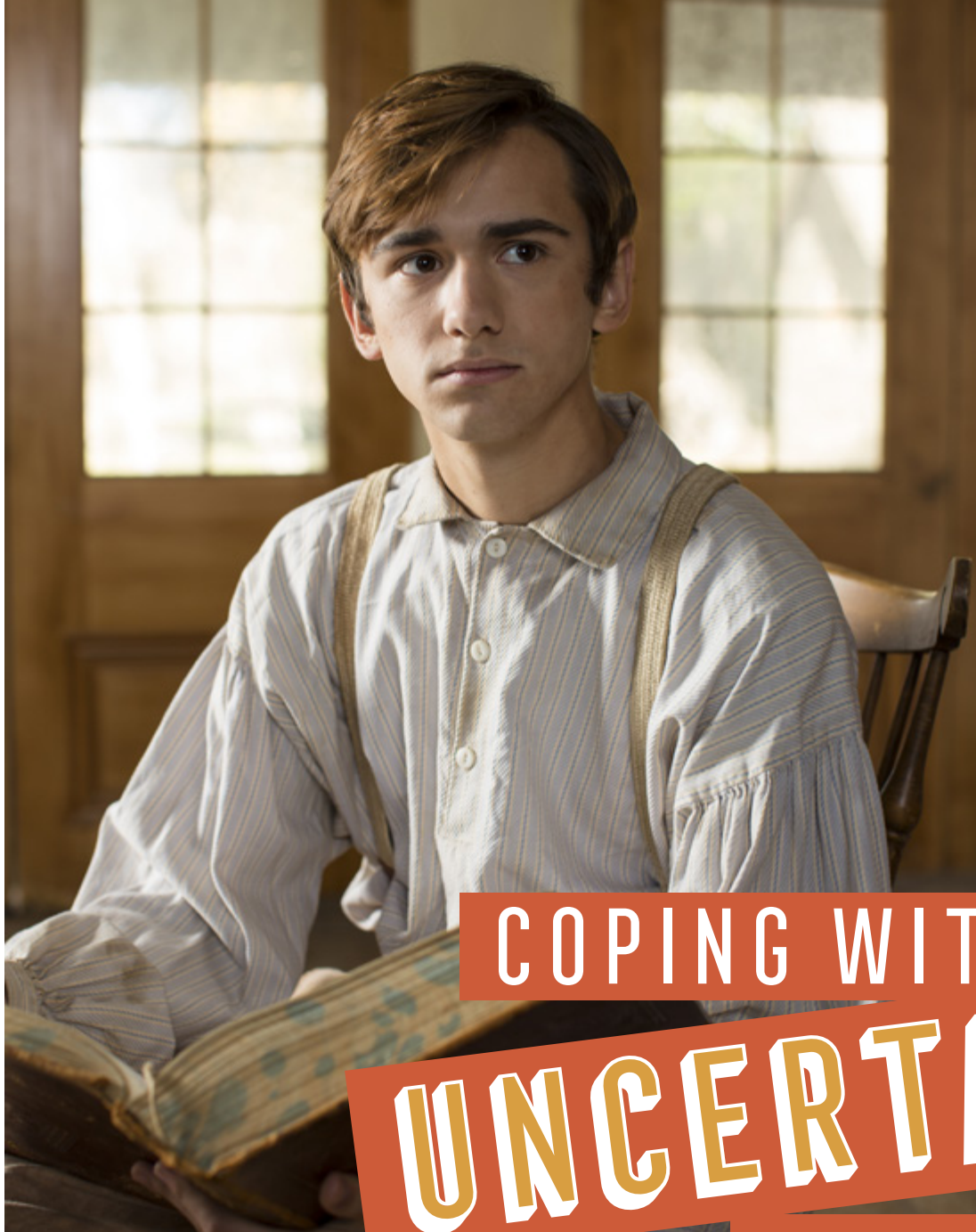


Young Joseph Smith studying the Bible. Taken from Church History Museum exhibit



COPING WITH UNCERTAIN TIMES

By Sam Lofgran
Church Magazines

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

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).

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