

WHAT YOU KNEW in Premortal Life

*You might think
you don't have
a testimony,
but in fact, you
always have.*



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When I was young and preparing for a mission, my mom invited me to go to a continuing education night at the church.

The topic was Joseph Smith. Of course, I had a lot going on, and I didn't really want to go.

But she talked me into it, and I'm glad she did.

I can remember sitting in the back row of the chapel as the instructor began teaching about the Prophet Joseph Smith. I'll never forget it. It was a riveting moment of clarity. I was completely tuned in to the story. As it culminated and the teacher bore testimony, I knew that I knew it was true. I just knew it. But more importantly, I realized that I'd *always* known it was true; this was just the first time I'd realized it.

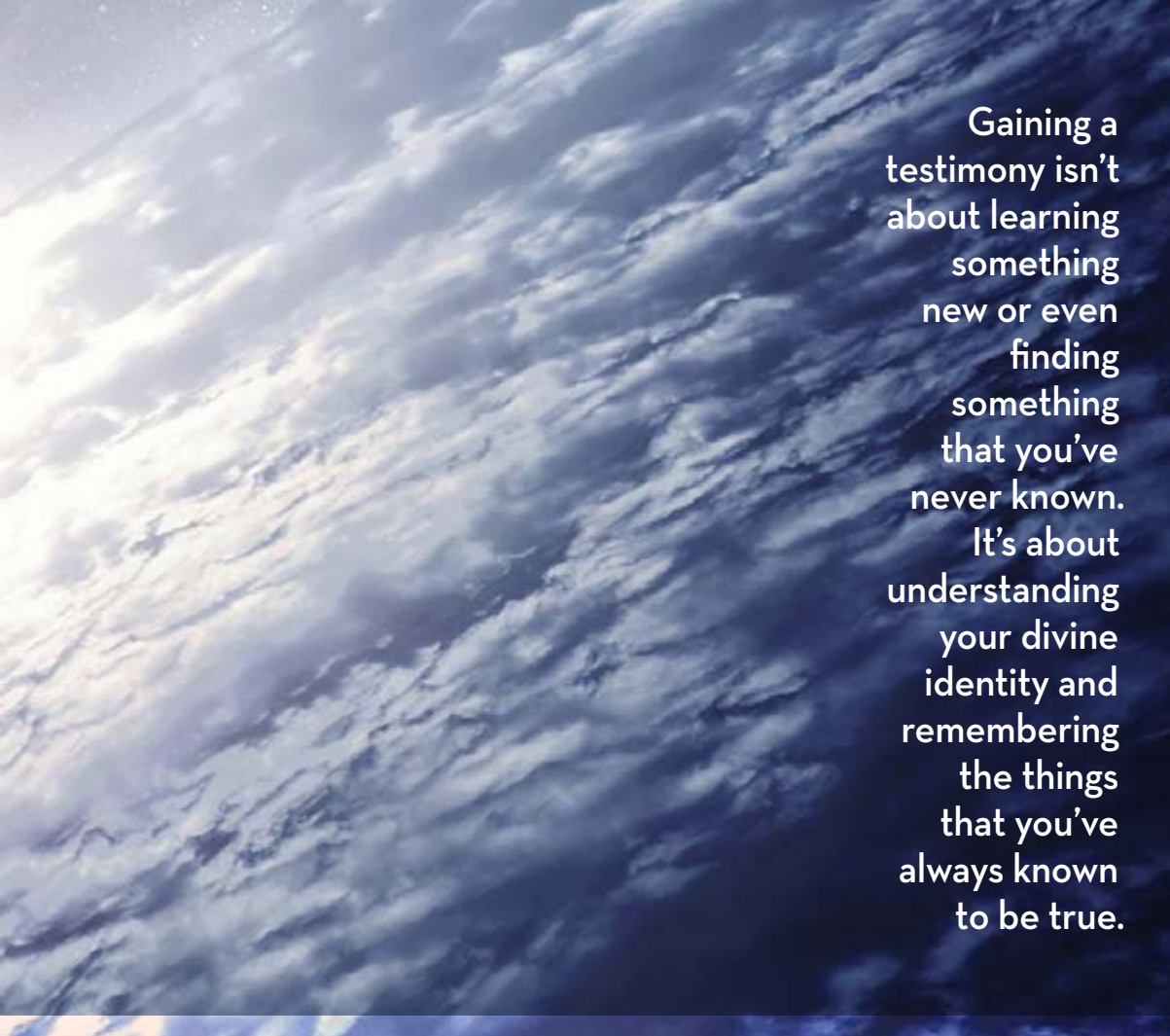
If you're trying to gain a testimony of

the Church, don't be tempted to think, like Laman and Lemuel, that "the Lord maketh no such thing[s] known unto [you]" (1 Nephi 15:9). Don't think that receiving such a testimony is beyond your reach. These tempting lies could never be true.

Gaining a testimony isn't about learning something new or even finding something that you've never known. It's about understanding your divine identity and remembering the things that you've always known to be true.

Know Who You've Always Been

While you might not know for sure how old your spirit is, you can be sure that it has been learning and growing since before the earth was even created. You knew about Heavenly Father, you knew about His plan for you to



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become like Him, and you wanted a part in that plan. You even knew about the Church. Now that you're in a physical body and many memories of premortal life are veiled from you, you might not be able to remember those experiences, but they will always be a part of your spirit. Even now, they are a part of you.

So as you seek to gain a testimony of divine truths, don't stress about what you don't know or understand yet. Take heart in the fact that you already know it!

Know Who You Are

I've discovered that the single most important thing you can learn at any time in your life is who you are. And it's not easy—especially when the media, your friends, and your family all have different ideas of who

and what you should be. But amid so many influences attempting to define us, it's easy to forget about the most important of all our identities—our divine identity.

When I was in a meeting as a newly called General Authority, I remember President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), former President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, “We are not us. You are not you.” I thought, “What does that mean?” But suddenly, several little experiences converged in my mind, and I realized he was right!

Before my mission, I was a tall, skinny kid from Salt Lake City, Utah, who played baseball, and that's who I thought I was. I realize now that baseball is just something I did and enjoyed; being a baseball player was not my true identity. A true, divine identity is not based on preferences or skills or even where





you're born on this earth. It has more to do with who you were before and who you will be after this life.

As you live the gospel, your divine identity and your testimony of the Church will become clearer. You'll begin to better understand the things you've always known, and certain doctrines and truths will begin to feel real and familiar.

Follow in the Savior's Footsteps

Even though Jesus was perfect, He too had to start life without being able to remember anything. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, “He was as much a God when he was born into the world as he was before. But as far as this life is concerned it appears that he had to start just as all other children do and gain his knowledge line upon line . . . ‘until he received a fullness’ [D&C 93:13]” (*Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith* [2013], 314).

As strange as it sounds, Jesus started where you did—with no knowledge of His life before. But as He lived the gospel and sought out the will of the Father, His divine identity as our Savior and Redeemer became

clearer and clearer. He began to *remember*. It didn't happen all at once either—it came one step at a time until He knew perfectly who He was. Once Christ knew this, it gave Him purpose, it gave Him direction, and it helped Him continue to live in a way that helped Him remember even more.

Remember You Always Knew It

You knew so much before this life. Don't ever forget that.

As you strive to gain or strengthen your testimony of the Church, be patient with yourself and your Heavenly Father's timing. We're only meant to remember one small step at a time. But as you live the gospel of Jesus Christ and do the will of the Father, the Spirit will help you discover your true, divine identity.

You are a spiritual child of a living God. And that matters. This knowledge will give you purpose and direction. Once it becomes clear who you are, spiritual truths that you once knew will begin to feel like home.

That's when you'll realize that you do have a testimony and you always have. You just had to remember. **NE**



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