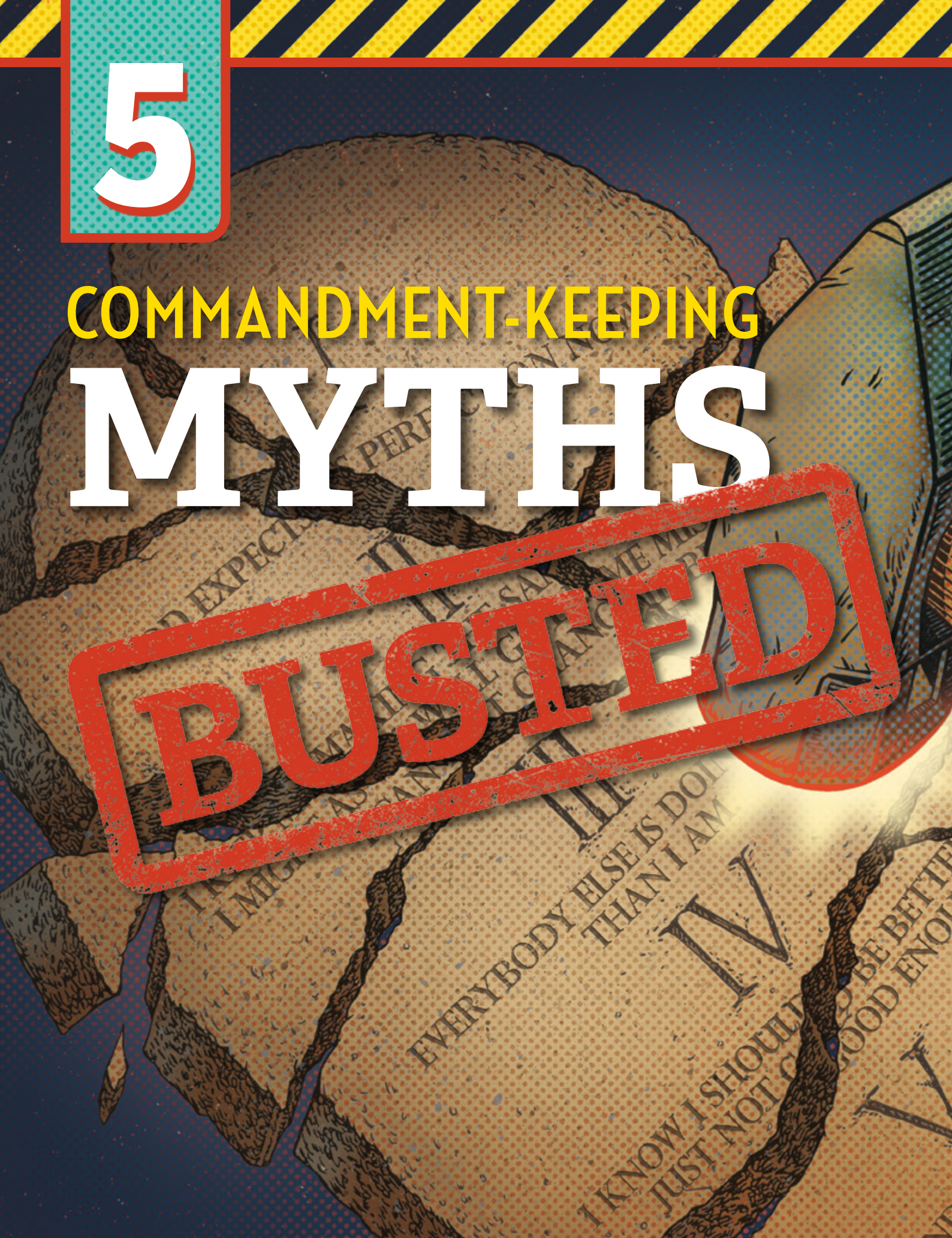


5

COMMANDMENT-KEEPING

MYTHS

BUSTED



Still not perfect yet? It's OK. Here's why.

By Bethany Bartholomew

Church Magazines

Ever feel like you don't measure up? First, remember that no one is perfect. We all "come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And second, give yourself a break! You're probably doing better than you think. Here are some common myths about keeping commandments, along with some facts to keep in mind.

MYTH #1: GOD EXPECTS PERFECTION NOW.

Heavenly Father doesn't expect us to do everything perfectly right now; He does expect us to do our best and then to have faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ to help us change.

FACT:
He knows we will struggle. He is pleased when we do our best and keep trying.



"We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 1995 general conference.



"With the gift of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we can improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed. . . . Keep trying. Keep trusting. Keep believing. Keep growing. Heaven is cheering you on today, tomorrow, and forever."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016 general conference.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KACHIK

MYTH #2:

I KEEP MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES. I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP, BECAUSE I CAN'T CHANGE.

FACT:

When we keep trying and turn to God, He can help us change—no matter what.

The whole point of this life is to change—to become, to grow, and to learn so that one day we can become like our Father in Heaven (see Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

But we have to make the choice to change.

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy warned, “Once any of us conclude[s,] ‘That’s just the way I am,’ we give up our ability to change” (Apr. 2014 general conference). So whatever we do, we shouldn’t give up.

When we choose to change, that doesn’t mean we’ll be perfect right away (see myth #1). But it can mean that our heart wants to be obedient and that we’ll keep trying again whenever we fall short of where we want to be. When we make that choice to turn to God, He will give us strength beyond the strength we’d have on our own—and He will help us change.



Learn more about how commandments bring happiness at lds.org/go/happyNE916.



“[God] cares that we keep on trying. . . . Even if we’ve been a conscious, deliberate sinner or have repeatedly faced failure and disappointment, the moment we decide to try again, the Atonement of Christ can help us. And we need to remember that it is not the Holy Ghost that tells us we’re so far gone that we might as well give up.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2015 general conference.

MYTH #3:

EVERYBODY ELSE IS DOING BETTER THAN I AM.

FACT:

God doesn’t judge us by comparison. We shouldn’t either.

Don’t worry if you think others are doing much better than you.



“God is fully aware that you and I are not perfect. . . . God is also fully aware that the people you think are perfect are not.

“And yet we spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others—usually comparing our weaknesses to their strengths. This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. . . .

“Be compassionate and patient with yourself.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Forget Me Not,” Oct. 2011 general conference.

And remember, “We are not in a race against each other. . . . The race we are *really* in is the race against sin” (Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2012 general conference). So just try to do *your* best to become better each day.

MYTH #4:
**I KNOW I SHOULD
BE BETTER. I'M JUST
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.**

FACT:
God knows our
limitations. He
won't measure us
against an impos-
sible standard.

Sometimes we assume we know how God will judge us. But He reminds us, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isaiah 55:8). He is the perfect judge, and He judges with a perfect understanding of our situation.

Think of it this way: If you try to jump as high as you can right now, you can probably jump pretty high. But if you try it again while holding 20 pounds of weight, you won't be able to jump as high. Does that mean you aren't as good now as you were before? No. You didn't change; your circumstances did.

Sometimes we have to deal with heavy things. God knows what you're capable of, but He also understands better than you do what your limitations are. He will judge with that understanding in mind. He just wants us to do the best we can with what we have.

President Thomas S. Monson has said, "Our task is to become our best selves. One of God's greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final" ("The Will Within," Apr. 1987 general conference). So believe in yourself and God, and keep trying.

MYTH #5:
**COMMANDMENTS ARE
TOO RESTRICTIVE; THEY
TAKE AWAY MY AGENCY.**

FACT:
Commandments
lead us to incred-
ible freedom and
blessings.

Rather than restricting our agency, commandments open our lives to more freedom and blessings—they're like a how-to booklet for happiness (see D&C 82:8–9). President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has said, "Maybe obedience is not so much the process of bending, twisting, and pounding our souls into something we are not. Instead, it is the process by which we discover what we truly are made of. . . .

"We come to see obedience not as a punishment but as a liberating path to our divine destiny. . . . Eventually, the priceless, eternal spirit of the heavenly being within us is revealed, and a radiance of goodness becomes our nature" ("He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home," Apr. 2016 general conference).

So the next time you feel like you just don't measure up, remember that you are a divine son or daughter of heavenly parents—a royal soul with infinite potential.

And that is what Heavenly Father sees in you—that's why He gives commandments.



"Some see only sacrifice and limitations in obedience to the commandments of the new and everlasting covenant, but those who live the experience—who give themselves freely and unreservedly to the covenant life—find greater liberty and fulfillment. When we truly understand, we seek more commandments, not fewer. Each new law or commandment we learn and live is like one more rung or step on a ladder that enables us to climb higher and higher. Truly, the gospel life is the good life."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2009 general conference, footnote 2.