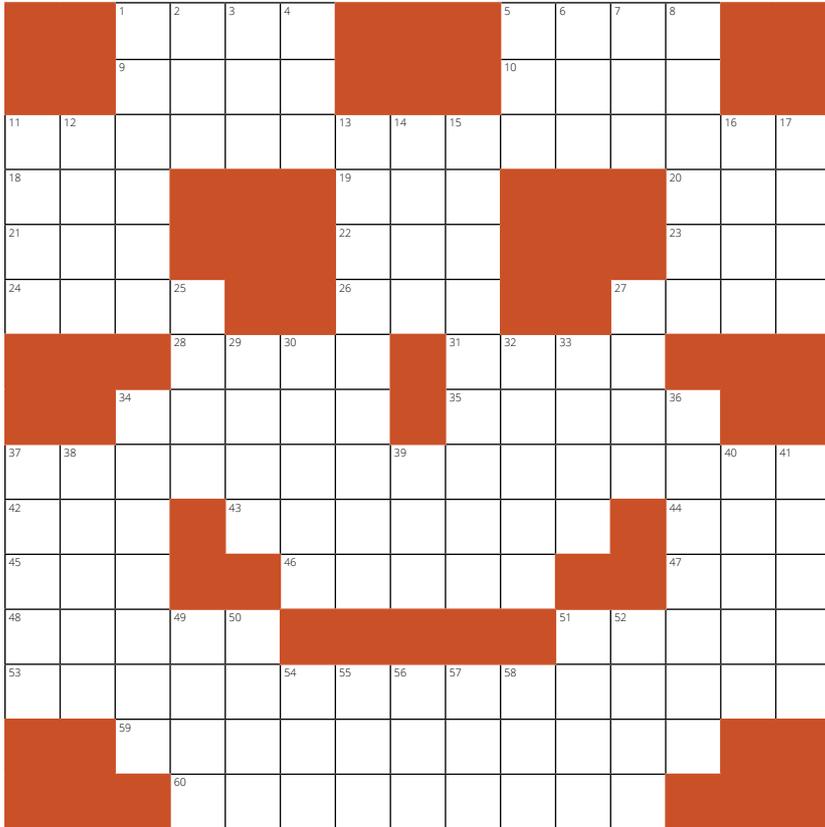


MOUNT MITCHELL

is the highest point in the Appalachians (6,683 ft)

FUN STOP

Happy Crossword!



JON CLARK



SUMMER BIRD

Across

1. Stack
5. Round, green things in pods
9. "Come ___!" ("Please enter!")
10. Prefix with -morphosis and -data
11. "___ was happiness" (Alma 41:10)
18. Couples' cruise ship in Genesis?
19. Paramedic (abbr.)
20. Apple of Adam's eye
21. Take to court
22. Contend (for)
23. "___ are that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25)
24. ___-Nephi-Lehies (Alma 23:17)
26. When you think you'll get there (abbr.)
27. "I would thou ___ cold or hot" (Revelation 3:15)
28. A person telling a story (abbr.)

31. What someone who tells a 3-down is called
34. "___ short for Pamela"
35. South American mountain range
37. God's designs for mankind, a.k.a "the great ___"
- (Alma 42:8)
42. French for "the" (plural)
43. Amass in reserve
44. "I've got it!"
45. Consume
46. Used up
47. Took a seat
48. To "tread the boards" means to ___ a play onstage
51. Jesus Christ came to ___ for our sins
53. "Consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep ___ of God" (Mosiah 2:41)
59. Always keeps the eighth commandment

60. Reed instrument that's usually brassy and curved

Down

1. Small pouch on clothes
2. Pen filler
3. If you try to always keep 53-across, you won't tell one of these
4. The righteous will "dwell in the presence of God ... in a state of happiness which hath no ___" (Mormon 7:7)
5. Afternoon and evening hours (abbr.)
6. "___ though it be a cross that raiseth me" (*Hymns*, no. 100)
7. Had a meal
8. What a drowning swimmer might say to a lifeguard
11. "Moroni ___ strong and mighty man" (Alma 48:11)
12. "For me, when pizza arrives, walking isn't an option, so ___"

13. To follow the fourth commandment, some people try to ___ on Sunday
14. Radiate
15. Take a ballpoint that doesn't belong to you
16. Always
17. Pay for the temporary use of something
25. ___ hour (60 minutes from now)
27. Type of small bird
29. Book after Joel
30. Fissures
32. "I'd like your ___ on this" ("Give me your thoughts")
33. "Let's go for ___" ("Let's take a quick swim")
34. "Our curfew starts when the time hits double digits. We can't stay out ___"
36. Winter, spring, summer, and autumn
37. Double fold up and down a skirt, say

38. Seep
39. "Ye ___ the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)
40. "No, I ___" (response to "Yes, you shall")
41. Fills up, and then some
49. Applies a sugary coating to a cake
50. A star that suddenly increases in brightness
51. "___ of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3)
52. Prefix with -phone and -vision
54. Country south of the USA (abbr.)
55. What students might call a teacher with the last name Odrzywolski, for short (abbr.)
56. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the ___" (Isaiah 11:8)
57. To the ___ degree (extremely)
58. "Gloria in excelsis ___" (*Hymns*, no. 203)

Caption Contest



This photo is nearly perfect. All it needs now is a healthy dose of your creativity. **Send in your best punch lines (by Nov. 1, 2020) to NewEra@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.** But first, be sure and read some favorite entries from the last contest!



When you trip in heaven: "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:21). — Andrew J.

Darryl and Darleen get impatient while waiting for people to do their temple ordinances. — Dekker S.

Tied with a Bow, the Sequel

Can you figure out what word ties the following sets together?

(Feel free to warm up on a similar puzzle in last month's *New Era*!)

Example: cuff, made, shake: hand

1. Amusement, water, national: _____
2. Hero, bowl, sonic: _____
3. Game, diving, cutting: _____
4. Marriage, service, Solomon's: _____
5. Base, basket, tether: _____
6. Pack, stroke, bone: _____
7. Shore, sick, shell: _____
8. Plow, flake, shoe: _____
9. Red, hard, soft: _____

Waiting for temples to open again be like . . . — Sydney C.

Bob and Fredrica try extreme miming. — Hailee W.



RYAN STOKER

How do I get over feelings of loneliness?

"The pain of loneliness seems to be part of the mortal experience. But the Lord in His mercy has made it so that we need never deal with the challenges of mortality alone. . . . We have been promised the constant companionship of the third member of the Godhead and hence the privilege of receiving revelation for our own lives. We are not alone!"

Sheri L. Dew, former counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, "We Are Not Alone," Ensign, Nov. 1998, 94; Liahona, Jan. 1999, 112.



Develop Your Talents

I get over my feelings of loneliness by developing my talents, whether it be a musical instrument,

a hobby, etc. This helps to distract you from your feeling of loneliness, and often it will go away completely. This will also lead to finding others who share your interests.

Steven H., 12, New Mexico, USA

Trust the Lord

Leaving home to come to Brazil for my mission was hard. I hardly even spoke the language! But I've learned that if you have the Lord's Spirit with you, you never feel lonely. He knows you and will always help you. Trust Him!

Elder Joseph Tolen, 20, Brazil Campinas Mission



Seek the Light

I seek the support, encouragement, and love of Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost to give me

peace, hope, and strength when meditating, praying, and reading the scriptures. As it says in 3 Nephi 11:11, Jesus Christ is "the light and the life of the world." He came to dispel all darkness.

Andrea B., 18, Zulia, Venezuela

Reach Out to Friends and Family

When I feel alone, I like to reach out to my friends and family; it really makes me feel happy. I look at the blessings in my life and thank Heavenly Father for how much He has already given to me!

Talli N., 16, Oregon, USA



Remember God's Plan

Know that through God's plan, we are everything but lonely. The Holy Ghost is always with us, and God knows what we're struggling with. The Lord went through every trial and struggle you face. One of the most important things we feel in mortality is happiness, but we can't have happiness without sadness (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Pray to God and ask for help; He won't fail any of us.

Brock S., 17, Utah, USA

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

What Do You Think?

"What should I do if I have repented but can't stop thinking about what I did wrong?"

Submit your answer by November 15, 2020.

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



If I've had mental health challenges, can I still serve a mission?

Yes. All who "have desires to serve God ... are called to the work" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:3). Where we serve is less important than how we serve. And anyone thinking of serving a mission will have their physical and mental health taken into consideration.

If you have a desire to serve a mission, talk to your bishop. He can help you begin the process of applying. Part of that process will include consulting with doctors and other professionals, as well as Church leaders and parents. These consultations are not meant to evaluate whether you're "good enough" for the Lord but to help determine the best options for your service.

A *call* to serve can come to anyone with desires to serve. The *assignment* you receive to serve in a particular place or in a particular way can depend on many factors. People with health challenges (including mental health) have sometimes tried to withhold this information in the application process, thinking that will help them receive the assignment they want. But if you are completely honest about your medical history (including mental health), the Lord will bless you. He expects you to do all you can to improve your health. And much of the medical support you receive at home can be continued in the mission field.

For more on mental health, go to mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org. For more on missions, including service missions, go to ChurchofJesusChrist.org/callings/missionary.

FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 42-43): Happy Crossword: Across: 1. pile 5 peas 9. on in 10. meta 11. wickedness never 18. ark 19. EMT 20. Eve 21. sue 22. vie 23. men 24. Antl 26. ETA 27. wert 28. narr. 31. liar 34. Pam is 35. Andes 37. plan of happiness 42. les 43. store up 44. aha 45. eat 46. spent 47. sat 48. act in 51. atone 53. the commandments 59. never steals 60. saxophone Down: 1. pocket 2. ink 3. lie 4. end 5. p.m.'s 6. en 7. ate 8. save me 11. was a 12. 1 run 13. never shop 14. emit 15. steal a pen 16. ever 17. rent 25. in an 27. wren 29. Amos 30. rfts 32. input 33. a dip 34. past ten 36. seasons 37. pleat 38. leach 39. are 40. shant 41. sates 49. ices 50. nova 51. a man 52. tele 54. Mex. 55. Mr. O 56. asp 57. nth 58. Deo Tied with a Bow, the Sequel: 1. park 2. super 3. board 4. temple 5. ball 6. back 7. sea 8. snow 9. rock.



How can I participate in family history?

Here are some things you could try:

1. Interview your parents.
2. Write down personal experiences from when you were young.
3. Find journal entries from your ancestors.
4. Help a member in your ward upload photos to FamilySearch.
5. Schedule a temple trip with some friends.

THE QUEST FOR THE THOMAS FAMILY

WHEN I TURNED 12, I was very eager to go to the temple for the first time. My mother and I went onto FamilySearch to find some family names for me to take. When I went to the Cardston Alberta Temple, I was baptized for my great-grandmothers and great-aunts, and I felt so warm inside.

When I was 14, I began to attend the family history classes in my ward, but I had a hard time finding family names. I eventually set a goal to find my great-grandfather's family, the Thomas family.

"Anytime you do anything that helps anyone—on either side of the veil—take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel."

President Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide devotional for youth, June 3, 2018), 15, HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

I found several records about William Alfred Thomas. It turns out that he was the first person in my family to go to South Africa, my birthplace. I searched for more information about him for a year, but I still couldn't find much more about him or his family. I just could not shake the feeling that the Thomas family wanted to be found.

One day I received the distinct prompting to look for William's wife, Francina. A number of records came up—I had finally found them! I ecstatically told my parents, and my grandfather confirmed it to be the correct line.

My brother and I have now been baptized and confirmed for five generations of the Thomas line, all because of perseverance and a special prompting!

Family history does not always come together immediately, but doing it truly does bring a light into your life.

Savannah B., Canada

WHO AM I?

I WAS RECENTLY going through a really hard time, and I didn't know what to do, so I prayed for help and guidance. I went to my Young Women class that Sunday, and the lesson that our Young Women president gave was the answer to my prayer. She gave us a piece of paper that read, "Who Am I?" at the top. We had to see how many words we could come up with to describe ourselves. We came up with a few, and then we watched a talk by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and we had to write down more things about ourselves that we'd heard in the talk.

I liked that so much that I came home and wrote this on a poster and hung it on my wall: "Who am I? I am a daughter of God. I am a friend. I am a leader. I am known and loved by my Savior. I am strong. I stand for truth. I am Camryn." I also wrote that on a piece of paper and hung it in my locker. Whenever I was feeling frustrated about my situation, I just thought about what I had written. I am so grateful for getting an answer to my prayer from that lesson.

Camryn T., Utah, USA



THE THIRD TIME, I LISTENED

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was sitting on the fence between being active and inactive in the Church.

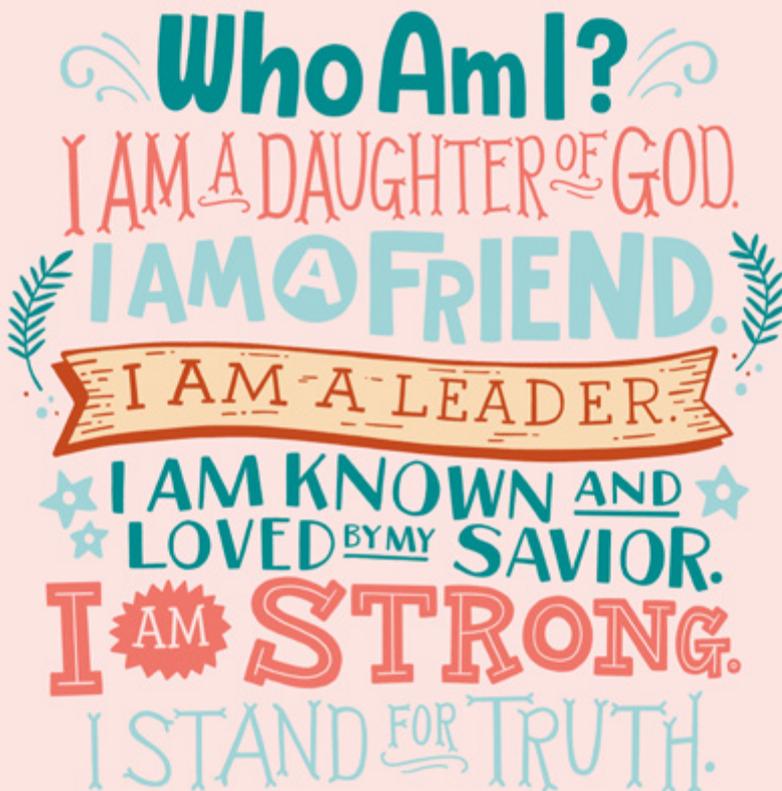
I spent one weekend with my friend Spencer, who was about to leave on his mission. He shared his conversion story with me and his desire to serve a mission. I felt the Spirit, and the words "Go on a mission" spoke to my soul. Never in my life had I had the desire to serve a mission. I pushed the feeling away and tried not to think about it.

The very next day, as Spencer and I were traveling, our driver began talking to us about her faith. As she shared, the same words came to my mind: "Go on a mission." Once again, I buried the feeling.

As we sang the closing hymn at a fireside the following day, the Spirit poured over me and again prompted me to go on a mission. With tears uncontrollably streaming down my face, I thought, "Heavenly Father, if this is what you want, then I'll do it, even though I don't want to." As soon as I made the decision, my desire and excitement to serve grew.

I started my mission papers two days later, and when I received my call, I was assigned to serve in the Philippines Quezon City North Mission. This experience always reminds me that if we have enough faith to follow the promptings of the Spirit, we will find happiness and peace.

Thomas A., South Australia, Australia



Our Hope, Our Light, Our Strength

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*From an Evening with a General Authority broadcast for
religious educators held on Feb. 8, 2019.*

When I was ordained an Apostle, dear President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) stated I was to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world. I did not take that charge lightly. I pored over the scriptures, identifying the Lord by His names and titles. All of these that I am going to share with you are from scripture verses that remind us of our hope that is in Him.

He is the Hope of Israel (Jeremiah 17:13), Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16), Good Shepherd (Doctrine and Covenants 50:44), Counselor (Isaiah 9:6; 2 Nephi 19:6), Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6; 2 Nephi 19:6), Deliverer (Romans 11:26), Light of the World (John 8:12), and High Priest of good things to come (Hebrews 9:11). He is Mighty to save (Alma 34:18; Doctrine and Covenants 133:47) and the One who has all power (Doctrine and Covenants 61:1).

Christ's influence, imprint, and reach are all encompassing. He is there when we falter and strive to move forward. And if we slip, His "light which shineth in darkness" (Doctrine and Covenants 6:21) is brighter than ever. He loves us in our brightest and our darkest hours.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not guesswork. His path is well marked by His footsteps. As we follow Him, we come to love what He loves. As we renew our covenants with Him each week partaking of the holy sacrament, we grow in understanding of Him as the Redeemer of the world (Doctrine and Covenants 93:9), the Spirit of Truth (Doctrine and Covenants 93:9), and the Word (Doctrine and Covenants 93:8).

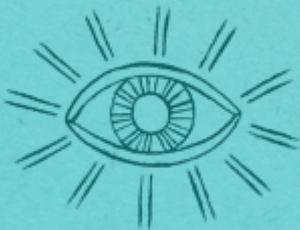
Dear friends, that is the Savior I know, whom I love and revere with all my heart. From the depths of my soul I bear testimony of Him and of His goodness and mercy. He has promised, "You are my friends, and ye shall have an inheritance with me" (Doctrine and Covenants 93:45).

Jesus Christ is always the answer to the problems and challenges that are part of this mortal experience. In understanding His mission and His gospel, our love for Him and our belief in and reliance on Him gives us strength. **NE**

Brother of Jared



Led his family and friends from the Tower of Babel to the promised land.



Saw a **miraculous vision**, which is recorded in the sealed portion of the plates (see Ether 4:4–5).



“A large and mighty man, and a man highly favored of the Lord” (Ether 1:34).



Built barges to **cross the ocean**.



Asked the Lord to touch 16 stones to **light the barges**.



Spoke with Jesus Christ **face to face** (see Ether 3:13–20).

You are invited...



Share
your experiences
participating in the
invitations extended by
the Young Women
General Presidency by
using **#strivetobe**
on social media.

... to a special Face to Face broadcast on
November 15, 2020, celebrating 150 years
of the Young Women organization.

**Watch on ChurchofJesusChrist.org,
YouTube, or Facebook.**

