ADJUSTING TO SERVICE MISSIONARY LIFE

RESOURCE BOOKLET
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Introduction

You Can Be Successful with the Lord’s Help

As a service missionary, you are called to represent Jesus Christ. You are ministering to Heavenly Father’s children. The Savior loves you, and He will help you move ahead. He has promised: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:88).

Exercise your faith and act on the decision you have made to do the Lord’s work. Through your continual faith and best efforts, you will develop the skills, gifts, and strengths you need more quickly. You will feel the help of the Lord. You will grow in confidence in your ability to serve Him.

The Lord has promised to help missionaries. But many of the greatest missionaries in history suffered and struggled in their missionary labors. Ammon and his brethren “suffer[ed] much, both in body and in mind, such as hunger, thirst and fatigue, and also much labor in the spirit” (Alma 17:5). At times, they were overwhelmed. “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success” (Alma 26:27).

This promise applies to you in your assigned service to the family of God. You can become a useful servant of the Lord.

Tatsu Ito, who had spinal muscular atrophy, is an example of this promise’s fulfillment. When the Ito family moved from Japan to Utah, Tatsu decided to serve as a service missionary. Tatsu’s younger brother, Dan, “could see how Tatsu was changing” during the mission and knew that Tatsu was truly “preparing to return to heaven.”
When Tatsu passed away, Dan, who also has spinal muscular atrophy, went to the temple. He felt prompted to ask if he might be called to complete the same mission assignment in which Tatsu had been serving before his passing. Dan was blessed to be able to do so. He served on the LDS.org response team and reviewed “I’m a Mormon” profiles in Japanese.

Dan said that he was also “a representative of God in everyday life.” If someone had problems, he was “always happy to listen to them and encourage them to go to their bishops to receive a blessing.”

While Elder Ito’s mission did not have a proselytizing routine, he said that he absolutely felt that he was a missionary. He said that his mission helped “increase my willingness to serve more every day.”

How to Get Started

Read “Understanding Stress”
To begin, read "Understanding Stress" on pages 4–8. You will learn what stress is and what causes stress in service missionary work. You will also learn what resources are available to manage stress.

Study “Using the Challenge Log”
Follow the directions under “Using the Challenge Log” on pages 9–11. These directions will help you determine which challenges of your missionary work might be causing difficulty right now. You will find suggestions within this booklet that will help you learn to overcome each challenge. Family members and service mission leaders can help you apply these suggestions and also suggest other ideas. Then continue to work on other challenges by using the suggestions in this booklet.

How to Use This Booklet
A service mission can be both joyous and stressful. Hard work and service are proven tools in managing worry, despair, and weariness. They are essential for anyone engaged in the Lord’s work, both during and after missionary service. But hard work and service alone are not your only tools. Other resources include professional help, priesthood blessings, counsel from experienced adults, and this booklet. The Lord will help you develop skills and attitudes to help you succeed. You can find satisfaction and success in your service mission and in life.

This booklet is not meant to be read all at once. Use the instructions below. You will be guided to suggestions for the challenges you face. These ideas will also help as you serve and minister to others.
New experiences (like joining the Church or attending a new school) are exciting. But they can also make you feel nervous. You don’t know quite what to expect. Over time you will learn to meet these challenges, and you will grow in the process. Adapting to stress in positive ways develops emotional resilience.

Service missions are no different. Sometimes a service mission feels like a wonderful spiritual adventure. It seems like a challenge you can handle. You calmly move forward with faith. You realize that much of the nervousness or worry you experience is temporary. You take courage in knowing you will adjust with time. You grow spiritually and have the opportunity to develop new skills. Experiences you once feared often become more manageable. You even come to love aspects of missionary service that once felt overwhelming. You rely on the Spirit. You grow in confidence and find joy in your service.

At other times, however, you may face unexpected problems. Some experiences are more difficult or unpleasant than you anticipated. You might wonder how you can succeed. Instead of feeling motivated to try, you might become anxious, irritable, exhausted, or frustrated. You might have physical symptoms like pain, upset stomach, sleeplessness, or illness. You might have trouble learning or connecting with people. You might feel discouraged or want to quit.

Four Levels of Stress

The symptoms of stress are like gauges on a car’s dashboard. They remind you to slow down, get fuel, or check the engine. They remind you to fill up your spiritual “tank” and look for new solutions. According to the following chart, when missionaries are coping well with stress, they are at the “green” level. When they become anxious or have trouble, they are at the “yellow” level. If they continue to feel stress, they are at the “orange” level. And when they feel unable to function because of stress, they are at the “red” level.

Over the course of your mission, you may experience different levels of stress at different times. You may feel “orange” today and get back to “green” tomorrow. This booklet has suggestions and tools that may help you stay at—or get back to—the green level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs You Are at This Level</th>
<th>What to Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>This is the ideal. At this level, you are handling the everyday stresses of missionary service. You are learning and progressing. Continue to work hard and trust in the Lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident, happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to meet challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovering quickly from setbacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting along with your leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling the Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>It is normal to spend some time at the yellow level. Be kind to yourself as you cope with challenges. Be patient as you learn new skills, such as mindfulness. These skills will help you become stronger and increase your ability to serve. Continue to pray and serve with faith. Look to the scriptures and conference talks, your service mission leaders, and this booklet for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense, worried, insecure, anxious, unprepared, unable to sleep well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having trouble getting along with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having difficulty feeling the Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>No one enjoys being at an orange level of stress, but this is not a permanent condition. Pray for guidance as you study scriptures and apply the suggestions in this booklet. Contact your service mission leaders if you stay at the orange level for over three days. They will help you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhausted (physically and emotionally)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill (upset stomach or other symptoms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily angered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeply discouraged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to feel the Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Red | Feeling persistent and intense depression, panic, or anxiety  
|     | Feeling hopeless  
|     | Having trouble eating or sleeping (can lead to illness)  
|     | Feeling overwhelmed and unable to continue  
|     | Feeling as though you have been abandoned by God | 

**What to Do**

If you are at this level, contact your service mission leaders, family members, or stake president for help.

Ask for a priesthood blessing. Take some time to write in your journal or ponder the suggestions in this book. Pray about them. You might request a break from the things you find most difficult about your assignment. Speak with your service mission leaders to help find the right service changes for you.

You can become a useful servant of the Lord no matter what your challenges are. Try to use the ideas in this booklet and move forward with faith. Consider the experience of Sister Xochilt Oteo, who served in the San Diego Service Mission:

“When I began serving at Catholic Charities, I was excited but apprehensive. We were asked to teach a preliteracy class to immigrants and refugees. I felt I was in no way capable of teaching an English class to people from all over the world.

“We didn’t have translators in our class, so communication was limited. Sister Pennock and I spoke through pictures and hand gestures. In my first class, I was terrified! I didn’t have any idea what to do. But when I gathered my class, a surge of calm rushed through me.

“I felt the Spirit of the Lord. My job was simple—serve each student, who had left everything behind to come to the United States, and help them learn how to write their name and general information and have a basic conversation in English.

“We kept going. Months later, we were in the San Diego Temple as part of our assignment, when we overheard sisters talking about refugees coming to the baptistry that day. To my utter joy, one of those coming to the baptistry was one of our former students. We didn’t even know she had joined the Church.

“Our hearts were full and our eyes were wet as Sister Pennock and I knew we had done our part as service missionaries in blessing the lives of our students.”
Demands of Missionary Service

Serving “with all your heart, might, mind and strength” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2) is an invitation from the Lord to bless your life. But missionary work is not easy. The demands of missionary service fall into several categories:

**General** (see “1. Developing Resilience under Stress,” pages 12–17). During your missionary service, you may experience many changes and transitions. Your familiar ways of coping may not work as well on your mission. At times you may feel awkward and you may struggle. You may wonder how to help other service missionaries who struggle.

**Physical** (see “2. Developing Physical Resilience,” pages 18–22). You may be on your feet much of the day. Your work may be physically tiring. Just the newness of the situation can be fatiguing.

**Emotional** (see “3. Developing Emotional Resilience,” pages 23–32). You may feel anxious about all you have to learn or do. You may have trouble unwinding. You may become discouraged, get bored, or feel lonely.

**Social** (see “4. Developing Social Resilience,” pages 33–36). You may need to get to know new people quickly. You may talk to strangers and interact with new leaders at your place of service.

**Learning and Work** (see “5. Developing Mental Resilience,” pages 37–40). You may need to learn new skills to complete your assignments. You will need to plan and manage goals. You must also adapt to changes and solve all kinds of practical problems.

**Spiritual** (see “6. Developing Spiritual Resilience,” pages 41–44). You will stretch to strengthen your
testimony and avoid temptation. Strive to feel and recognize the Spirit. At times, you will need to take correction, repent, and face your weaknesses and regrets. Be humble, and rely on the Lord more than ever before. As you do these things, you will grow and progress.

President Russell M. Nelson taught: “We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending.”

“Perfection Pending,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 86

Meeting the Challenges of Your Service Mission

Many of the challenges of a service mission cannot be reduced. You will need to learn new things. You must obey the rules and get along with other people. You must do assigned work competently and leave your comfort zone to try new things.

However, you will have many resources that will help you meet the challenges of your new service role. This booklet will help you find and use these resources. Also, remember the importance of prayer, scripture study, the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and helping others. The most important thing you can do is rely on the Savior and His Atonement. He is the ultimate source for dealing with the stresses of service missionary life.

What Should I Do Next?

Study and apply the information in the next section “Using the Challenge Log.” As you do, you will be guided to sections in this booklet. These sections can help with your specific concerns. Read those sections now. Come back to other sections if you need them.
Using the Challenge Log

Directions

1. Study the “List of Challenges” that follows. Each of these challenges is discussed in this booklet. Beside each challenge is the section where it is discussed.

2. Choose a challenge that you would like to work on. Write the challenge in the “Challenge Log.” Also write your start date.

3. Turn to the section of this booklet that provides suggestions for overcoming that challenge.

4. Read the suggestions in that section. Choose one or more of the suggestions that would be helpful to you.

5. Write the suggestion(s) in the “Challenge Log” under “Plan for Improvement.” Also write what you would like to accomplish under “Expected Outcome.”

6. Share your plan with an accountability partner, such as a parent or service mission leader, so that this person can help you with your plan.

7. During the next week, try to use the suggestions. Each day, put a check mark in the “Challenge Log” to show your progress.

8. At the end of the week, evaluate what worked and what did not work. Also record your personal summary of your week.

9. Decide whether to continue working on the same suggestions for another week. You could also choose other suggestions for this challenge and work on them. Or if you have made good progress, you could decide to choose another challenge. Create another “Challenge Log” as needed.
List of Challenges

1. **Developing Resilience under Stress**
   - A. Responding positively to stress
   - B. Responding to a “stress emergency”
   - C. Helping others who are overstressed
   - D. Dealing with a personal challenge

2. **Developing Physical Resilience**
   - A. Learning to work hard
   - B. Staying healthy and energetic
   - C. Managing head, stomach, or muscle pain
   - D. Sleeping well and going to bed on time
   - E. Getting up on time
   - F. Eating with family
   - G. Getting motivated to exercise

3. **Developing Emotional Resilience**
   - A. Adjusting to your new assignment
   - B. Overcoming feeling sad or discouraged
   - C. Overcoming feeling self-critical
   - D. Overcoming feeling anxious or inadequate
   - E. Overcoming feeling easily irritated or angry
   - F. Overcoming feeling unmotivated
   - G. Managing sexual or romantic feelings
   - H. Managing changes and transitions

4. **Developing Social Resilience**
   - A. Communicating with others
   - B. Avoiding feeling lonely or left out
   - C. Managing conflict or criticism
   - D. Getting along with leaders
   - E. Helping others understand your mission assignment

5. **Developing Mental Resilience**
   - A. Learning a new assignment
   - B. Staying organized with goals and plans
   - C. Overcoming the feeling of not being capable

6. **Developing Spiritual Resilience**
   - A. Strengthening your testimony
   - B. Learning to repent
   - C. Learning to pray with real intent
   - D. Learning to love the scriptures
   - E. Learning to rely on the Spirit
Challenge Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved the Outcome</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Made Some Progress</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made No Progress</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**End-of-Week Self-Evaluation**

Write your own thoughts, covering topics such as these: “Am I making progress? Can I do better?”

**Personal Summary of the Week**

Write your own summary of the week, covering topics such as these: “Am I pleased with my efforts? Do I need to reevaluate? Do I need help to improve?”
1. Developing Resilience under Stress

This section contains general suggestions for preventing excessive stress and coping with stressful times when they occur. These suggestions can be helpful to all missionaries.

A. Responding Positively to Stress

- **Pray fervently and often.** Tell the Lord about your feelings, experiences, plans, and concerns. Ask the Spirit to be with you in all things. Write down impressions you receive as you pray and study the scriptures. Be alert to spiritual guidance you may receive throughout the day. Hearken to the voice of the Spirit. As you do so, you will continue to receive guidance, comfort, and help. “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5). Ask the Lord to help you recognize and follow spiritual promptings.

- **Be still.** Stillness doesn’t mean just being physically still, although it can certainly include that. Being still is an inward attitude. It is a state of internal calm that invites God’s presence. “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Learn to be still. You will then be more sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit. You will be more able to meet the demands of your mission. Whenever you’re feeling too much stress, you can practice stillness. Instead of focusing on the thoughts in your mind, pay attention to sensations in your body. Notice whether your muscles are tense or relaxed, and notice the sounds and smells around you. It is especially helpful to pay attention to your breathing (see page 14). You’re not trying to suppress any thoughts or turn off your mind. You’re just shifting your attention away from worries and fears. This allows more room for the Spirit in your mind. It can also help you feel more at peace.

> “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
> 
> John 14:27

- **Recognize the hand of the Lord in all things.** You have the privilege of participating in God’s miraculous work of blessing His children. Practice focusing every day on blessings you are grateful for. Notice the Spirit’s influence in...
your life, and write about it in your journal (see Moroni 10:3).

- **Serve from your strengths and talents.** Make a list of your strengths, talents, and spiritual gifts. Your strengths are part of the Lord’s storehouse. He draws on them to bless His children and build His kingdom. A crucial part of your mission is to cultivate your gifts. Use your strengths in a Christlike way to help others. Consider what the Spirit whispered to one missionary: “I didn’t call you for your weaknesses. I called you for your strengths.” Focus more on what you do well than what you do wrong. Plan ways each week to develop and use your gifts to serve and bless others. (See Doctrine and Covenants 82:18–19.)

- **Identify and memorize comforting scriptures.** As you study the scriptures, list verses that strengthen and comfort you. You may read, listen to, or memorize them.

- **Focus on the needs of those you are serving.** Think about what you can do to bless those you are serving. Seek inspiration to know how you can better help them. Try to strengthen their faith.

- **Connect your work to people you know.** Think about how your service helps people you know with real problems. In your journal, record examples of how your service makes a difference for others.

- **Examine your expectations.** Your service mission may not always be what you expected. Sometimes things won’t turn out the way you hoped. Your assignment may not always be challenging or rewarding. And you may not do everything perfectly. But remember the Lord’s counsel to Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. . . . Therefore, hold on thy way” (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7, 9).

- **Ask for permission to take a break from whatever you are doing.** Perhaps you can’t take one right away. If so, tell yourself, “I can wait until time for a break.”

- **Exercise.** Regular exercise is one effective way to manage stress. Try to participate in a variety of activities that are both enjoyable and physically challenging. As you focus on these activities, you may find yourself energized. You will be able to forget the worries of the day. Any exercise can help increase your stamina and capacity to serve the Lord. Find a way to reward yourself for finding ways to increase your exercise.

- **Don’t try to control things you cannot control.** The results of your righteous efforts may depend on the agency of others. You cannot control people or force them to do things. “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:41). “Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (Doctrine and Covenants 123:17).

- **Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is a technique for dealing with stress. It involves paying attention to experiences in the present moment. Use it when you’re feeling overly stressed or fearful.
Try to focus your awareness on what’s going on around you. Focus on right now and right here, not on the future. Notice how your mind is reacting to this awareness.

- Take a deep breath, close your eyes if necessary, and try to relax.
- Take a short walk if that is helpful.
- Observe, almost as an outsider, what you were worrying about. How are you feeling about it?
- Allow whatever is bothering you to pass. Focus on what you can or should do in the next few minutes.
- If the situation does not improve, let your service mission leader know.

**Breathing Exercise**

- Sit in a comfortable position or stand quietly.
- Take a few deep, slow breaths through your nose, pausing after each one.
- Relax your shoulders and try to breathe so your stomach moves, not your shoulders.
- Try to focus on your breath. If your thoughts stray, gently return them to your breath.
- Continue to breathe slowly and calmly for five minutes or until worried feelings ease up.

- **Befriend your coworkers and other missionaries.** Share ideas, serve each other, help each other, and forgive each other.

- **Use music.** Recall the words to a few songs or scriptures that you love. When you are feeling stressed or discouraged, remember the words. Ask if you can use earbuds at your service assignment. Listen to calming music if it does not interfere with your assignment. Consider using “Calm” or a similar app on your smartphone.

- **Remember what you’ve learned.** You have been dealing with change and difficulty your whole life. List what you have learned from past periods of high stress (a move, a loss, or a new school or job). How can you use these skills now?

**B. Responding to a “Stress Emergency”**

A stress emergency occurs when you suddenly move into the orange or red stress zones. If you are in physical or emotional danger, call your parents or service mission leader immediately. For other situations, try the following suggestions:

- **Take a short break.** If you feel very upset or overstressed, take a break. Take several slow, deep breaths; stretch; and relax physically. When your body and mind are calm again, you will think more clearly. Take a walk, or get some food or a drink. Or just sit and be still for a few minutes. Just naming what you feel (for example, I feel frustrated or rejected) can help your brain start to work on the problem.

- **Be kind to yourself.** Talk to yourself with the same kind, comforting words you would use with someone else. Everyone gets frustrated or makes mistakes sometimes. Know that the Lord understands. Imagine Him sitting close to you, listening and offering support. Remember, thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, or harsh condemnation are not from the Lord.
• **Refocus on gratitude.** Notice what is around you. Focus on what is right, good, and positive about yourself and the world. Offer a prayer of gratitude for at least five specific things. Tell yourself, “I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people” (3 Nephi 5:13).

• **Take one step at a time.** Identify the immediate problem, and take one step at a time to solve it. Remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is .”

• **Help someone else.** Refocus your energy by serving someone else. Smile at people, help them out, and offer service. Start a conversation with someone to bring your thoughts back to the present.

• **Talk back to negative thinking.** Right now, or before bed tonight, list today’s negative thoughts on paper. Then rewrite them to be more hopeful, truthful, and encouraging (see the following example).

### Talking Back to Negative Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MY THOUGHTS</th>
<th>MY REWRITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can’t do this assignment.</td>
<td>This assignment is hard right now. But I can learn it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m bored with this work.</td>
<td>I will look for a way to make this work more interesting for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t care what my supervisor thinks; I’m doing this my way.</td>
<td>I do care; I’m just frustrated. I’ll try to listen better and ask more questions. Then I’ll understand why my supervisor sees this differently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am always being judged.</td>
<td>I know I’m doing good work; the Lord knows it too. Right now all I can do is focus on my effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m always so disorganized.</td>
<td>Sometimes I’m disorganized, and sometimes I’m better organized. I can pick one thing and get better at organizing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll never make it through this day.</td>
<td>I’ve made it through every day so far, and I’ll make it through today. All I have to do right now is what is in front of me, one step at a time. I’ll relax for five minutes to calm down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should know my assignment by now.</td>
<td>Who says I should? I am working hard. The Lord and others will help me get the assignment done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coworkers are annoying.</td>
<td>I know God loves all His children. He will help me love them too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Helping Others Who Are Overstressed

- **Notice others who are struggling.** Let them know that you understand. Offer to help. Take time to listen to their distress. Suggest that they take a short break.

- **Think of your baptismal covenant.** We have promised “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; . . . to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things” (Mosiah 18:8–9). Apply this covenant by (1) sharing another’s burden, (2) offering understanding and comfort, and (3) testifying of God’s love.

- **Ask a few questions, but don’t force the person to talk.** Try saying, “You seem upset. What happened?” or “Would you be willing to tell me about it?” Other good comments might include:
  - “I don’t know what to say right now, but I’m so glad you told me.”
  - “Tell me about what you’re feeling right now.”
  - “I care about you.”
  - “I’m here for you.”
  - “It’s okay to feel this way. You aren’t broken.”

- **Remind the other person of what he or she does well.** For example, you could say, “I really appreciate your integrity and your desire to serve God.”

- **Listen to understand, and offer support and encouragement.** Until a person feels understood, offering advice and suggesting solutions is often not helpful. Ask questions and help the person find his or her own answers. You should not take on the role of counselor with others. But you can be an empathetic listener who helps and supports them.

- **Bear your testimony.** Share your conviction of God’s love and willingness to help.

- **Be wise as you minister to others.** Yours is a holy calling. Be trustworthy, and keep confidences.

- **Focus on what needs to be decided right now.** Help overstressed individuals to sidestep big issues and focus on the immediate decisions to be made. Offer to help them. Encourage them to come back to the bigger problem when things have calmed down. Then help them look for solutions. Remind them that the Lord can help with solutions over time. We should do what we can and turn our problems over to Him.

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President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. . . . In the Doctrine and Covenants we read about how important it is to ‘. . . succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees’ [Doctrine and Covenants 81:5]. So often, our acts of service consist of simple encouragement or of giving mundane help with mundane tasks, but what glorious consequences can flow from mundane acts and from small but deliberate deeds!”

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 82*
D. Dealing with a Personal Challenge

You are a unique person with unique strengths and weaknesses. If you have a personal challenge you would like to work on, write it here:

Also list new things to try. You can learn from people around you, professionals, or personal research. Think of physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual approaches that might help. Remember you will probably have to practice a new approach for several weeks. Then you will know how well it works.

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Practice explaining your challenge to others and asking for help managing it. Practice with your parents or service mission leaders.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland counseled: “Whatever your struggle, my brothers and sisters—mental or emotional or physical or otherwise . . . trust in God. Hold on in His love. . . . Though we may feel we are ‘like a broken vessel,’ as the Psalmist says [Psalm 31:12], we must remember, that vessel is in the hands of the divine potter. Broken minds can be healed just the way broken bones and broken hearts are healed.”

“Like a Broken Vessel,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2013, 42
2. Developing Physical Resilience

Excessive stress can affect your health, ability to sleep, and ability to handle temptation. Good nutrition and exercise can help you manage stress better. If you are having physical challenges, pray about them. Then choose one or two of the following suggestions that seem right for you. Not every suggestion will work for every person. Most ideas must be practiced for at least two to three weeks before they begin to be helpful. Look in the section “1. Developing Resilience under Stress” (pages 12–17) for additional suggestions.

A. Learning to Work Hard

- **Break down big or difficult tasks into smaller pieces.** If the tasks still feel too hard, break them down further. Then begin working on one of the tasks. If you wait until you “feel like” working before you start, you may wait a long time. Get started, and motivation will generally follow.

- **Pace yourself.** Vary the work you do, and don’t work too long at just one activity. Remind yourself: “All I have to do right now is ________.”

- **Get enough sleep, healthy food, water, and exercise to have the stamina you need.**

- **Look for and welcome support, suggestions, and encouragement from others.** Support and encourage others as well.

- **Express gratitude.** Be grateful not only for your blessings but also for your challenges and adversities. You can learn from them. Expressing gratitude will open the door for the Lord to bless and help you.

B. Staying Healthy and Energetic

- **Study and apply Doctrine and Covenants 89.**
“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

“And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.”

Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–21

• Strengthen your immune system.
  ◦ Get eight to nine hours of sleep.
  ◦ Drink 6 to 12 glasses of water per day, depending on the climate.
  ◦ Except when fasting, don’t skip meals, especially breakfast.
  ◦ Avoid sugar.
  ◦ Take a multivitamin each day.
  ◦ Eat some protein each day (for example, nuts, beans, tofu, eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, fish, poultry, meat).
  ◦ Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer, especially if others around you are ill.
  ◦ Don’t let food sit around that should be refrigerated. When in doubt, toss it out.

• Exercise regularly. Exercise is essential for physical well-being. Do both strength and endurance training, averaging 30 minutes a day, five times a week. Exercise helps increase your energy and stabilizes your mood.

• Dress for the weather. If you work outside in the hot sun, be sure to wear sunblock and light-colored clothing. If you get too warm, run cool water over your wrists. In cold weather, wear layers of clothing, including gloves and a hat.

• Keep your living space clean and dust free. A clean room will also lift your spirits. Cooperate with your parents, and be considerate of your family. Help them to maintain shared spaces. Keeping your living space clean is especially important if you have frequent colds or allergies. Wash towels and sheets regularly to reduce allergens.

C. Managing Head, Stomach, or Muscle Pain

• Practice physical relaxation. Relaxing may help to reduce physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, or back pain. It may also help diarrhea, joint pain, racing heart, or trouble catching your breath. It may reduce feelings of panic. Train your body to relax by practicing the progressive relaxation exercise (page 20). Or try the breathing exercise (page 14) every day for at least three weeks. When you have physical symptoms or feel overstressed, use these exercises to reduce tension. They will help you feel calm. When you relax, focus on trusting that the Lord will help you with your challenges. In this way, learning to relax can be a form of surrender to God’s will. It can also show a willingness to follow the Savior, who said, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).
Progressive Relaxation Exercise

Deep relaxation helps your body recover from stress. Practice the following exercise or the breathing exercise (page 14) at night before you sleep. Doing this will train your body to relax. You can do a shorter version of the following exercise during the day. Use it any time you feel overstressed.

- Lie or sit comfortably and close your eyes.
- Concentrate on one part of your body, such as your hand or foot. Notice any tension. Consciously relax that part of your body. Feel all the tension draining away, like sand running through your fingers. Then move on to the next part of your body. Take your time. Do you think there is still tension in your body? Tighten part of your body for 10 seconds. Then completely relax for 10 seconds before moving on.
- Focus on one area of your body at a time, starting with your head and working down to your feet and toes.
- Mentally scan your body for any remaining tension. Completely relax.
- Choose a “personal scene” that brings you joy and peace. It can be a memory or an imagined setting. Try to imagine this scene as vividly as possible.

- Break your work into small tasks. Then take on only one task at a time. At each step, remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is _________.” For example, you could say, “All I have to do right now is call the service mission leader” or “All I have to do right now is get dressed for the day.”

- Keep a log for a week. This will help you see when your physical symptoms occur. Look for patterns. For example, your symptoms might be more likely to occur:
  - Under certain circumstances, such as on Sundays. You may also feel ill when you are around leaders. Often you may feel ill when you haven’t eaten for several hours.
  - When you think a certain way. For example, when you think you should have done something better.
  - When you have certain feelings you don’t want to talk about, such as anxiety or anger.

- Consider a way to change the situation. For example, you could carry healthy snacks with you or try to change your thoughts (see “Talking Back to Negative Thinking,” page 15). You could also try to calm your feelings (see “Responding Positively to Stress,” pages 12–14). Find more suggestions under “3. Developing Emotional Resilience,” pages 23–32.

- Seek medical attention. If symptoms continue or if you are injured, consult with your parents to receive medical help.

- Forget yourself. You may notice worried thoughts such as “I’m going to forget what to say.” Or you may think “I am making a fool of myself.” Remind yourself that everyone makes mistakes. Remember that the Lord chooses to work through the weak and simple (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:24–28).
D. Sleeping Well and Going to Bed on Time

- **Write a list of what is keeping you awake.** Then set this list aside. Doing this will allow your mind to rest knowing that you won’t forget something important. Remind yourself that you will work out specific plans in the morning. Focus your nightly prayers on gratitude and reporting what you learned that day.

- **Follow a routine each night.** This will train your body that it is time to sleep. For example, use the progressive relaxation exercise (page 20) before going to bed. Refrain from reading or eating in bed. You will sleep better if your mind knows that your bed is a place for sleeping. Plan to get eight to nine hours of sleep each night.

- **Unwind and relax during the last hour of the day.** Before going to bed, write in a journal or have a light snack like milk or fruit. Listen to appropriate music, talk to a family member, or practice relaxation skills. If you forget to start to relax during this hour, set an alarm to go off 30 minutes before you should go to bed. When you hear it, stop what you are doing. Then begin to relax and prepare for bed.

- **Avoid sugar or exercise for an hour before bedtime.**

- **Warm up or cool down.** It is more difficult to sleep if you are too hot or too cold. Take a cool shower or get an extra blanket.

- **Prevent light and noise as much as possible.** Block out light, and mask noise by running a fan or wearing earplugs. Even a little light or noise keeps some people awake.

“Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary, arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.”

Doctrine and Covenants 88:124

E. Getting Up on Time

- **First, get to bed on time.** If you are not getting enough sleep, go to bed 30 minutes earlier.

- **Get regular exercise.** After three to four weeks of exercising 30 minutes a day, you may notice that you need less sleep. As your body gets stronger, it has more energy and relaxes more easily.

- **Avoid sugar before bedtime.** Doing so may help you feel less groggy in the morning.

- **Program your brain.** Tell yourself the night before what time you want to wake up.

- **If possible, get a timer and attach it to a light.** Set the timer to turn on your light 15 to 20 minutes before wake-up time. Light signals your brain to wake up.
F. Eating with Family

- **Engage with your family in planning meals.** Contribute time to shop for food, plan and prepare meals, and clean up.
- **Eat a variety of foods.** Aim to eat at least five fruits or vegetables each day, if available.
- **Eat protein each day.** Foods high in protein include nuts, beans, tofu, eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, fish, poultry, and meat.
- **Reduce sugar and avoid caffeine.** Both tend to make people moody and tired in the long run.
- **Drink water and other liquids.** Stay hydrated by drinking 6 to 12 glasses of water and other liquids per day, depending on the climate.
- **Lose weight gradually if needed.** Are you trying to lose weight? If so, don’t try to lose more than one to two pounds (one kilogram) per week. Drink extra water.

> “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

*Ether 12:27*

G. Getting Motivated to Exercise

- **Pray for the desire to exercise.** Then start by telling yourself that you will exercise for only five minutes. You will often become more motivated once you get started.
- **Remind yourself of the benefits of exercise.** Imagine having better immunity and increased energy. Also imagine managing stress better, feeling better emotionally, and managing your weight better. Even people who don’t like exercise receive these benefits.
- **Make exercise a game.** While you exercise, plan a fun activity for later, or exercise to appropriate music. Keep a scorecard of your exercise efforts, and reward yourself for meeting your goals. The reward might be going to a park, restaurant, or store.
- **Find a type of exercise you enjoy (or dislike the least).** For example, you might march to upbeat music or jog. You might jump rope, stretch, or do push-ups, sit-ups, or yoga.
3. Developing Emotional Resilience

Strong emotions like fear and worry help us know that we are overstressed. Read “1. Developing Resilience under Stress” on pages 12–17 for overall suggestions for managing emotional demands. In addition, the suggestions below may help with specific emotions. If your emotions become overwhelming or last a long time, talk to your parents or service mission leaders about seeking professional support.

A. Adjusting to Your New Assignment

- **Review your reasons for serving a mission.** Think of your mission as a gift of thanks you can offer to the Savior. List your blessings. Remind yourself of what your leaders and loved ones would tell you about your missionary service.

- **Be patient.** It generally takes about six weeks to begin to adapt to a new situation. Put off making any decisions until you give yourself time to adjust. Take one day at a time.

- **Put up motivating pictures.** Post scriptures, quotations, or pictures that help you remember your values. They will help you focus on your service and righteous desires.

- **Review uplifting scriptures and stories.** Collect scriptures, personal experiences, quotations, and family stories that help to motivate you. When you read uplifting scriptures, put your name in them. You could try putting your name in scriptures such as these: Proverbs 3:5–6; 2 Nephi 4:28–35; Mosiah 24:13–14; Alma 36:3; Helaman 5:12; Doctrine and Covenants sections 4, 6, and 31. (See also “Adversity,” in *True to the Faith* ([2004], 8–11.)

- **Review your patriarchal blessing often for guidance.** Look for ways your gifts and strengths can contribute to your work.

> “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”

*Alma 26:27*
B. Overcoming Feeling Sad or Discouraged

- **Don’t procrastinate.** Putting off things can lead to stress. Break down big tasks into smaller pieces. Get started on one piece of the task. Remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is ______” or “I’ll just do this for a few minutes and then take a break if I want.”

- **Listen to music or sing.** Choose music that is calm and soothing if you are anxious. Music that is upbeat and cheerful may help you if you feel down. (Make sure that you don’t wear earbuds while at your assignment unless given permission.)

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**Listen to Hymns**

Here are some hymns that can inspire you, in addition to your own preferences:

- “Redeemer of Israel” (*Hymns*, no. 6)
- “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief” (*Hymns*, no. 29)
- “How Firm a Foundation” (*Hymns*, no. 85)
- “The Lord Is My Light” (*Hymns*, no. 89)
- “Lead, Kindly Light” (*Hymns*, no. 97)
- “Nearer, My God, to Thee” (*Hymns*, no. 100)
- “Come, Follow Me” (*Hymns*, no. 116)
- “Be Still, My Soul” (*Hymns*, no. 124)
- “Where Can I Turn for Peace?” (*Hymns*, no. 129)
- “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136)
- “Did You Think to Pray?” (*Hymns*, no. 140)
- “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (*Hymns*, no. 142)
- “Sweet Is the Work” (*Hymns*, no. 147)
- “Count Your Blessings” (*Hymns*, no. 241)
• **Let go of what you can’t control.** You can’t control the past or others’ choices or personalities. You can’t control some of your own limitations. Focus on things you can do something about. Leave the rest to the Lord.

• **Accept the reality that some routines are boring.** Not all of life is deeply meaningful and exciting. Avoid creating drama, intensity, or conflict to deal with boredom. Instead, appreciate and enjoy the good around you. Look for ways to improve and serve.

• **Train your brain to look for the positive.** Focus on the positive around you. Take a few minutes each night to write or share your answer to one of these questions:
  ◦ What was a happy surprise today? Who helped make that happen, and how did they do it?
  ◦ How did God help me today?
  ◦ What are three new things I’m grateful for today?
  ◦ How can I remember and appreciate these things?
  ◦ Who helped me today, or who did I help?
  ◦ When did I take a risk today that helped me grow? What did I learn from it? How can this help me do even better in the future?
  ◦ When did I succeed at something hard today? How did I do it? How can I celebrate?

• **Challenge your thinking.** Worry and sadness can alter your thinking patterns. If you are feeling negative emotions, ask yourself:
  ◦ Is there anything that supports the truth of what I am thinking?
  ◦ Is this something the Savior would want me to think or feel?
  ◦ Is this thought all or nothing—black or white, win or lose, true or false?
  ◦ Does thinking this way benefit me?
  ◦ How does this thought make me feel?
  ◦ What do I know about myself and others that tells me this is not true?
  ◦ What would I tell my best friends if they thought these things?

• **Find things to enjoy.** While respecting the dignity of your calling, rediscover humor. Savor the beauty in the world, and notice the kindness of others. Take delight in feeling the Spirit in your life.

• **Do the basics: prayer, scripture study, and service.** When reading the scriptures, avoid judging yourself too harshly. Focus on the parts that most apply to you as a faithful servant of God.

• **Read Alma 26 and discover what Ammon did when he was discouraged.** Also read Doctrine and Covenants 127:2 and note how Joseph Smith kept from becoming discouraged. Don’t worry about being worried, which can create a vicious circle. It is normal to have days when we feel discouraged, stressed, or lonely. Most of the time these feelings will pass.

“**Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.”**

*Doctrine and Covenants 123:17*
3. Developing Emotional Resilience

• **Pay attention to exercise and sleep.** Exercise is especially important in managing fears and worry. Even if you don't like exercise, it can help you feel better and be more creative. Start small and build up a little at a time. Going to bed at the same time each night and getting enough sleep are also important.

• **Talk to a family member, friend, or service mission leader.** Share your feelings with someone who cares about you. You will feel better when you understand that someone knows and cares for you. You will gain a new perspective. This person may simply listen or may have suggestions you can try.

• **Talk to a professional.** Is your sadness lasting more than a couple of weeks? Is it interfering with your life? A professional counselor can often help. Sometimes persistent sadness is caused by a medical condition like thyroid disease or diabetes. These need to be treated by a doctor. Sometimes medication to treat depression can help you feel better.

• **Get help if you’re feeling suicidal.** Do you occasionally wonder if life is worth living? Do you have thoughts of hurting yourself in some way? Do you think sometimes that you would be better off dead? Thoughts like these are not unusual. If these thoughts are upsetting to you and persist over several days, don’t wait. Tell someone about them and get help. Do this especially if you start coming up with a plan to end your life.

C. Overcoming Feeling Self-Critical

• **Focus on what you do right, and avoid comparing yourself to others.** People with extremely high expectations of themselves may focus too much on their weaknesses and failures. Then, instead of improving, they may feel hopeless. When reading scriptures, focus on those that most apply to you. You are a beloved servant of God. Look for evidences of God’s patience, grace, hope, and mercy. He extends these blessings to those who love Him and desire to serve Him.

• **Talk positively to yourself.** See “Talking Back to Negative Thinking” (page 15).

• **Realize that everything you do can’t be above average.** You want to work hard to improve, and you may be very good at some things. But you cannot be above average at everything you do. This is just math, not a cause for alarm.

• **Give yourself extra credit.** Give yourself extra credit for doing something you don’t do well or don’t always enjoy. Remember that even if you didn’t do those things perfectly, you still did them. As you get better at doing these things, you may find that you enjoy them. But getting to that point takes time and practice, support, and experience.

• **Practice being still.** Focus your attention away from the thoughts in your mind, and practice being still. Acknowledge that you are having self-critical thoughts. But these thoughts do
not represent who you really are. (See also “Responding Positively to Stress,” pages 12–14.)

- **Work on one or two major goals at a time.** Avoid trying to improve too many things in your life at once. This can be overwhelming and lead to feelings of failure.

- **Trust in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.** Our limitations and inadequacies are not sins. They usually do not keep us from being clean and worthy of the Spirit. Jesus Christ suffered so we can be strengthened, uplifted, and forgiven. The Savior’s power helps us overcome our weaknesses and sins.

- **Record inspiring things in a notebook or planner.** You could record:
  - Favorite scriptures.
  - Goals you want to accomplish.
  - Personal or family stories of bouncing back from setbacks or hardships.

- **Listen to the Holy Spirit, not negativity.** If you are having thoughts that are belittling, they are not from the Lord. Neither are thoughts that are mocking, angry, sarcastic, or critical. Murmuring and name calling also do not come from the Lord. If you are having such thoughts, try writing them all down. Then tear up the paper. Or rewrite the thoughts one at a time so that they state a true, positive idea. Add a truthful and loving statement of how the Lord feels about you. Say out loud: “Christ is my Advocate. He always loves me and believes in me.”

- **Seek good counsel.** Ask your service mission leaders and others to help you know if you are trying hard enough. Ask them if you are trying too hard. Accept their counsel. Many self-critical people are not good at distinguishing between trying hard enough and trying too hard.

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D. Overcoming Feeling Anxious or Inadequate

- **Enjoy being a beginner when you are new at something.** You aren’t expected to be an expert when you are learning something. It is enough to be curious, interested, humble, and willing to try. Enjoy learning something new!

- **Cheerfully do what you can, and trust God to make up the difference.** Sometimes missionaries feel useless or ashamed when others seem to be more successful than they are. Satan tempts us to doubt ourselves or compare ourselves to others. Remember that this is God’s work, and He chooses the weak and simple to do it. He has chosen you! Trust Him, for He trusts you.

- **Think about success.** Worrying about things that might go wrong can be a way of mentally practicing failure. Instead of worrying, try to mentally practice positive outcomes. Don’t worry about what might happen. Instead, make plans to achieve success. If things don’t work out as you hope, imagine yourself learning from the setback. Think about yourself going forward.

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“When our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”

*Alma 26:27*
• **Live your values anyway.** You don’t have to get rid of worries or fear. You can still live a happy life. You can choose to live your values even in the midst of worry and fear. You cannot control everything. But think of one or two things you can do to live your values. Plan how you can serve others or show courage in a situation that makes you worry.

• **Don’t try to control what you can’t control.** Trying to control things you can’t control only makes you feel more out of control. Doing this increases your worry. Focus your energy on things you can do something about.

• **Ask, “What is the worst that can happen?”** Often people find that the worst possible outcome they can imagine is something they can live with. Then they can move on. No matter what happens, the Savior can help you overcome it, so you can feel less fear.

• **Try slowing down if you tend to rush a lot.** If you are calmer, you may be more efficient as well as happier. Slowing down will take practice. You will need a way to remind yourself to do this. Post a message on your mirror or wall. Put an alarm on your phone. Or pray every morning for help in remembering to slow down. After several weeks, evaluate your progress.

• **Don’t get worried about worrying.** Worries are a normal part of every life. Getting worried about your fears won’t help. Worry is unpleasant, but it will pass. When you are worried, sit quietly and allow the fearful feelings to wash over you. They will often lessen on their own before too long.

• **Don’t fear setbacks when you are doing hard things.** In order to live a meaningful life, you must take some risks. At times, you must step into the unknown. The things that matter most can be hard, but they can be learned through practice. Don’t let fear stop you from doing hard things. And try not to see setbacks as failures. Fear and setbacks can mean that you are taking on hard things and being brave.

> “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
> 2 Timothy 1:7

• **Keep a list of stories.** Remember, record, and share stories. These stories can be from your life or from the lives of people you admire. These stories should tell how people have kept going when things were hard or frightening. They should tell how you or others have responded to setbacks or fear in ways you admire. People often do small, simple things to keep going or show courage.

• **Embrace ambiguity.** Sometimes people do not want to live with ambiguity or uncertainty. They would rather fail than take risks without knowing they will succeed. You can’t know today if you will live your goals and values perfectly. You can’t know what problems you may confront in the future. But you can decide now to live bravely, gratefully, compassionately, and humbly. Right now you can live consistent with your goals and dreams. That is all any of us can do, and it is enough. Try to distract yourself from the temptations of despair and worry. Focus on the here and now.

• **Serve.** As you serve others, you will think less about yourself and be happier.
E. Overcoming Feeling Easily Irritated or Angry

- **Give your brain time to override your emotions.** Your brain can reason and make good judgments. If you get angry or irritated, turn away from the situation for a few minutes. Take some deep breaths, and give your rational brain time to think and reason things out. You might count to 10, exercise, go outside, or choose helpful thoughts. You might listen to calming music, meditate, or pray.

- **Don’t encourage your anger.** You may choose to see others as threatening, unfair, or disrespectful. If so, you are more likely to feel angry. Instead, see if you can think of a more charitable explanation for their behavior. Perhaps they are tired, uninformed, insecure, or trying to be helpful. Make the choice not to encourage anger.

- **Try to understand other people.** Be curious about what others are thinking and feeling. Ask people questions, and listen calmly and carefully to them. Tell the other person what you think you heard. Ask if you understood correctly. If not, try again.

- **Resist the tendency to blame others or yourself.** If something goes wrong, try to figure out what the problem is. Ask others for help in fixing the problem, regardless of whose fault it is. Try not to blame anyone for causing the problem.

- **Be willing to apologize and ask what you can do to make things right.** Apologizing is a sign of spiritual strength, not weakness. When you do something wrong, take responsibility for it. Ask how you can make it right or avoid the problem in the future. Show empathy for the feelings of the other person.

- **Be willing to laugh at yourself.** Being able to laugh at yourself will help you better cope with life’s frustrations. Uplifting humor can help improve our attitudes, relationships, and health. While it’s not appropriate to laugh all the time, everyone can benefit from laughing more. When you start to get angry, try laughing at yourself and your anger. Laughing at yourself can be good medicine for anger!

- **Serve those you are angry with.** Apply the Savior’s counsel to “love your enemies.” He said, “Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you” (3 Nephi 12:44). How could you serve or pray for someone you’re angry with?

- **Take good care of yourself.** Try to eat well, sleep enough, exercise, and pray. Doing these things will help you have the emotional resources to deal with frustration.

- **Make up a new story.** Think of the most generous explanation you can for why other people are acting as they are. Write it down.

- **Forgive.** Study Matthew 18:23–35. If available, watch the video “Forgive Every One Their Trespasses: The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant” (ChurchofJesusChrist.org). Think about how the parable’s message applies to you.
F. Overcoming Feeling Unmotivated

- **Focus on your strengths.** What are the values, talents, experiences, and gifts you bring to your service? Make a list of ways you could use one of your strengths in creative ways this week. If you have trouble seeing your strengths, ask others for help.

- **Take one step at a time.** Make a list of things you need to do. Then organize them on your calendar. Remind yourself, “All I have to do right now is ________.”

- **Make it fun!** Set interesting goals to help you with your missionary service. Make a game out of meeting your goals. Be creative, and congratulate yourself for success.

- **Don’t overwhelm yourself with too many personal goals at once.** Set one or two personal goals at a time (like being more cheerful or less messy). Don’t expect perfection. Include a plan for how you will get back on track when you have a bad day. Remind yourself often of why you want to change.

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“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass. . . . And by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.”
Alma 37:6–7

- **Share your goals with your parents or leaders.** They can support you and offer helpful ideas.

- **Realize that motivation follows action.** Getting started is often the hardest part. Tell yourself, “Just do it for 10 minutes.” Then get started. You will often feel more motivated.

G. Managing Sexual or Romantic Feelings

- **Develop self-mastery.** Sexual and romantic thoughts and feelings are normal and God-given. But we need to keep our thoughts, relationships, and behavior under proper control. If you do this as a missionary, you will grow in strength and gain great blessings. Prayerfully study 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 38:12; Doctrine and Covenants 121:45. Look up “Virtue” and “Chastity” in the Guide to the Scriptures (scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). List blessings and advantages that will come to you as you develop these traits.

- **Replace the thought.** Try not to become preoccupied with sexual or romantic thoughts and feelings. Distract yourself, and get involved with something else. Try to relax. Sing hymns. Memorize scriptures and recite them. Focus on what you are grateful for. Think about plans for the day. Exercise. Recommit to your work. Have fun and be creative.
• **Avoid temptation.** Avoid places, circumstances, conversations, or people that provoke temptation. If you are exposed to a provocative image or idea, don’t dwell on it. Change your mental channel to other things. Get away from the situation as soon as you can.

• **Continue in hope and faith.** If you are struggling to manage your sexual feelings appropriately, God still loves you. Never abandon your relationship with Him because you feel unworthy. Though you may struggle to manage these feelings, He will not reject you. He understands what you are going through. He values your efforts to resist temptation, learn from errors, and repent. Seek the counsel of your service mission leader, and continue striving to overcome these challenges.

• **Don’t get too hungry, lonely, tired, bored, or stressed.** All of these things can make temptation more difficult to resist. Get a snack. Take a short break from what you are doing, or do something else for a while. Have a good conversation, or practice progressive relaxation exercises (page 20).

• **Keep yourself safe.** Understand the rules and guidelines regarding socializing with others that apply to you. If you feel yourself being sexually attracted to someone, contact your bishop or stake president and seek his counsel.

• **Fast and pray for understanding and strength.** When you fast, you ignore your normal, healthy hunger for food. You do this for a period of time in order to seek spiritual strength. Fasting can develop skills like self-control and sensitivity to the Spirit (see Isaiah 58:6). It can give you empathy for those who are hungry. These same skills can help you control normal sexual or romantic feelings as a missionary in appropriate ways. Fasting will not eliminate sexual feelings. But monthly fasting may help you gain strength and self-awareness. It can motivate you to manage these feelings appropriately.

H. Managing Changes and Transitions

• **Know yourself.** Changes and transitions are harder for some people than others. If change is especially hard for you, let people know how they can help.

• **Think about other transitions you’ve experienced.** What did you learn? What helped you cope at other times? Recognize your successes and your abilities. Which of those things could help now? What else could you try?

• **Write down reasons.** Write down what you know about why this change is necessary. Refer back to the list often. Understanding the reasons for the change may help you feel less frustrated.

• **Remember what hasn’t changed.** Make a list of what has changed and what has not changed. Try to make the second list as long as you can.

• **Make a plan.** Create a plan for how to help yourself manage the change. Write down the steps of your plan. Also talk to others who know you well. They can support you as you carry out your plan.
• **Think about how to feel calmer.** Make a list of things you can do to feel calmer. Read over these before, during, and after the change.

• **Take one step at a time.** When you are facing a big transition, remember this: you don’t have to figure everything out at once. What is the first decision that needs to be made? What might be a first step? A next step?
4. Developing Social Resilience

Relationships can be a source of stress and also a resource for coping with stress. Research shows that healthy relationships have lifelong benefits. Such relationships are linked to good mental and physical health. When we are overstressed, relationships can suffer. Consider the following suggestions for building good relationships. Also refer to the section “1. Developing Resilience under Stress” (pages 12–17) for additional ideas.

A. Communicating with Others

- **Identify and use your strengths as you serve.** You have strengths that can help you be an effective missionary. Seek inspiration to help you understand your strengths. The Lord will help you use these strengths in His service. For example, some people find talking with others energizing. Some people find it tiring. However, both types of people can be effective service missionaries. If talking with new people wears you out, pace yourself. Be a good friend to those you know well. Your strengths may be your creative ideas, your insights about people, or your ability to plan.

- **Be curious about others.** Learn questions you can use to encourage other people to talk. Ask people about their work, hobbies, family, or personal history. Ask about what matters most to them and what they yearn for or worry about. Listen for opportunities to testify of a gospel principle that will be relevant to them. Try to show interest in others. This is part of what it means to love our neighbors. Be willing to answer their questions about you as well.

- **Make a goal to get to know one new person every day.** Use the person’s name in the first minute after you meet him or her. Use it again when you end the conversation. Write down the name to help you remember.

- **Focus on helping others.** Turn your attention to the needs of others. As you do, you will feel less self-conscious about your own needs or inadequacies (see Mosiah 2:17).

- **Ask for help in understanding others.** Not everyone is good at understanding other people’s facial expressions or body language. If you have trouble noticing how other people are feeling, ask someone to help you.
4. DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESILIENCE

- **Give yourself permission to sound confident, even if you don’t feel it.** When President Gordon B. Hinckley was on a mission, his father told him, “Forget yourself and go to work” (in “Taking the Gospel to Britain,” Ensign, July 1987, 7). This advice is helpful for all missionaries. Try to ignore your fears about how you are doing. Instead, focus on your calling to serve others.

### B. Avoiding Feeling Lonely or Left Out

- **Ask questions to learn about other people.** Ask other people about their experiences and feelings so you will understand them better. When you understand other people, you will feel less lonely.

- **Share more.** Share your thoughts and feelings with others. We feel lonely when we feel that others don’t know and value us.

- **Define what “lonely” means to you.** Try to define what feelings, thoughts, and behaviors make you feel lonely. Then try to work on these things.

- **Talk to adults who care.** Let these adults know how you are feeling. They may have suggestions for what you could do to avoid feeling lonely.

> “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”

*Moroni 7:48*

### C. Managing Conflict or Criticism

- **Respectfully explain what is bothering you.** If someone’s behavior is bothering you, respectfully talk to the person. Explain what you would like to have changed, but don’t criticize the other person’s behavior. If you are critical or angry, the other person may become defensive and be less cooperative. For example, you could say, “I have a real dislike for trash left out in the break room. But I also don’t like cleaning it all up myself. I wonder how we could remind everyone to take care of their own trash.” Or, “I worry that you’re angry with me when you’re so quiet. Could you tell me what you’re thinking?”
• **Ask for feedback.** Ask others for suggestions about how you can overcome your weaknesses. Also ask the Lord to help you understand your weakness (see Ether 12:27).

• **Be kind to others.** When thinking about others, avoid making negative judgments about them or giving them negative labels. Don’t try to make yourself feel better by thinking about other people’s faults.

• **Focus on fixing problems, not people.** When people do things that bother you, focus on identifying and fixing the underlying problems, not on criticizing the people or trying to fix them. When you are speaking to people, try to keep an even tone that is not angry or self-pitying (see Ephesians 4:29–32).

• **Don’t take offense.** Take suggestions from others with as much grace and humor as you can. Do this even if someone is rude. If you feel that someone is criticizing you, say, “Thanks for the feedback. I’ll work on that.”

• **Compliment and serve others often.** Thank others for things you appreciate, and point out things they do well. Look for little ways to serve and help others every day.

• **Pray for the gift of charity.** Do so “with all the energy of heart” (Moroni 7:48). Ask for eyes to see others as God sees them. Include in your prayers the people who reject you and hurt you (see 3 Nephi 12:44).

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D. Getting Along with Leaders

• **Be humble.** Humility is a vital part of being teachable and willing to improve (see Doctrine and Covenants 112:10). Ask your leaders for suggestions on how you can improve. Be willing to take counsel from them, and let them know they can count on you. Thank your leaders for their service, both verbally and in writing.

• **Try to be a good follower.** Some people distrust authority figures or find it hard to take direction. They may be used to being their own boss. Others may feel competitive with coworkers. Let your leaders know if you have these challenges. Pray for humility to be a good follower.

• **Pray for all your leaders.** Pray for your leaders, especially for leaders toward whom you have unkind feelings.

• **Realize that leaders are human.** Sometimes we think leaders are supposed to be much better than other people. If so, we may be disappointed and become critical when they make mistakes. Leaders can get impatient, show poor judgment, and misunderstand us. If you see imperfections, look for positive attributes as well (see Mormon 9:31).

• **Learn from your leader’s strengths.** Make a list of qualities your leader has that you want to emulate when it is your turn to lead.
E. Helping Others Understand Your Mission Assignment

- **Explain what a service mission is.** Some Church members may not understand what a service mission is. You could say, “Service missionaries serve at Church or community facilities up to 40 hours a week. They have mission rules and guidelines that are different from those for proselyting missionaries. For example, I’ll be living at home. I’ll be serving at ____ for ____ hours a week. I’ll be able to participate in the young single adult ward and its activities in my free time.”

- **Explain that you are called as a representative of Jesus Christ and His Church.** This calling is the same for every missionary and does not change when assignments change. But your assignment, hours, or time of service may change. For example, you might have been reassigned to a service mission because of health problems. You can say, “I’m still a missionary. But I’ve been reassigned to a new mission, where I will now be focusing my service.”

- **Let people know what you want and need.** You may be just starting your service mission. You might invite ward members to learn about what you are doing. Ask them to be supportive. If you have been reassigned, you might ask for a few minutes in a Relief Society or elders quorum meeting. Explain to the members your change of assignment and ask for support. If you are nearing the end of your mission, you might ask others for help. Ask for help in finding a job or getting into school as you make the transition.

  A missionary who was reassigned from a proselyting mission to a service mission said: “I’m finally beginning to adjust to being home and my new assignments. I forgot how much fun it is to be a missionary and how much I love it. I’m so grateful to be a part of this great adventure.”

  Elder Scott
5. Developing Mental Resilience

Missionary work places many demands upon people, and these demands affect each person differently. The abilities you have will help you to accomplish God’s work. You can trust Him to make up the difference between your abilities and what is needed. The suggestions below may help you with some issues. Refer to the section “1. Developing Resilience under Stress” (pages 12–17) for additional ideas.

A. Learning a New Assignment

Starting a new assignment can be stressful. Be patient with your supervisor, your coworkers, and yourself. Try not to get discouraged or upset as you are learning your assignment. Typically, you will figure things out within a few days. Here are a few tips to help you as you begin your assignment. You might discuss these things with your service mission leader.

- **Settle in.** Learn your way around. Take care of any paperwork. Set up your work area. Get to know the names of your coworkers and supervisors.

- **Be of good cheer.** Make a decision to work every day on having a positive attitude at work. Even if you’re tired or unsure of what is expected, choose to be friendly. Be positive even if you don’t enjoy your tasks or the people you work with. This will help you succeed. It will help those around you learn to trust and appreciate you.

- **Show up.** Be on time for all assignments, dressed appropriately and ready to begin. Look around for ways to help out and get involved. Let people see that you are willing to try new things and practice new skills.

- **Study.** If you receive videos or written material explaining your job, study them carefully. Take notes on things you need to remember. Be especially aware of safety rules. Also take note of rules about privacy or confidentiality. Learn the standards expected for doing your work successfully.
• **Ask questions.** Politely ask your supervisor and coworkers about anything you don’t understand. You might carry a small notebook for writing down questions and answers that you can refer to later. Be patient with those training you if they don’t explain things clearly. Try repeating what you heard. Ask, “Did I get that right? Is there anything else?” Ask your supervisor about his or her expectations for you. Ask what matters most in doing your job well.

• **Look for unwritten rules.** Every workplace has its own way of doing things. Some of these things are not written down, even though they are important. Such unwritten rules may include how to handle disagreements and where and when to eat. Other rules may include how much creativity is acceptable and what to do with work that isn’t completed before the workday ends. Watch for these unwritten rules and try to follow them.

• **Be patient with yourself and others.** You will make mistakes! This is part of learning anything new. Apologize to others, and ask them how you can fix your mistakes. Find out what you should do next time, and try again. Don’t dwell on mistakes—you or anyone else’s. Learn and move forward with a positive attitude. You will learn to do your job well.

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Elder Cecil O. Samuelson taught: “All of us are ‘works in process.’ We can be worthy while still needing improvement. Be sure that you do not have higher standards for yourself or others than the Lord has established. Find satisfaction in your progress while acknowledging that perfection may still be distant.”


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B. Staying Organized with Goals and Plans

• **Keep a calendar or planner.** At the beginning of each week, put your appointments on your calendar or planner. Include work assignments, church meetings, and other commitments such as reading scriptures and praying. Write down names, appointments, goals, and lists of things you need to do.

• **Don’t rely just on your memory.** Check your calendar or planner throughout the day. For important things you need to do, post reminder notes on the door, on the fridge, or by your bed. Set reminders on your phone.

• **Put everything you will need the next day in a specific place.** Do this before you go to bed. Then you won’t forget something important. Keep your important things in the same place. That way you won’t waste time looking for them.

• **Ask for help remembering things.** When you need to remember something that is not part of your usual routine, ask others to help you remember. You can say, “I know this is the kind of thing I’m likely to forget. Can you remind me if I forget?”
• **Stay focused on what you are doing.** When you notice that you are distracted from a missionary activity, turn your attention back to your task. Do this as often as you need to.

• **Decide on goals.** As it is useful to you, define goals in each category below. Make a plan for what you will do. Add your plan to your calendar or planner each week.
  
  ◦ Physical goals such as exercising, developing healthy eating and sleeping habits, taking care of your room or work setting, managing money, helping out at home, or playing sports.
  
  ◦ Emotional goals such as taking time for rest or reflection, meditating, writing about feelings or experiences, taking breaks, or spending time in nature.
  
  ◦ Social goals such as doing things with friends and family, participating in young single adult activities, helping others, working on family history, interviewing family members about their lives, or learning and practicing social skills.
  
  ◦ Mental goals that will make you a better servant of the Lord, such as taking classes, learning a language or a musical instrument, reading, exploring job interests, or developing job skills.
  
  ◦ Spiritual goals such as praying more sincerely, studying the scriptures more thoroughly, acting on spiritual promptings, participating in your ward or branch, attending the temple, or serving others outside of your mission assignments.

• **Turn your day over to the Lord.** Do what you can to schedule your time and use it well. Then at the beginning of your day, turn the day over to the Lord. Ask the Lord to make it possible for all things to work together for your good. Throughout the day, be flexible and responsive to the Spirit.

C. Overcoming the Feeling of Not Being Capable

• **Keep your sense of humor when you make a mistake.** Apologize for what you did wrong and then try again. Remember that being willing to apologize is a sign of resilience and strength.

• **Find the strength in a weakness.** Sometimes having a weakness helps us develop strengths like compassion and empathy. Striving to overcome a weakness can teach us patience, humility, and reliance on the Lord. Sometimes a weakness such as being easily distracted has a strength that goes with it. You may notice things that others miss. Look for the strengths that might come from your weaknesses.

> President Thomas S. Monson declared: “Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. . . . It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.”

> "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 123–24
• **Work on your weaknesses.** Work on one weakness at a time so you won’t get overwhelmed. Get ideas from others. Pray for guidance and help. Make a plan for overcoming your weakness. Think through obstacles you are likely to run into, and think about how to handle them. Practice. Adjust your plan if needed. Be patient.

• **Refocus your attention on your personal mission.** Do you feel jealous of someone else’s skills? Put your energy into developing your strengths and contributing them to the work. This is your mission.
6. Developing Spiritual Resilience

Sometimes missionaries react to excessive stress by questioning the truthfulness of the gospel. Missionaries often react this way because they lack the resources to deal with excessive stress. If you feel this way, try the suggestions below. Select those that seem right for you. Refer to the section “1. Developing Resilience under Stress” (pages 12–17) for additional ideas.

A. Strengthening Your Testimony

- **Realize that questions are healthy.** The Prophet Joseph Smith received many revelations in response to his honest questions. It is healthy for you to have questions about the gospel. As you strive to find answers, remember that scriptures, prophets, teachers, and your own ability to reason can help. But only the Spirit can confirm the truth. The Spirit tells us that Jesus is the Christ and that the Church is true.

- **Understand what faith is.** To have faith is to trust God’s perfect goodness, love, wisdom, and fairness. It is to trust even when we do not perfectly understand. Alma taught that “faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21). You do not need “perfect knowledge” to have faith. Study Alma 32 for help in building your faith.

- **Have faith when things seem out of control.** You may feel worried about certain circumstances or outcomes. When this happens, practice being still and focused on the present (see “1. Developing Resilience under Stress”). Notice the emotions that you have when you feel out of control. Even though these feelings can be uncomfortable, they can’t harm you. Over time, you’ll learn to have greater and greater faith. You can have faith in the face of uncertainty and challenge.

> “Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another.”
> 
> *Doctrine and Covenants* 90:24
• **Keep the commandments.** We gain trust in the Lord when we learn the value of His teachings. To gain this trust, we must do His will. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

• **Be patient.** Time and experience will help you make sense of some things that are confusing now. Remember Nephi’s teaching: “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). Build on what you know by the Spirit to be true about God.

B. Learning to Repent

Repentance involves aligning your will with the Savior’s. The following principles will help you as you strive to repent.

• **Be honest with your stake president.** If you have serious sins you have not dealt with, talk to your stake president. Be open and honest. He will help you make these things right.

• **Forgive yourself after repentance.** Sometimes people still feel guilt and shame after repenting. Remember that we all regret past sins and mistakes. Trust that Christ’s Atonement is sufficient, even for you. Remember that repentance is not just the backup plan. Repentance is the plan of happiness for every person.

• **Focus on the things that really matter.** Do your best to repent each day. Then make sure that the things you worry about are things that really matter. An example might be serving with love. Don’t worry about matters of personal pride, such as what others think of you.

• **Understand the role of confession.** You do not need to confess less-serious sins or repeatedly confess the same sin. Priesthood leaders will tell you when your confession is sufficient. Continuing to feel regret and sadness about past sins is normal. But it does not mean you need to confess over and over again for the same thing. Distract yourself from such thoughts with other activities. Make the deliberate choice to believe in the Lord’s forgiveness. Ignore the temptation to become anxious or ashamed.

• **Talk to your stake president or bishop if you continue to struggle.**

C. Learning to Pray with Real Intent

• **Try praying out loud, even if only in a whisper.** Try preparing for prayer by writing your questions or concerns. Visualize God nearby. Ask Him what you can do for Him today. Then act on ideas that come to mind. On occasion, use your prayer only to thank God. Thank Him for the many good things He has given you.
D. Learning to Love the Scriptures

- **Pray specifically for help in understanding and enjoying the scriptures.** Use some of your study time to write your feelings about the scriptures and your reactions to them. Write what you learn or spiritual impressions you receive.

E. Learning to Rely on the Spirit

- **Practice with patience.** Learning to recognize the voice of the Spirit is much like learning a language. It takes practice, patience, and humility. Strive to learn from mistakes without giving up.

- **Learn from general conferences.** For ideas on how you can receive personal revelation, study general conference addresses on this topic.
Scripture Resources

Study the following scripture passages. They will strengthen your faith that God will provide you with comfort and help. Feel free to add your own favorite scripture passages as well. As you remember the Savior, you “may have his Spirit to be with [you]” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:79).

- Isaiah 41:10: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”
- John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
- 1 Nephi 1:20: “The tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”
- Jacob 3:1: “He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause.”
- Jacob 4:7: “The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.”
- Mosiah 4:27: “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.”
- Mosiah 24:14: “I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”
- Alma 7:12: “He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”
- Alma 26:27: “When our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”
- Alma 38:5: “As much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions.”
- Ether 12:27: “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 6:32, 34–36: “Even so am I in the midst of you. . . . Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. Behold, I do not condemn you. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 58:2–4: “He that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation come the blessings.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 84:88: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”
- Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9: “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. . . . Therefore, hold on thy way.”
- Other scripture passages:
Service Missionary Preparation

Adjusting to Service Missionary Life

It is common for new missionaries to experience some degree of stress or discomfort. You will need to learn new tasks, meet new people, and work with others. As you learn to do these things, be patient. You will learn to recognize the blessings of devoting your life to the Savior. Remember, the Holy Ghost will be with you. He will help you make this transition. He will assist you in adjusting to your new service missionary responsibilities.

Adjusting to New Experiences

Service missionaries are like many people who enter a new situation. Many go through various stages of emotional adjustment when they begin their service:

- **Anticipation**
  - You may feel eager for the challenge (see 1 Nephi 3:7).
  - You may feel an increased sense of purpose and loyalty to God (see 3 Nephi 5:13).

- **Discovering the unexpected**
  - You may begin to question your decision to serve (see Alma 26:27).
  - You may notice physical symptoms of stress, such as disturbed sleep, appetite changes, or irritability.
  - You may unexpectedly find yourself critical of service mission rules and expectations. You may not want to follow them completely.
• “I can do this”
  ◦ You learn to willingly comply with service mission rules and expectations.
  ◦ You learn to have patience (see Isaiah 28:10; Mosiah 4:27).
  ◦ Your physical symptoms of stress, if you had any, begin to diminish.

• Emotional self-reliance
  ◦ You feel comfortable navigating your daily routine.
  ◦ You recognize your personal strengths and progress.
  ◦ You understand what it means to take life one step at a time (see Doctrine and Covenants 98:12).
  ◦ You develop greater self-confidence and an increased desire to serve.

• God has required many people to do things beyond what they felt capable of doing. What can you learn from scriptural examples? You might study Exodus 4:10–12; Jeremiah 1:6–9; Alma 17:9–12; Alma 26:27; Ether 12:23–27; Moses 6:31–32.

• Why is it important to go to bed and wake up on time? Why is it important to maintain good nutrition? Why should you get regular exercise? Why should you have personal prayers?

• How can writing in a journal help you during both successes and challenges?

• How can you respond when troublesome thoughts or feelings don’t go away?

• Focus on strengthening your relationship with your Heavenly Father. Seek the Spirit through personal prayer and scripture study. Listen to uplifting music, and read your patriarchal blessing.

• Be kind to yourself and others. Talk to yourself with the same comforting, kind words you might imagine the Savior using. Remember, thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, or harsh condemnation are not from the Lord.

• Expect the unexpected. Your experiences as a service missionary will not be the same as someone else’s. Everything will not go exactly as you’ve planned. Strive to be open to change so you can fulfill your responsibilities as a service missionary.

Things You Can Do Now

Find ways to serve others. Your mission is a call to service. Focus on looking outside of your own feelings of discomfort. Minister to those who need a kind word, an act of charity, or friendship.

Talk with others about your adjustment to your service mission. Make time to discuss the following topics with parents, priesthood leaders, or returned missionary friends:

Remember that the Spirit will be with you as you make this transition and will help you adjust to your new responsibilities:

“And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:88).
Summary

Remember that your life as a service missionary will be different from your previous life. But the Lord will reward and bless you. Develop a positive attitude. Exercise faith in the Lord. Be patient with yourself and others. Remember the counsel given to the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7).
Reassignment from a Proselyting Mission

When you are reassigned from a proselyting mission to a service mission, the reassignment does not affect your calling as a missionary.

Dealing with the Change

- Reassignment from a proselyting to a service mission is traumatic for many missionaries. You may experience a wide range of negative feelings. But be assured that the Savior knows your situation. His love for you is perfect. He still wants and needs your service. He needs your service in building His kingdom prior to His return to earth.

- Often reassigned missionaries feel guilty. They regret that they were unable to remain in a proselyting mission. Those feelings of guilt can keep them from feeling the Spirit. If you are in this situation, remember that the Spirit is with you. There is no good reason to feel guilty about not completing a proselyting mission. You are both willing and worthy to serve (see Doctrine and Covenants 64:34).

- Feelings of guilt can come from chemical reactions in the brain. These feelings may not be the consequence of sin. It is critical to understand and recognize the difference.

Still a Success

Consider the story of Helaman and his 2,060 stripling warriors (see Alma 57:19–27). All 2,060 warriors suffered wounds. Many of them fainted from loss of blood. The survival of all of them was miraculous. No matter how many wounds each one had, all 2,060 were successful. All of them were willing to serve the cause of righteousness. They were faithful, obedient, and courageous. You can follow their example and be a faithful missionary.

Wounds in today’s missionary work may include physical, mental, and emotional illnesses. These illnesses come from a wide variety of sources and causes. You can continue to serve and be successful. You are willing and worthy and can use your abilities in God’s service. (See Doctrine and Covenants 4.)

“We all have our own so-called disabilities; some are just more noticeable than others. Service missionaries are some of the most elect people I know. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to be a service missionary and am proud to tell others that I am one.”

Elder Harkness
As you go forward in your new assignment, remember these inspiring words from Elder Gerrit W. Gong: “We can find our lives by losing our lives for the Savior’s sake” (“Becoming Perfect in Christ,” Ensign or Liahona, July 2014, 19). And you can always find strength in the Savior’s promise: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28, 30).

Continue to Grow

Now that you have been reassigned, you are living at home again. Try not to revert to old habits of dependence on others. You are still a missionary! Continue to develop adult skills, such as these:

- Take care of your own clothes by washing, drying, and ironing them yourself.
- See to your personal grooming. Shower daily, and present yourself as a representative of the Savior.
- Learn to cook, shop for your groceries, and monitor what foods you eat.
- Make sure you exercise daily.
- Get enough sleep to remain healthy and alert.
- Conduct daily personal gospel study and prayer.
- Set achievable goals and sub-goals, and write them down.

“I know now how much Heavenly Father loves me and cares enough to guide me down the path that is for me. When I left my proselyting mission, I felt only regret and sorrow, but now I have found joy in my return.”

Elder Scott
Integrating Missionary and Non-Missionary Life

One of the purposes of a service mission is to “help each service missionary prepare for a lifetime of service” ("Service Missions for Young Missionaries," attachment to First Presidency letter, Nov. 16, 2018). You can work toward this purpose as you fulfill your service assignment while living at home. Doing these things at the same time can be a challenge. You will need to manage your time carefully. As you are serving your mission, you will also be learning to do what your post-mission life will require of you. You will need to balance work, family, education, church, other service, and leisure time.

Your service mission is the ideal time and environment for developing time management skills. You will have the flexibility and support structure to identify and develop your unique talents. You can then use them to serve others.

Counsel with your service mission leader and stake president about setting goals. Your leaders will also help you identify your talents. Developing your talents should be included in your goals. These goals are part of your own customized mission plan to help you balance your priorities. You will be the principal designer of your plan. This will be your plan. It is customized to your strengths, talents, current capacity, and future hopes and dreams. Your support team can advise and encourage you, but the choices are yours.

With your support team, you will establish achievable post-mission goals and the plans to reach them. The skills you develop will bless you and others throughout the rest of your life. You can become what your loving Heavenly Father wants you to become. The Lord will also help you in this exciting journey.

By learning to use your time wisely, you will prepare for a lifetime of service. You will be able to live the two greatest commandments. These are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” and to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37, 39).
Look unto Me

Remember, the Savior loves you. Trust in Him and His power to heal and redeem you. God has a perfect plan for His imperfect children. This is the good news you demonstrate to the world by your service and example. Remember these promises:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you.

“Fear not to do good, . . . for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward.

“Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

“Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

“Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

“Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:32–37).