

Liahona

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"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:9-11



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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are two ideas.



"The Glorious Day of Priesthood Restoration," page 24: Consider explaining how the priesthood has been passed down by drawing a simple line from one person to another, beginning with Adam and continuing on through the other Old Testament prophets and then from Jesus Christ and His Apostles to Joseph Smith. You might try memorizing the words John the Baptist spoke when conferring the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 13:1, and discussing the significance of that event.

"Mia's Testimony," page 74: After reading the article together, you could discuss the "how" of gaining a testimony: praying, reading scriptures, listening to prophets and apostles, listening to other people's testimonies, bearing your own, etc. Talk about how testimonies can be like a light. The parents could then bear their testimonies and invite their children to also share testimonies or their feelings if they desire.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**
First Counselor in
the First Presidency

FAMILIES CAN BE TOGETHER Forever

The priesthood power to bind families eternally is one of the greatest gifts of God. Every person who understands the plan of salvation longs for that lasting blessing. Only in sealing ceremonies performed in dedicated temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does God offer the promise that families can be bound together forever.

The priesthood keys that make this possible were restored to the earth by the prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. Those priesthood keys have been passed in an unbroken line through living prophets in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the present day.

The Savior in His mortal ministry spoke of the power to seal families in words to Peter, His chief Apostle, when He said, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

It is only in the celestial kingdom that we can live in families forever. There we can be in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Savior. The Prophet Joseph Smith described that wonderful experience this way in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves.

“And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:1–2).

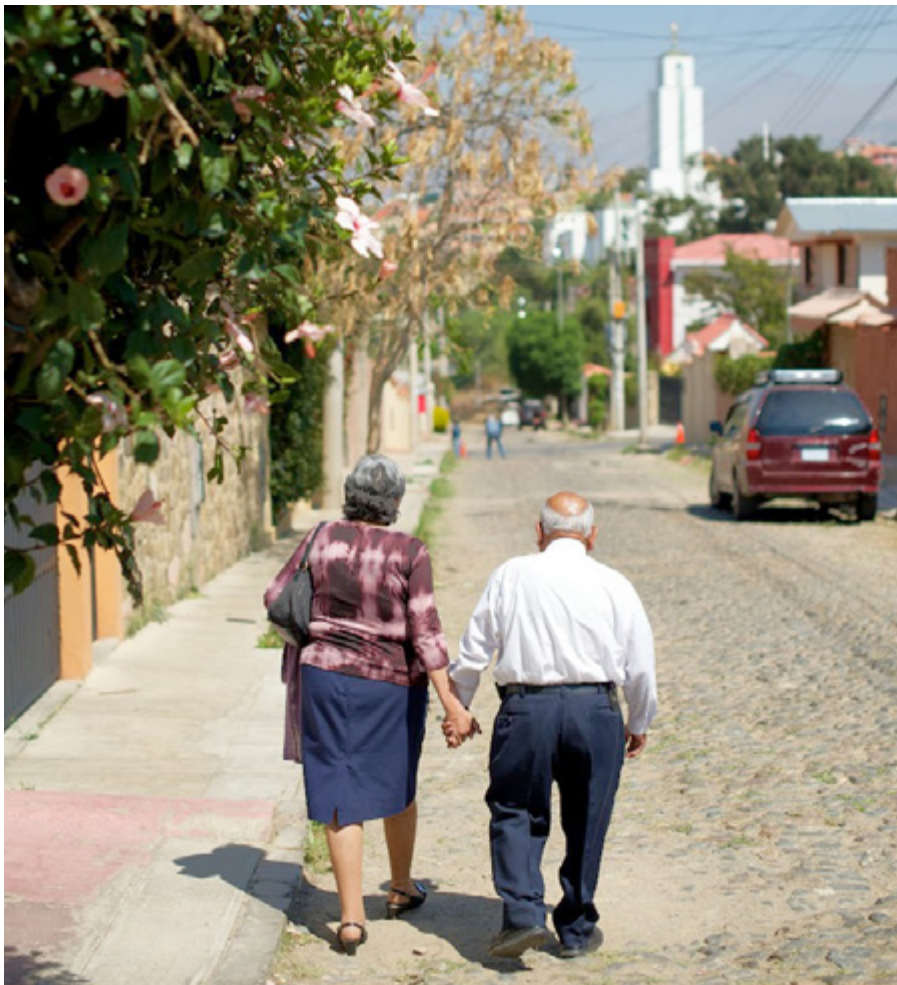
This scripture suggests that we can with confidence aim for a heavenly standard in our relationships within our families. We can care enough about our family members, living and dead, to do all that we can to offer them the priesthood ordinances that will bind us in heaven.

Many of you, young and old, are doing that. You have looked for names of ancestors who have not yet received the ordinances that can seal you together.

Almost all of you have living relatives who have not been sealed in families by priesthood power. Many have living relatives who have received priesthood ordinances but are not keeping the covenants they made with God. God will bless you that you will be able to help reach out to all of those relatives in faith. You have a promise that the Lord makes to His disciples who go to bring others to Him:

“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” (D&C 84:88).

From my office window I see brides and grooms every day having their pictures taken among beautiful flowers and shooting fountains. The groom often carries his bride



in his arms, at least for a few staggering steps, while the photographer shoots wedding pictures. Every time I see that, I think of couples I have known who in time—sometimes in a very short time after their wedding day—had to carry each other in other ways when life became hard. Jobs can

be lost. Children can be born with great challenges. Illness can come. And then, habits of having done unto others as we would have them do unto us—when it was easier—will make us heroes and heroines in those trying times when it takes more than we thought we had in us.

We owe our families the kind of relationship we can take into the presence of God. We must try not to give offense or take offense. We can determine to forgive quickly and fully. We can try to seek the happiness of others above our own. We can be kind in our speech. As we try to do all these things, we will invite the Holy Ghost into our families and into our lives.

My assurance to you is that, with the Lord's help and with repentant hearts, we can catch a glimpse in this life of the kind of life we want to have forever. Heavenly Father loves us. He wants us back with Him. The Savior, through the power of His Atonement, makes possible the change in our hearts we need to make in order to enter holy temples, make covenants we can then keep, and in time live in families forever in celestial glory—home again. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

As you share the doctrine of eternal families, consider what Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "Always seek to strengthen families. Teach with a vision of the importance of families being sealed in the temple. . . . When you have the vision of the sealing ordinances of the temple, you will help build the kingdom of God on earth" ("I Have Given You an

Example," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 34). How can you help those you teach develop a vision of the importance of being sealed in the temple? Invite those who have not yet been sealed to discuss steps they could take toward that ordinance. Invite those who have been sealed to discuss how they can keep the vision of their eternal family and work to improve their relationships with one another.

Eternally Linked to My Family

By Laura Burton

When I was adopted at age three, my birth mother allowed the adoption to be finalized only if my parents agreed to have my Church ordinances done after I turned 12. She thought I needed to be old enough to make the choice for myself, but it was really difficult to wait.

Yes, it was hard to see many of my friends get baptized when they turned eight, but what was even harder was knowing I couldn't be sealed to my adoptive parents and five older siblings until I was 12. I was scared that something would happen to me and I wouldn't be able to be sealed to them.

As my 12th birthday approached, we began planning for my baptism and sealing to my family. My parents let me choose which temple we would be sealed in. I had always thought that the San Diego California Temple was the most beautiful, so my entire family agreed to drive to California for the sealing.

I couldn't wait to become an eternal family with my parents and siblings. During my sealing, I felt the Spirit so strongly that it is hard to put into words. Now that I am finally sealed to my family, my feelings of worry have been replaced with comfort and peace, knowing I am now eternally linked to them.

The author lives in Utah, USA.



CHILDREN



Looking to the Temple

President Eyring explains that because of the priesthood, we have the chance to go to the temple to be sealed together with our family for eternity. Draw or find a picture of your favorite temple and keep it in a place where you will see it every day. Make a list of how you will prepare to go to the temple someday.

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the divine attributes of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Virtue

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring divine attributes of the Savior.

Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven” (D&C 121:45).

What is virtue? President James E. Faust (1920–2007) said: “Virtue in its fuller sense encompasses all traits of righteousness that help us form our character.”¹ President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) added: “Love of God is the root of all virtue, of all goodness, of all strength of character.”²

Of the relationship between women and virtue, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Women bring with them into the world a certain virtue, a divine gift that makes them adept at instilling such qualities as faith, courage, empathy, and refinement in relationships and in cultures. . . .



“Sisters, of all your associations, it is your relationship with God, your Heavenly Father, who is the source of your moral power, that you must always put first in your life. Remember that Jesus’s power came through His single-minded devotion to the will of the Father. . . . Strive to be that kind of disciple of the Father and the Son, and your influence will never fade.”³

Additional Scriptures

Psalms 24:3–5; Philippians 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3–5; Alma 31:5; Doctrine and Covenants 38:23–24

NOTES

1. James E. Faust, “The Virtues of Righteous Daughters of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 108.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 73.
3. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 29, 31.
4. Virtue has power (see Mark 5:30).
5. In Guide to the Scriptures, “Priesthood” is defined as “the authority and power that God gives to man to act in all things for the salvation of man” (D&C 50:26–27).



Faith, Family, Relief

From the Scriptures

Today, virtuous women, full of faith, reach out to the Savior. In Luke 8 we read of a woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years that could not be healed. She sought healing when she “came behind [Christ], and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood [stopped]. . . . And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue⁴ is gone out of me.” This virtuous faithful woman fell down before Him, declaring “unto him before all the people” that “she had touched him” and “was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole” (see Luke 8:43–48; see also 6:17–19).

Through His virtue,⁵ Christ can heal, enable, strengthen, comfort, and cheer when we choose with courage and faith to reach out to Him.

Consider This

How does virtue empower and strengthen us?

MY LESSON IN LOVE

By Janice Tate

I didn't expect the simple service project to teach me so much about Heavenly Father's love for His children.

It sounded like a typical service project: round up a group of Relief Society sisters to put on a short choir program at a local hospital's respite care center, though no one from our ward was a patient there.

We found ourselves crammed into a small room with nine elderly patients facing us in their wheelchairs. Their faces seemed blank, empty of expression. It was hot and stuffy, and I thought, "Let's get this over with."

I was to lead the music, so I turned my back to the patients and concentrated on the program. As we began, I heard one patient calling, "Mama,



LOVE IN ACTION

"There is a serious need for the charity that gives attention to those who are unnoticed, hope to those who are discouraged, aid to those who are afflicted. True charity is love in action. The need for charity is everywhere."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Charity Never Faileth," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 124.

Mama," while another clapped and made noises. I felt uncomfortable, but in a few minutes we would finish and go home.

As we prepared to sing our last hymn, "How Great Thou Art" (*Hymns*, no. 86), we invited the patients and medical personnel to join with us. I turned around to lead everyone in the singing, and that's when I saw her—a tiny, wrinkled, white-haired lady with a lap full of tissues wet with her tears.

She motioned for me to come to her. I did so, and when I bent my head to listen, she took my hand. Her whole body trembled as she whispered, "I'm a Latter-day Saint. It's so wonderful to have my sisters come."

The Spirit filled my soul, and I knelt beside her, tears streaming from my eyes. She put a frail arm around me and patted me as if she understood my emotions. Everyone began singing the hymn, but I couldn't get the first verse out.

As the patients and staff sang of God's greatness, the Spirit filled the

room, and all were touched. I finally gained control of my feelings and joined the others, singing:

*When Christ shall come, with shout
of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall
fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble
adoration
And there proclaim, "My God, how
great thou art!"*

After the program the Relief Society sisters mingled with the patients and staff. The white-haired sister told us she had been lonely and had felt surrounded by strangers until we came. We didn't know she would be there, but Heavenly Father did.

I was reminded that all of these people were our brothers and sisters, that they needed love and comfort, and that someday I could be in their place. I was touched that we could be instruments of a loving Father, and I was grateful that our service project had taught me a powerful lesson about love. ■

The author lives in California, USA.



THE HUMMINGBIRD RESCUE

By William Hoggan

In rescuing a hummingbird, we learned how to help the spiritually weak.

At Young Women camp in the mountains of California, girls and leaders waited for dinner in an A-frame lodge. As we waited, some girls noticed something under a table. A hummingbird had somehow flown into the lodge, couldn't find its way out, and finally collapsed on the floor. They asked me to help.

The bird looked near death, its beak wrapped with cobwebs and its feathers askew. I gently put it into a cup and carried it outside. I hoped it would recover on its own but realistically expected it to go the way of all nature. However, as I tipped the cup to gently deposit the hummingbird onto the ground, in mid-slide the hummingbird grasped the rim of the cup with its tiny talons. I held the cup upright, the bird perched on the rim, its eyes closed. Now what?

One leader, seeing the bird, mixed a solution of sugar and water and brought it to me. First I gently brushed the cobwebs from the needle-sharp beak. The bird didn't flinch. Then I dipped a finger in the sugar water and held a drop to the tip of the beak. The drop disappeared, even though the bird didn't move. Perhaps

the liquid seeped into the beak? I dipped my finger again and held it to the bird's beak. This time a tiny tongue, thinner than a hair, licked my fingertip.

For 10 or 15 minutes, the hummingbird drank one drop after another. By then, several other leaders had gathered around me, and I offered them a try at feeding it.

Suddenly the bird opened its eyes, and its ruffled feathers fell instantly into place.

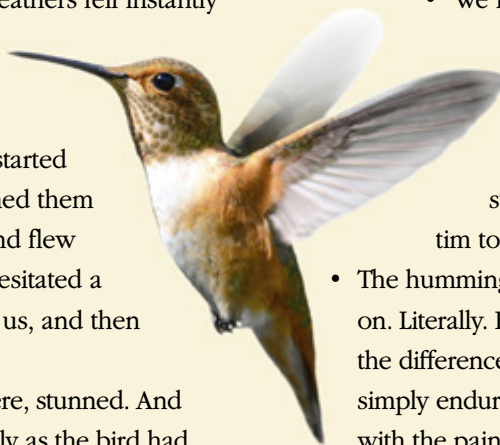
After drinking a couple more drops, it started its wings, warmed them for a second, and flew straight up. It hesitated a moment above us, and then shot away.

We stood there, stunned. And then, as suddenly as the bird had flown away, the spiritual lessons came:

- Often, as we reach out to the less active, our efforts don't seem to make a difference. But the love we offer does slip into the cracks—like the nectar into the unmoving beak of the

hummingbird—providing spiritual nutrition that one day may produce results.

- At times we can't go further on our own; we need a kind, caring hand up.
- Sometimes people get tangled in the cobwebs of sin or addiction and need the help of a friend or priesthood leader and the Savior's assistance to get free.
 - We need regular spiritual nutrition in order to endure, else we run out of spiritual strength and fall victim to evil influences.
- The hummingbird kept hanging on. Literally. Hanging on made all the difference. At times, we must simply endure in faith as we deal with the painful and sometimes horrible challenges of life.



The New Testament says that the Master is aware of even the sparrow's fall (see Matthew 10:29–31). I now know He is also aware of a hummingbird's fall. And He is aware of you. ■

The author lives in California, USA.



“How We Preach of Christ” in Our Home



By Darren E. Schmidt

During Easter time one year, my wife suggested that we read as a family the scriptural accounts of the Savior’s final week in mortality. Each night at bedtime, we read the New Testament and showed our children a short video clip of each event and discussed questions that arose. I was amazed at the questions our children brought up as well as the Spirit that permeated our home during our reading and discussions.

At the conclusion of the week, I felt a more profound gratitude and love toward the Savior, having reflected much on His sacrifice and the eternal consequences that result from all that He went through for us. Along with my own stirrings, I knew my wife had been inspired, and I sensed a deeper understanding and love for the Savior in our children as well as a greater desire to demonstrate Christlike demeanor toward one another.

Since then we have explored other ways that we might “talk of Christ” and “preach of Christ” more in our conversations and lessons, knowing that by building upon a foundation of Jesus Christ, we are promised great resistance against the storms of life (see Helaman 5:12).

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).



An Example of Teaching about Prayer

For example, let's say that you are teaching the importance of prayer. You might use Doctrine and Covenants 10:5, where we are instructed to “pray always,” or Nephi's counsel that the “evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8). These scriptures teach the doctrine of prayer powerfully. As you discuss them, let's say you ask something like “How did the Savior pray?” or “What were the Savior's

prayers like?” If you have younger children, you might ask, “What do you *think* the Savior's prayers were like?”

Take a moment to think of how you might personally answer this question by considering the scriptural accounts that come to mind. I think immediately of the Savior's visit to the Americas, when “he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . . Eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:15–16).

Later in the account we discover that the people tried to pattern their prayers after His and as a result “did not multiply many words, for it was *given unto them* what they should pray, and they were *filled with desire*” (3 Nephi 19:24; emphasis added). At this point, you might invite your children to share a time when they were filled with a desire to pray, or you could share a time when you were given the very words to say while praying. Then you could testify of how different a prayer is when it is given this way, as the Savior taught.

Think of the difference you could have on your children if they were to act on the principles of prayer found in these verses and in the testimonies you and they have

Make the Savior the Focus of Your Teaching

One of the things we have discovered is that when we bring the Savior's example and teachings into our family discussions and interactions, they have become much more powerful and purposeful. To use an analogy from the Savior Himself, He taught, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5). If we apply this analogy to our teaching, we teach gospel principles not as unrelated ideas but as appendages of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, as the prophet Joseph Smith declared them to be.¹ This is how we make the Savior the focus of our instruction and not just merely leaves that we have plucked from His true vine.

If we make Him the center of our instruction, we are promised nourishment, strength, and growth, including fruit-bearing branches—in other words, that our discussions and lessons will have greater converting power and long-term results. One way that we have found to do this is to teach a gospel principle and then ask our children a question such as “How did Jesus demonstrate this principle or teaching?” or “What did the Lord say or teach about this very thing?”

borne. Think how this could improve their ability to feel and recognize the Spirit, magnify their callings, give priesthood blessings, and later raise a family of their own, being directed by the same Spirit that “teacheth a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

If the Savior’s example or teachings were left out of this instruction, we could still have a good discussion on prayer, but including His example and teachings adds greater depth and power.

Gospel-Centered Artwork

Another thing we have sought to do to establish a more Christ-centered home is to have pictures of Christ, the temple, and other gospel-related things where they can readily be seen and where our children can know what is truly important to us.

A few years ago, while sitting with our children at tithing settlement, our bishop invited our 10-year-old son to take a small picture of the Savior and decide where in our home to place it, where it would be a constant reminder of our family’s commitment to follow Him. After returning home, he placed the picture on the front door, where, our son said, “each of us would see it the most.” This has been a great blessing and constant reminder to all of us every day in a small but powerful way of our promises to follow Jesus Christ.

Regardless of where pictures are placed in your home, it would be worth the effort to note the pictures on the walls and the messages you are sending to your children. Is the art in your home portraying the message that you are committed to following Christ?

Other Ways to Teach of Christ

I admit I have laughed on more than one occasion when one of my children has asked me if Jesus was tougher than a cartoon superhero, yet I have found that my child’s inquiry has always made for a great discussion about what makes the Savior superior to a superhero. Along with everyday conversations such as these, here are a few

additional ideas that you might consider in order to make your home more Christ-centered:

- Use the Book of Mormon to teach your children about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The word *Atonement* or *atone* appears 39 times in the Book of Mormon.
- Use Mormon Messages videos, Bible videos, and other Church media that teach of Jesus Christ to enhance your family home evening lessons and scripture studies.
- Learn and sing the hymns about the Savior together and discuss their teachings and meanings.
- Find ways to emphasize that prophets are powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ.
- Seek consistently to improve your own relationship with the Savior.

I have come to know through careful study and fervent prayer that Jesus Christ lives and that His great gift of the Atonement is real and gives our lives, and the lives of those we love, meaning and purpose, with the grand and glorious hope that our families can and will be ours for eternity. May each of us realize the great importance of establishing a Christ-centered home, recognizing “that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ” (Alma 38:9). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49–50.



The Path to

PALMYRA



*The path to Palmyra—the site of the First Vision
and the resting place of the golden plates—was anything
but a path of sweetness and light for Joseph Smith
and his family.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE ANDERSON, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

By Matthew S. Holland

This is the first article in a two-part series about the Prophet Joseph Smith. The second article, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," will appear in next month's issue of the Liahona.

Make no mistake about it. Whether you are a full-time missionary or not, all Latter-day Saints are called to take the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to "all the world" (Matthew 24:14). We are called to share the pure principles and organizing practices of *His* gospel in *His* name. In order to do so, we must also remember that it is essential to teach and testify that Joseph Smith was His instrument in restoring those pure principles and organizing practices to the earth.

With so very much at stake, you would be wise to ask yourself if you stand ready to step forward and declare with clear conviction and sweet boldness that "on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty,"¹ Joseph Smith walked into a secluded grove of trees, knelt, prayed, and the world was never the same again. If you would be the servants of God you are called to be, you must be ready to do so.

Decide now to become a student of the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There is power and wisdom in his life like no other, save the life of the Savior Himself. As you earnestly and prayerfully familiarize yourself with the details of Joseph's life, I promise that you will find your affection and admiration for him grow, you will find comfort and encouragement for those particularly hard days of life and service, and you will bolster your understanding against the sneer of modern critics so sure that worldly evidence proves Joseph could not be what he claimed. To those ends, consider just a few glimpses of this most remarkable man.

A Painful Path

There is every reason to believe that the morning of the First Vision was as glorious and idyllic as the hymn "Joseph Smith's First Prayer"² makes it



Following three years of failed crops in Vermont, Joseph Smith Sr. took the fateful step of moving his family 300 miles (482 km) southwest to the town of Palmyra, in upper New York.

proceeds while spinning tales that the venture had been a bust, producing only a chest full of tea as reward.⁵

Meanwhile, just as this swindle was unfolding, the payments for a large inventory of merchandise had fallen due at the Smith store. In the face of demanding creditors, the Smiths hit a desperation point. To pay their debts, Lucy gave up a wedding gift of \$1,000 that she had saved for years, and Joseph accepted \$800 for the family farm in Tunbridge.⁶ The farm was the one thing that would have

out to be. But in relishing such a picture, we must not lose sight of what it took to get to that morning. The path to Palmyra—the general location of this sacred, singular moment—was anything but a path of sweetness and light for this boy prophet and his family.

The Prophet's parents, Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, married in Tunbridge, Vermont, USA, in 1796. After six years of fairly successful farming, the Smiths moved to nearby Randolph to try their hand at storekeeping.³

The line of goods Joseph Sr. acquired with the help of Boston-based creditors moved quickly to eager new customers—not for cash but for promises of payment once harvests came in at the end of the growing season. As he waited for promised payments to pay off his creditors, he jumped into a new investment opportunity.

In those days Chinese markets were clamoring for crystallized ginseng root. Though Joseph Sr. had a hard-cash offer from a middleman for \$3,000 for the ginseng root he had collected and prepared for shipment, he decided on the riskier but potentially more lucrative strategy of taking the product to New York himself and contracting with a ship's captain to sell his goods in China on consignment. By eliminating the middleman, he stood to make as much as \$4,500—an immense sum in those days.⁴

As bad luck or sinister planning would have it, Joseph Sr.'s shipment ended up on the same boat carrying the son of the middleman with whom he had declined to do business. Taking advantage of the situation, this son sold the Smith ginseng in China “at a high price” and kept the



at least guaranteed a modicum of economic stability and long-term physical security in the often harsh world of the early American frontier. Now, penniless and landless, the Smiths would be forced to move eight times in 14 years, constantly looking for a way to provide for their family.

At least one of those moves was triggered by the financial difficulty of accumulated medical bills incurred from the 1813 typhoid fever epidemic that struck all the children of the Smith family with great and debilitating force. A few weeks after Joseph's fever had passed, he experienced tremendous pain in his shoulder. A local doctor misdiagnosed the pain as a consequence of a sprain. Two weeks later, when the pain had escalated to excruciating levels, the doctor returned and discovered a pool of infection linked to Joseph's extended fever.⁷

When Joseph Smith arrived in Palmyra, the Lord had brought His foreordained prophet to the physical resting place—a nearby hill—of a treasure of inestimable value.



A lancing of the sore area drew out a quart of infected matter, but the procedure was incomplete, and new infection moved to Joseph's lower left leg. For this, a surgeon was summoned. He made an eight-inch (20 cm) incision from the knee to the ankle, which eased the pain somewhat. But the infection, unfortunately, shot into the bone.⁸

At this point the family sought the latest medical advice from leading authorities at Dartmouth Medical College. Lucy insisted that the most logical and customary procedure,

memory. There was Joseph lying in a blood-drenched bed, "pale as a corpse, [with] large drops of sweat . . . rolling down his face, whilst upon every feature was depicted the utmost agony."¹¹ Fortunately, the operation was a success, but Joseph would spend the next three years on crutches.

After this ordeal, the family hoped that a new start in Norwich, Vermont, would finally bring the stability and prosperity they so urgently sought. But once again their hopes were dashed. In their first year of trying to make a



amputation, *not* be used. Instead, the Smiths would try a new and painful procedure—one without promise of success. Doctors would open Joseph's leg and bore two holes in each side of the bone. Then they would chip off three large pieces of the bone to remove all the infected area.⁹

All of this was to be done without the advantages of today's general anesthesia. As a consequence, the family was urged to give Joseph alcohol or to tie him to the bed so he would not jerk away in pain during the delicate procedure. At the tender age of seven, Joseph refused both options. Instead, he made two requests—that his father hold him and that his mother leave the room.¹⁰

When Joseph's cries became so great that his mother could not be kept away, twice she entered the room over his pleading objections. What she saw seared an indelible

go of farming on rented land, their crops failed. Their crops failed again the second year. In year three, 1816, Joseph Smith Sr. determined to give it one more try, convinced that things simply had to get better.¹²

Half a world away in 1815, Mount Tambora in Indonesia had erupted and spewed tons of ash into the earth's atmosphere, disrupting normal weather cycles. From June to August of 1816—dubbed the "year without a summer"—four killing frosts hit New England, ruining summer crops yet again.¹³

With famine setting in and thousands leaving Vermont in mass exodus, Joseph Sr. took his most fateful step yet. He decided to leave the roughly 20-mile (32 km) radius of family, friends, and farmland he had known most of his adult life and headed 300 miles (482 km) southwest to the town

of Palmyra in upper New York. There, it was reported, land was fertile and long-term credit was readily available. Out of necessity Joseph Sr. left in advance, leaving behind Lucy and the eight children to pack up their household goods and follow him.¹⁴

It was winter as Lucy and her brave little band loaded everything they owned into a sleigh and later into a wagon. After paying off several creditors, Lucy had little money left for the trip. By trip's end she was giving away clothing



and medicine to pay innkeepers. She recalled arriving in Palmyra with “barely two cents in cash.”¹⁵

Along the way the man hired to drive the sleigh forced young Joseph off to make room for two pretty daughters of the Gates family, whom they had encountered traveling in the same direction. Joseph—still not fully healed—was forced to limp “through the snow 40 miles [64 km] per day for several days,” experiencing what he called “the most excruciating weariness & pain.”¹⁶

When Joseph's devoted older brothers, Hyrum and Alvin, pleaded with the man to relent, he knocked them to the ground with a violent thump from the handled end of a whip. In Utica, when it became clear that Lucy was out of cash, the man abandoned the family—but not until after a

failed attempt to steal their wagon, during which he tossed their belongings to the ground.¹⁷ Somehow the family pressed on until all arrived safely in Palmyra, tearfully collapsing into the arms of Joseph Smith Sr.

Perhaps the most heart-wrenching detail of this journey, though, is found in an underappreciated postscript Joseph later added to the original account of his family's journey: “On our way from Utica I was left to ride on the last sleigh in the company, but when that came up I was knocked down by the driver, one of Gate's sons, & left to wallow in my blood until a stranger came along, picked me up, & carried me to the Town of Palmyra.”¹⁸ The significance of this should not be missed.

A Treasure of Inestimable Value

Just two miles (3 km) south of the center of Palmyra sits a grove of trees that would become the site of one of the grandest visions in human history. Three miles (5 km) beyond that sits the Hill Cumorah, repository of a then-unknown set of golden plates.

When Joseph arrived in Palmyra, the Lord had brought His foreordained prophet to the physical resting place of a treasure of inestimable value. This treasure would signal that after centuries of general spiritual darkness and confusion, the heavens were again open. This treasure would show that Jesus's ministry was far more expansive in both doctrine and geography than the Christian churches of that day could possibly know. This treasure would affirm that, in miraculous fashion, God is sweepingly active in the affairs of men across time, languages, and continents. And this treasure would promise teachings so pure and powerful that if you planted them deep into your soul, you could personally be transformed, tasting of something so delicious as to make it the ultimate and unmatched feast of your desires.

With mortal eyes, we might be tempted to envision that a more fitting path for such a man and such a moment would be a path of greater ease, efficiency, and acclaim. In recognition of the earth-shattering events about to happen as a consequence of this boy entering this town at this time, could

**A short distance south of
Palmyra sits a grove of trees
that would become the site
of one of the grandest visions
in human history.**



not the Lord, who so carefully orchestrated the placement of the golden plates over a millennia earlier, have provided a straighter, more comfortable and heralded path of arrival?

Yes, He surely could have, but He did not.

There was no prominent, prophetic anointing of Joseph in his childhood (see 1 Samuel 16:11–13). There was no directive dream pointing him to a promised land (see 1 Nephi 5:4–5). There was no curious Liahona to help his family avoid missteps along the way (see 1 Nephi 16:10; Alma 37:38). And there certainly was no open-air limousine traveling along a sunny, streamlined parade route with cheering masses providing a triumphant welcome.

Rather, for Joseph and his family, there was a wildly meandering trail of sorrow marked with bad luck, ill health, poor judgment, natural disaster, crushing pain, callous injustice, continuing obscurity, and unrelenting poverty. This is not to suggest that the Smith family lived in one continual round of abject misery; they did not. But the path to Palmyra was anything other than direct, prosperous, and publicly notable. Lame, limp, and bloodied, the Prophet literally had to be carried to his unparalleled rendezvous with destiny by a nameless stranger.

Remember this as perhaps the first lesson of Joseph’s life and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In spite of failure, mishap, and bitter opposition—and in many cases precisely *because* of those things—Joseph Smith got exactly where he needed to be to fulfill his mission. So, if now or on some future day, you look around and see that other perhaps less-devoted acquaintances are succeeding in their jobs when you just lost yours; if major illness puts you on your back just at the moment critical tasks of service seem

to come calling; if a call to a prominent position goes to someone else; if a missionary companion seems to learn the language faster; if well-meaning efforts still somehow lead to disaster with a fellow ward member, a neighbor, or an investigator; if news from home brings word of financial setback or mortal tragedy you can do nothing about; or if, day after day, you simply feel like a bland and beaten background player in a gospel drama that really seems made for the happiness of others, *just know this*: many such things were the lot of Joseph Smith himself at the very moment he was being led to the stage of the single most transcendent thing to happen on this earth since the events of Golgotha and the Garden Tomb nearly 2,000 years earlier.

“But,” you may say, “my life and earthly destiny will never be like that of the Prophet Joseph.”

That probably is true. But it is also true that your lives do matter to God, and your eternal potential and that of every soul you will meet is no less grand and significant than that of the Prophet Joseph himself. Thus, just like our beloved Joseph, you must never give up, give in, or give out when life in general, or missionary work in particular, gets utterly painful, confusing, or dull. Rather, as Paul teaches, you must see that “*all* things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28; emphasis added).

Just as He did with young Joseph Smith, God is shaping and directing you every single day to ends more glorious than you can know! ■

From a devotional address, “The Making of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and You,” delivered at the Provo Missionary Training Center on February 15, 2014. Matthew S. Holland is president of Utah Valley University.

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:14.
2. *Hymns*, no. 26.
3. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 37, 45. For a concise summary of events related to the Smith family’s move to Palmyra, see also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (2005), 17–29.
4. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 49.
5. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 49–50.
6. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 51.
7. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 60, 62.
8. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 62–63.
9. See LeRoy S. Wirthlin, “Joseph Smith’s Boyhood Operation: An 1813 Surgical Success,” *BYU Studies* 21, no. 2 (1981): 146–54.
10. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 64.
11. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 65.
12. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 66.
13. See *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed. (2003), 24.
14. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 67.
15. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 68, 70.
16. Joseph Smith, in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, 2 vols. (1989), 1:268.
17. See *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:268.
18. Joseph Smith, in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:268–69.



SEEKING
Rescue

By Connie Goulding

On August 5, 2010, 33 Chilean miners were trapped by a massive cave-in after the rock inside the mine collapsed. They were restricted to a small safe area and to the mine shafts below the collapse, 2,300 feet (700 m) deep inside the earth.

The situation looked bleak. They were separated from home and family by almost a half a mile of unmovable rock overhead, and they had only a small supply of food and water. Although they had tools and knowledge, because of the instability of the mine they could not save themselves. Their only chance was to be found and rescued.

In spite of this, they chose to have hope. They organized themselves, rationed their food and water, and waited. They had faith that those on the surface were doing what they could to rescue them. Even so, it must have been hard to hold onto that hope as they waited in the dark. Days passed, and then weeks. Their carefully rationed food ran out.

I suffered a tremendous collapse in my own life. Before my eyes, my beautiful, funny, full-of-life eight-year-old son was killed in an automobile-pedestrian accident. I held his body as his blood spilled out on the roadway and his spirit slipped away and returned to his heavenly home. I pleaded with my Heavenly Father to let him stay, but that wasn't in my son's life plan.

I was lost in the dark, overwhelmed with the burden of my grief. I was weary, unable to rest, as the problem of mortality clouded my eyes. I came to know that a broken heart is a true physical feeling. Where once I had a heart, there was now only a dark hole that was raw and painful.

I believed that I should just be strong enough to get over it. Many people had suffered more. But like the miners,

Like the 33 men trapped by a mine collapse in Chile, we may feel trapped by our trials and weaknesses; however, through the plan of salvation we can find hope of a rescue.

trapped by the unmovable rock that held them captive, I could not lift the burden of my grief.

In many ways we can all feel trapped. Some may feel trapped by personal trials, weaknesses, or difficult circumstances in life. Nevertheless, there is comfort in knowing that mortal life is a time when we grow stronger as we face our sorrow and grief. We find hope in Jesus Christ.

A Ray of Hope

On the 17th day of their trial, hope was renewed for the miners when a small shaft was created by a drill bit that broke through the rock that held them captive.

The trapped men, wanting the rescuers on the surface to know they had been found alive, pounded on the drill bit and fastened a note written in red marker to the end of it. It read, "*Estamos bien en el refugio, los 33*" ("We are well in the shelter, the 33"). Hope was restored. They had been found.

Through a small hole, the circumference of a grapefruit, communication was established with the world on the surface. Food, water, medicine, and notes from loved ones were sent down the shaft to the miners.

It must have been with mixed feelings that the miners realized their situation. Although they had overwhelming joy and relief that they had been found, their situation was

still precarious. Even though those on the surface knew where they were, it would take time to put a rescue plan into place, and they could only hope it would even work.

The rescuers reluctantly informed the miners that it would be months before they could be brought to the surface. They hoped to have the miners back with their families by Christmas, which meant the miners faced an entombment of an additional four months. However, now they waited with hope.

We too have a ray of hope. Before this world was created, a plan was put into place to rescue us. Heavenly Father provided us a Savior, who would save us from our mortality, from our sins, from our weaknesses, and from all that we would suffer in this life. He is the giver of hope and of life. He paved the way for us to return to our Heavenly Father and to be reunited with the loved ones who have gone on before us. He stands beside us to take the weight of the burdens that we carry, to dry our tears, and to bring us peace. He came to bring us home, if we follow the plan He has set.

The Rescue

Although different attempts were made to rescue the miners, only one drill followed a straight path, through one of the small pilot holes that had been drilled previously to locate the miners.

The miners were not passive in their rescue. As the drill pounded its way to their rescue, rock fell down the smaller shaft and heaped up in the cavern where the miners were trapped. They moved the rock as it came down, clearing the way for the larger drill.

The rescuers built a capsule to be lowered down the narrow shaft using cables. The rescue capsule was barely



We must each choose to surrender our will to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.

big enough for a man to fit inside. The capsule was only four inches (10 cm) narrower than the shaft that was driven through 2,300 feet (700 m) of solid rock.

When the time came for the miners to be rescued, each man was faced with a choice. One man at a time stepped into the capsule; each would ascend alone. As each man chose to trust in the plan, he had to hope that

the capsule would be drawn up the narrow shaft in a true and straight ascent and not become off balance and get stuck. The plan had to work, or all hope was lost. Each miner stepped into the capsule and gave his will over to the plan and the rescuers.

One by one the miners made the solitary journey up from the darkness and into the light. They were greeted by their loved ones as the whole world watched and cheered.

The rescue plan succeeded; not one man was lost. They were redeemed on October 13, 2010—69 days after the mine collapse and 52 days after they had been found alive.

Trust the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Just as with the miners, our rescue is an individual rescue. Though salvation is available to everyone, our relationship with the Savior is an intimate and personal one. We must each choose to surrender our will to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Because of the eternal sanctity of man's agency upon which this mortal life was founded, the Savior cannot take from us our will. We are free to choose. The Savior stands beside us waiting to heal our wounds and to lift us into eternal salvation, but He can only do that with our invitation. We must choose Him. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.

My rescue came when I was on my knees in the depths of grief over my son's death. Like the miners as they entered the capsule, I was at a pivotal point: should I try to overcome my challenges with my own strength and knowledge, or should I reach out to my Heavenly Father and ask for help?

Oppressed by the weight of my grief, I decided to turn to God. As I appealed to my Father in Heaven, I told Him how weary I was and asked Him to please lift the burden of my grief. Before I stood again, the weight of my sorrows was lifted from my shoulders. I still had to work through the pain and loss, but the unbearable load was gone.

It was there that I came to know that the Savior stands by our side, waiting to lift us, waiting only for us to ask Him, waiting for us to lay our burdens upon His shoulders, waiting for us to put our hand in His so that He can rescue us.

We—like the miners, who had to pull the capsule door closed behind them and trust their rescuers—must surrender our will to the Savior and trust in His rescue plan for us.

It is my hope that when I make that solitary journey from this life into the next, there will be joy as I am reunited with those who have made the journey before me! In the meantime I know that my Savior lives and loves me and stands beside me. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT CAN LIFT YOU

"We acknowledge that your path will at times be difficult. But I give you this promise in the name of the Lord: rise up and follow in the footsteps of our Redeemer and Savior, and one day you will look back and be filled with eternal gratitude that you chose to trust the Atonement and its power to lift you up and give you strength."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Can Do It Now!" *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 57.



By Elder L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles



THE GLORIOUS DAY OF Priesthood Restoration

*How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored
His Church and His priesthood to the earth.*

When the Savior Jesus Christ came to earth, one of the first things He did was organize His Church. The New Testament tells us that He “went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” When He came down the next morning, He called His disciples together. “And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:12–13).

Later on He took Peter, James, and John up into a mount apart, and there Peter received the keys of the priesthood (see Matthew 17:1–9; see also 16:18–19). Peter became the one responsible for holding all the keys on earth in leading the Church after the departure of the Savior.

Obedying the Savior’s injunction (see Mark 16:15), the Apostles preached the gospel and organized branches of the Church. In many cases, they had the opportunity of visiting branches only once, which gave them little opportunity to teach and train. Paganistic ideas soon crept in, and different aspects of the Savior’s doctrine were changed or modified (see Isaiah 24:5). As apostasy spread, it became necessary for the Lord to take the priesthood from the earth. As a result, the earth was without the blessings of the priesthood for quite a period of time.

To establish His kingdom again on the earth with the powers of the priesthood, the Lord restored the gospel.

Remember the Restoration

As Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon and Oliver Cowdery was acting as his scribe, they came across the story in 3 Nephi of the resurrected Savior visiting the Western Hemisphere. As they learned of His teachings about baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:23–28), they wondered about the many forms of baptism being used in their day and about who had authority to baptize.

Joseph and Oliver decided to appeal to the Lord, praying in the woods near Joseph and Emma’s home. There, the great revelation occurred wherein John the Baptist appeared, put his hands on their heads and said: “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13:1).

That was a glorious event. I hope all priesthood bearers remember May 15, 1829, as a sacred event in the history of the Church and as a special event in the history of the world.

The Articles of Faith tell us “that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5).

Men are not called randomly; they are called by inspiration and prophecy. There’s a direct line of inspiration from the Lord to those who are called to exercise the priesthood. That is the way the Lord governs His Church, and that is the way He called the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Be Worthy of the Priesthood

Receiving the priesthood is not a rite of passage that comes automatically in accordance with age. We have to be worthy and “faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods” (D&C 84:33). We should carefully read the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which specifically points out conditions we must understand and agree to in order to accept the priesthood:



“Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

“But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come” (D&C 84:40–41).

That’s pretty serious. You might think men would shy away from the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods, but the next verse says, “Wo unto all those who come *not* unto this priesthood” (D&C 84:42; emphasis added).

If we accept the priesthood and live worthy of it, we receive the blessings of the Lord. But if we break our covenant and turn from our priesthood, we will not receive the Lord’s blessings or become “the elect of God” (D&C 84:34).

The Aaronic Priesthood, which is received by covenant, helps prepare young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the greater priesthood received by oath *and* covenant.

Reach Out in Service

The priesthood is a great brotherhood—probably the greatest brotherhood on earth. The relationships among our priesthood brothers should be greater than any other relationships except for those within our individual families. In addition to being a brotherhood, the priesthood is

a service organization where we give of ourselves to help others and make things better.

From the time a young man receives the Aaronic Priesthood and is ordained a deacon or a teacher or a priest, he belongs to a quorum. That quorum brotherhood continues when he receives the Melchizedek Priesthood and is ordained an elder. Quorums in the priesthood are vital.

Recently a young man going on a mission spoke in sacrament meeting. In his talk he explained that he and four friends had started out together in the deacons quorum. He said the friendship and support they gave each other as they faced challenges and moved forward through the ranks of the Aaronic Priesthood helped them to reach their goal of serving full-time missions.

I belong to a quorum. It's a very special quorum. It's made up of men from all different types of occupations and professions. But when we act as a quorum, we're united in purpose.

When quorum members agree unanimously on a course to follow and act together under the influence of the Holy Ghost, they act in accordance with the Lord's will. Unless

you have complete agreement by members of a quorum, you do not proceed. Think of how that can protect you throughout life.

Every quorum leader ought to

have a list of the members of his quorum, and he should be conscious of those who are having trouble defining the way they should be living. If a number of such young men belong to the quorum, the leader prioritizes his list, giving attention to those in most urgent need of nurturing. Then he and other quorum members start visiting them, making them friends and associates of the quorum in a way that draws them back into the fellowship.

A priesthood quorum has the duty and responsibility "to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59). Service in a priesthood quorum is essential to our development here on earth. Therefore, all quorum members should consider these duties as part of

their service obligation in our Father in Heaven's kingdom.

We all know that we face challenges in our mortal probation. Unless we have support to help us as we proceed through life, we will find ourselves without a firm plan, a firm direction, or a firm roadmap to lead and guide us. A properly functioning quorum helps us form a plan and a roadmap that will lead us back to the presence of our Father in Heaven.

Be Grateful

Bishops hold priesthood keys to preside over their ward, including the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishop, in fact, is the president of his ward's priests quorum. He helps the young men to be worthy to receive and advance in the Aaronic Priesthood and to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood. He helps them understand the obligations and blessings that come to bearers of the priesthood. He helps them learn to magnify the priesthood by giving them assignments that help them serve and minister to others.

The keys belonging to the Aaronic Priesthood remind us that we should always be grateful for the restored priesthood, with its power, authority, and responsibilities: "The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments" (D&C 107:20).

I challenge young men to honor the priesthood they hold and to prepare to advance in each office of the Aaronic Priesthood as they prepare for the additional blessing of receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, serving the Lord as full-time missionaries and eventually marrying in His holy temple.

I testify that no mortal man leads this Church. It is the Savior's Church, and He directs it through the priesthood, which He delegates to men on earth so they can act as His agents in leading His Church and performing sacred ordinances. How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored His Church and His priesthood to the earth. ■

The priesthood is a great brotherhood—probably the greatest brotherhood on earth.





PAINTING BY JUSTIN KUNZ

THE SAVIOR'S TEACHINGS ON Discipleship

In Luke's account of Jesus Christ's final journey to Jerusalem, we see the Savior giving us a clear pattern for how to follow Him.

By Casey W. Olson

Seminaries and Institutes

Just four months before the Savior's death, "when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly [or resolutely] set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).¹ In the preceding weeks, Jesus Christ had carefully prepared His disciples for the difficulties and transcendent spiritual events that lay ahead.

For example, immediately after Peter testified of Jesus Christ's divinity at Caesarea Philippi, the Savior spoke to His disciples about His approaching death and Resurrection for the first time in plain, unmistakable terms (see Matthew 16:13–21; Mark 8:27–31; Luke 9:18–22).² Jesus also brought Peter, James, and John with Him "up into an high mountain," where He "was transfigured before them" (Matthew 17:1–2). There, the Savior, Moses, and Elijah bestowed priesthood keys upon Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah also offered comfort and support to Jesus as they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31).³ Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles referred to this experience on the mount as "the beginning of the end" of Jesus Christ's mortal ministry.⁴

These events show that when Jesus Christ “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” He clearly knew He was commencing the journey that would culminate in His death. The book of Luke, which provides the most detail regarding this journey, records that as the Savior “went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22), a company of disciples—both men and women—traveled with Him (see Luke 11:27).⁵ While walking together, Jesus tutored His followers on the demands of discipleship. As we study the Savior’s teachings in context of this journey, we can gain a greater appreciation of how He reinforced His instructions on discipleship with the power of His own example.

Three Responses to Jesus Christ’s Instruction to “Follow Me”

Shortly before the Savior began His final trek to Jerusalem, He declared: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Later, as Jesus and His disciples traveled toward Jerusalem, “a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” (Luke 9:57). The Savior responded that “the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58), perhaps indicating that “life was very inconvenient for him,” as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once observed, and that “it will often be so” for those who choose to follow Him.⁶

Next, the Lord “said unto another, Follow me,” (Luke 9:59), but the man requested that he be permitted to first go and bury his father. Jesus replied, “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:60).⁷ The Savior’s words do not mean it is wrong to mourn the loss of a loved one (see D&C 42:45). Rather, they emphasize that devotion to the Lord is a disciple’s highest priority.

A third individual remarked, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house” (Luke 9:61). Jesus responded with an analogy of a plowman, whose task requires him to focus on what

is ahead rather than what lay behind (see Luke 9:62). The lesson for this man was simply to follow the example of the Savior, who “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51) and did not look back.

The Road through Samaria

As Jesus and His disciples passed through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem, some of the Samaritans “did not receive him” (Luke 9:53)—likely because they recognized Jesus and His disciples as Jews.⁸ In response, James and John sought permission to call down fire from heaven to consume their offenders (see Luke 9:52–54). In this volatile

*Like the good Samaritan,
Jesus ministered to each wounded
soul He encountered.*

setting, the Savior demonstrated patience and forbearance while admonishing His disciples to do the same (see Luke 9:55–56).

Shortly after this episode, the Savior told the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25–37). In addition to satisfying the questions of a disingenuous lawyer, this parable may have reminded the Savior’s disciples that there are no exceptions to the commandment to “love . . . thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27; see also verses 25–29).

In addition, the Savior’s disciples may have recognized similarities between the actions of the good Samaritan and those of Jesus. The love the good Samaritan demonstrated for a Jew mirrored the charity Jesus had recently displayed toward hostile Samaritans. Also, in the coming weeks, the Savior’s disciples would witness Jesus encountering many wounded souls on the road to Jerusalem (see Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 19:1–10). Like the good Samaritan,



who paused on a dangerous, thief-infested highway and placed the welfare of another ahead of his own, Jesus would minister to each wounded soul He encountered, thinking not of Himself even as He drew closer to His own death.

The Savior Teaches Mary and Martha

During His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus stopped at the home of Martha (see Luke 10:38). While Martha “was cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40), her sister, Mary, “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (verse 39). Hospitality was very important in Jewish society, and it seems Martha was diligently seeking to fulfill cultural expectations regarding her role as hostess.⁹

Although Martha demonstrated marvelous devotion and faith in the Savior in another setting (see John 11:19–29), here she complained, “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 10:40). To help Church members learn an important lesson from this episode, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once cited a Brigham Young University devotional address by Professor Catherine Corman Parry:

“The Lord did not go into the kitchen and tell Martha to stop cooking and come listen. Apparently he was content to let her serve him however she cared to, until she judged another person’s service. . . . Martha’s *self-importance* . . . occasioned the Lord’s rebuke, not her busyness with the meal.”¹⁰

Martha’s primary mistake on this occasion seems to have been focusing on herself—even as she was serving others. The Savior helped

Martha understand that it is not enough to simply serve the Lord and our fellowman. We must learn to lose ourselves in the process of serving and seek the Lord's will to guide our desires and motives as well as our actions (see Luke 9:24; D&C 137:9). Disciples must overcome the tendency to think first of themselves and learn to serve Heavenly Father and His children with an eye "single to [His] glory" (D&C 88:67). Later, after her brother's death, Martha showed her focused faith by setting aside temporal concerns and immediately going out to meet the Savior when she heard He was coming (see John 11:19–20).

The Savior Expounds on the Demands of Discipleship

Later on in the Savior's journey to Jerusalem, a man requested, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Jesus responded by addressing the root of the man's problem: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). He then gave the parable of the rich fool (see Luke 12:16–21).

In the parable, one reason for God's characterization of the rich man as a fool may have been the man's selfishness. In Luke 12:17–19 the rich man uses the words *I* and *my* 11 times, revealing his concern with self.¹¹ Not only was the man consumed by selfishness, but he also failed to recognize the source of his riches. In no way did he acknowledge, as the Savior did, that it was "the ground" that "brought forth plentifully" (Luke 12:16), nor did he thank the Lord for creating the earth in which his crops grew.



Ultimately the man was condemned not for the wise practice of storing temporal provisions but for failing to prepare spiritually for the future. Being “not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21), the man was eventually deprived not only of the treasure he had temporarily accumulated on earth but also of “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not” (Luke 12:33). His choices in life left him impoverished in eternity.

In direct contrast to the rich fool who hoarded material possessions before unexpectedly dying, Jesus purposefully marched toward His death, deliberately giving God all that He had and was—including His life and the fullest measure of His will (see Luke 22:42; Mosiah 15:7).

Like Mary and Martha, we must learn to lose ourselves in the process of serving and seek the Lord’s will.

He declared, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Luke 12:50). Having already been baptized with water, Jesus here was referring to His Atonement. Soon He would descend below all things and His body would be covered in blood and sweat as He suffered for our sins and experienced our pains and afflictions.¹²

Later, when some Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod Antipas would seek to have Him killed, the Savior simply affirmed that He would continue to seize each opportunity to teach, bless, and heal others (see Luke 13:31–33). He would spend the last days of His mortal life—like all His days before—serving others.

While drawing closer to Jerusalem, Jesus directed His disciples to count the cost of discipleship—to put forethought into their decision to follow Him (see Luke 14:25–28). He did not seek to sugarcoat the difficult realities they would

encounter if they continued as His disciples. Rather, He firmly declared: “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). However, the Savior also promised that as we lose ourselves on the pathway of discipleship, we will gain so much more in return (see Luke 9:24). The blessings He has promised His disciples include “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).

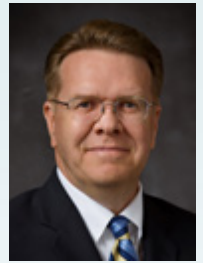
Although we do not have the opportunity to walk with Jesus Christ to Jerusalem, we can show our willingness to replicate that journey in our own lives. Remembering the Savior’s own willingness to sacrifice and serve in accordance with Heavenly Father’s will can give us strength to “go, and do . . . likewise” (Luke 10:37). ■

NOTES

1. See A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (1971), 240.
2. Veiled references to the Savior’s suffering and death from earlier instances in His ministry include Matthew 9:15; 16:4; John 2:19; 3:14.
3. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1936), 373.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 373.
5. In contrast to Mark and Matthew, who only briefly mention the Savior’s departure from Galilee for the last time in mortality and His trek to Jerusalem (see Matthew 19:1–2; Mark 10:1), Luke focuses great attention on this journey (see Luke 9:51–53; 13:22, 34; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11). John’s Gospel varies significantly in content from the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and does not mention the Savior’s final departure from Galilee to Jerusalem.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Inconvenient Messiah,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1984, 68.
7. Respect for parents was very important in Jewish culture, including the responsibility to provide a proper burial for them. After preparing a body for burial and placing it in a tomb, family members typically returned a year later to place the bones in a stone box called an ossuary, which remained in the tomb as a secondary burial among the remains of other deceased family members. (See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* [2006], 78–79.) If the disciple in this case was speaking of a secondary burial rather than an urgent need to care for the body of his recently deceased father, then his request demonstrated a desire to prioritize a cultural tradition over a singular opportunity to walk to Jerusalem with the Son of God and be tutored by Him.
8. There was considerable animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans at the time of Christ. These two groups typically avoided association with each other. In this case, the Samaritans evidently deprived Jesus and His disciples of customary elements of hospitality, such as provisions and lodging. (See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, *Making Sense of the New Testament* [2010], 140; Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* [1987], 241–42.)
9. See Gower, *New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, 244–45; Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (1953), 69–77.
10. In Dallin H. Oaks, “‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 12–13; emphasis added.
11. See Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry, *Understanding the Parables of Jesus Christ* (2006), 122.
12. See Luke 22:44; Alma 7:11–13; Doctrine and Covenants 19:18; 88:6.



Fishers OF MEN



By Elder
Scott D. Whiting
Of the Seventy

*All who have accepted the call to lead
in the Church have accepted the Savior's
invitation to become fishers of men.*

While raising our young family in Hawaii, my wife and I were grateful for the wonderful Latter-day Saints who assisted us. These dear members embraced us and treated us as their own family. On several occasions men in the ward would take my young son on ocean fishing adventures. These excursions did not involve boats but rather ancient fishing techniques developed by the early Hawaiians.

Using one such method, a skilled fisherman would meticulously fold and layer a circular net that had weights attached to the perimeter. He would then carefully carry the net to a location along the rocky shore above a clear pool of water. As he would see fish entering the pool, at just the right time and with great skill, he would throw the net, which would unfold to its full capacity and land in a large circular pattern on the water below, quickly sinking to the bottom and enmeshing the gathered fish.

While the skill of any such fisherman is impressive, he will be the first to

tell you that without a good net that is clean, mended, and in full repair, his efforts would be futile. Experienced fishermen know that their success is contingent upon the integrity of their fishing nets and that effective, productive fishing does not begin until the nets are inspected and in good order.

We see an understanding of this principle among the original Apostles, several of whom were fishermen by trade. We are introduced to these fishermen in the early chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where they are casting, mending, and washing their nets when they first encounter their future Master (see Matthew 4:18, 21; Mark 1:16, 19; Luke 5:2). These men fed their families and the families of others by toiling daily to catch fish. Their fortunes and their families depended on their preparation and skill and on the integrity of their nets.

When Jesus invited them to “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” “they straightway left their nets,” “forsook all, and followed him” (Matthew 4:19, 20; Luke 5:11; see also Mark 1:17–18).

I have thought of this example many times as I have considered that those who stand at the head of the Church have responded with similar faith to the invitation to “follow me.” Like the ancient Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led by prophets and apostles, who have forsaken their nets and their hard-earned professions and have developed new skills in order to serve and follow the Master.

Leaders of Men

What does it mean to become “fishers of men”? In His simple words of invitation to the early Apostles, the Savior introduced what was to become His common and powerful form of teaching—teaching in parables. He knew that those called to follow Him would understand, to a degree, what He meant by the words “fishers of men.”

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) taught, “To become ‘fishers of men’ is just another way of saying ‘become leaders of men.’ So in today’s language we would say . . . : ‘If you will keep my commandments, I will make you leaders among men.’”¹

A leader of men is someone who is called to help others become “true followers of . . . Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48). *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* says, “To do this, leaders first strive to be the Savior’s faithful disciples, living each day so that they can return to live in God’s presence. Then they can help others develop strong testimonies and draw nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”²

All who have accepted the call to lead in the Church have accepted the Savior’s invitation to become fishers of men.

Nets and Councils

From the highest level of leadership in the Church to Aaronic Priesthood quorum and

Young Women class presidencies, leaders are organized into councils. Leaders are instructed to prepare spiritually, participate fully in councils, minister to others, teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and administer the priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church. Additionally, they are to build unity and harmony in the Church, prepare others to be leaders and teachers, delegate responsibility, and ensure accountability.³

Just as the early Apostles applied their knowledge of fishing to become fishers of men, we can apply the principles found in their use of nets to the councils of the Church. Like a net, these councils are organized and prepared to gather Heavenly Father’s children—each council member acting as an important and integral strand of the net. Just as a net is effective only if it is in good repair, so are our councils compromised when council members are not organized, focused, and functioning as they should.

Leaders of councils follow the example of the ancient Apostle fishermen by regularly inspecting and mending these “nets.” Council leaders do so by providing regular training, leading out in council meetings, giving timely and appropriate feedback to council members, and offering love, encouragement, and praise. There is no substitute for the effective strength and gathering capacity of properly functioning councils.



The Ward Council

Perhaps the council with the greatest opportunity to influence individual members of the Church is the ward council. Men and women in this council are truly called to be fishers of men with the charge of leading the work of salvation in the ward, as directed by the bishop. They live and serve in their respective wards, where they can know and associate with those they have been called to lead.

“Members of the ward council strive to help individuals build testimonies, receive saving ordinances, keep covenants, and become consecrated followers of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 6:4–5). All members of the ward council have a general responsibility for the well-being of ward members.”⁴

Members of ward councils play an integral role in hastening the work of salvation. When the ward council is not functioning as it should, the work slows. The gathering capacity of the “net” is compromised, and council efforts yield limited results. But when the ward council is organized and focused on strengthening individuals and families, the results can be astonishing.

I am familiar with a ward that struggled with an ineffective ward council. It was difficult for the bishop to embrace the direction found in *Handbook 2* because he was comfortable in his ways and liked his old patterns. After much counseling and training by a loving stake president, however, the bishop softened his heart, repented, and began in earnest to organize the ward council as instructed. He watched training videos available at LDS.org, he read sections 4 and 5 of *Handbook 2*, and he acted upon what he learned.

Members of the ward council quickly embraced the changes, and a spirit of love and unity settled on them as they focused on strengthening individuals and families. In every meeting, they spoke at length about investigators, new converts, less-active members, and members with needs. Their hearts began to be drawn out to these brothers and sisters, and miracles began to happen.

The bishop reported that almost immediately after these changes were made to the ward council, previously unknown less-active members began to attend church. These members said they suddenly felt moved upon to return to the Church. They said they had received a clear



JOIN THE RANKS

“During the Master’s ministry, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring, ‘I will make you fishers of men.’ May we join the ranks of the fishers of men and women, that we might provide whatever help we can.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Our Responsibility to Rescue,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Oct. 2013, 4.

and compelling impression that they needed to once again associate with the Saints. They knew they would be loved and that they needed the support members would offer.

The bishop shared with me that he is certain Heavenly Father was just waiting for him to follow the counsel he had received and organize the ward council as instructed before He could put the desire into the hearts and minds of these less-active members to return to activity in the Church. The bishop realized that he needed to create the loving, nurturing environment these members needed before the Spirit would lead them back. His words remind me of the experience of Peter the fisherman:

“And [Jesus] entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

“Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

“And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

“And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes” (Luke 5:3–6).

As we listen to and follow the counsel given us by modern-day prophets, seers, and revelators—true “fishers of men”—and as we inspect and mend our nets while serving, our capacity to hasten the work of salvation will be greatly increased and we will become instruments in Heavenly Father’s hands to gather His children. ■

NOTES

1. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, 15.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.1.
3. See *Handbook 2*, 3.2.1–5; 3.3.2–4.
4. *Handbook 2*, 4.4.

MY EXPLODING PEACHES

I thought I was the perfect parent . . . until I had children.

For me, parenthood has been a refiner's fire. My weaknesses seem to come out as I become stressed, sleep deprived, worried, or upset. Of course, parenthood's blessings make up for those moments, but I have found that I have a temper. It's humiliating to admit, but I used to yell or throw things to get my children's attention.

I would resolve time and again not to lose my temper, but I would still lose it in times of stress. Heavenly Father knew I needed something dramatic to help me.

One evening after a long day of bottling peaches, I put on the last batch and decided to take a short nap. I was sure I would wake up in time to take the bottles from the steamer.

I didn't.

My husband, Quinn, and I were startled awake by the sound of exploding jars. I ran to the kitchen and saw shattered glass and gluey peaches over every surface of the room. Apparently, the steamer water had evaporated, heat and pressure had built up, the top of the steamer had blown off, and six of seven peach jars had exploded.

"I think I'll clean this up in the morning," I said.

Bad idea.

By morning the hot peach muck had solidified into hardened, glass-filled mounds all over the kitchen and

dining room. The plastered peach-glass tidbits had even found their way behind countertop appliances and into every nook and cranny, including behind the fridge.

Cleanup took several hours. I had to soak the glass-filled mounds with wet paper towels and then try to wipe them up without cutting myself.

As I cleaned, a familiar voice

ran into the kitchen and saw shattered glass and gluey peaches over every surface of the room.

whispered to me: "Mary, when your temper explodes, as did these jars, you cannot easily fix things. You cannot see where and how your anger hurts your children and others. Like this mess, that hurt hardens quickly and is painful."

Suddenly, the cleanup took on new meaning. The lesson was a powerful one. Like my anger, there was no quick cleanup. Weeks later I was still



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRADLEY H. CLARK



DID WE DO THE RIGHT THING?

finding little clumps of peach rock embedded with glass.

I pray that someday my patience will become as great a strength as it was a weakness. Meanwhile, I am grateful that the Lord's Atonement is helping me better control my temper so that I can spare my loved ones any more messes caused by exploding anger. ■

Mary Biesinger, Utah, USA

I was a well-known journalist who had written for some good magazines and newspapers in Lima, Peru, but my way of life—far from God—was tormenting me more each day. Because of this, I accepted a job as a proofreader for a magazine in the Ventanilla District, located far from my home. I was desperately seeking a way to get away from my current circle of friends. In Ventanilla, I felt in my heart that my life would change.

I was occasionally attending church with my girlfriend, María Cristina, when two good, stubborn missionaries convinced me to ask Heavenly Father in prayer if the Church was true. I did so, and what I experienced was indescribable. I had never felt the Spirit so strong as on that unforgettable day.

Married and baptized a short time later, María Cristina and I rented a small, uncomfortable room in Ventanilla. Because of my hard work, I was advanced from proofreader to editor at the company's magazine and newspaper. I had never been an editor before, and I was happy with the position. Even so, things started to change when our publications began to lower their standards, publishing items of questionable morality. These changes, ordered by our directors, opposed Church principles and values.

I had always wanted to be an editor, but the situation made me

uncomfortable. Our bishop suggested that if we did things that pleased our Heavenly Father, He would bless us. After my wife and I thought it over and prayed about it, we felt prompted that I should quit my job.

A few days later I was beginning to feel stressed out and wondered if I had done the right thing. After resigning, I had sent résumés to several companies but had heard nothing back. María Cristina suggested that we pray again, and we did so. We prayed that everything would turn out well and that we would not lose faith even though the bills were piling up.

A few hours later my wife encouraged me to call one of the companies. Somewhat unbelieving, I called. I was astounded when an official there said he was just about to call me. He wanted to know if I could start the next day!

We wept for joy. Our Heavenly Father had answered our prayers.

We had to leave our ward and many good friends for my new job, but we left with stronger testimonies. I now have respectable work and a good salary, and we have a nice place to live. Above all, we have been blessed with the certainty that when we do the things that please God, we receive His blessings. ■

Carlos Javier León Ugarte, Lima, Peru

I LOVE YOU

As my mission's zone conference was coming to a close, I stood outside wondering, "What am I doing in this foreign country? How am I going to do all that is expected of me?"

I had been in Sicily, Italy, for little over a week, but already I felt discouraged. My time in the missionary training center had seemed like a wonderful dream, but because of my inadequacies, I now felt as though I were in a nightmare.

"Dearest Father," I prayed, "I wanted to be a great missionary. Now that I am here, I realize I don't have the talents, skills, or intelligence to accomplish what I have been sent to do.

I thought I knew this language, but everyone speaks so quickly, and any words I try to utter just get tangled up in my tongue. I don't think my companion likes me. My mission president can barely speak English. I don't have anyone to talk to. Please help me."

I knew I had to go back inside, but I lingered on the street just a few minutes longer. Suddenly I felt three tugs on the back of my overcoat. I turned around to find a beautiful little girl and slowly knelt down next to her on the cobblestone street. She wrapped her arms around my neck and whispered in my ear, "*Ti voglio bene.*"

"What did you say?" I replied in

English, knowing perfectly well she didn't understand me.

She stared at my name tag. "Sorella Domenici," she read, "ti voglio bene."

I knew the meaning of the phrase. It was one of the first phrases we had learned as missionaries. It was a phrase that could speak directly to the soul. It means, "I love you."

Those words were just what I needed to hear at that moment. The Savior had sent a special messenger to deliver them to me. I led the little girl into the building.

"She must be the child of one of the members," I thought. I wove my way through groups of missionaries, hoping her mother would spot her.

When I found my companion, I asked, "Have you seen this little girl before?"

"What little girl?" she replied, looking confused.

I looked down at my side. The little girl was gone.

I stood in the open doorway of the building and glanced up and down the deserted street. As I pondered, a whisper I not only heard but also felt echoed through my soul: "Sorella Domenici, ti voglio bene."

I didn't know who the little girl was, but I knew that the Savior loved me. ■

Natalee T. Frstrup, Utah, USA



I turned around to find a beautiful little girl and slowly knelt down next to her on the cobblestone street.



The next afternoon I felt prompted to take what I was cooking for dinner to Sister Morgan and her husband for their anniversary.

WAS MY MEAL TOO SIMPLE?

For a couple of years, I visit taught a neighbor and friend named Sister Morgan. She was a few decades my senior, so I learned as much from her and her life as she did from my visiting teaching messages.

While I was her visiting teacher, Sister Morgan was diagnosed with cancer. I marveled at how bravely she endured her medical treatments and how she almost always had a smile on her face.

During one of my visits, she mentioned that the following day was her wedding anniversary. Our conversation soon led to other things, and our visit ended.

The next afternoon I felt prompted to take what I was cooking for dinner to Sister Morgan and her husband for their anniversary. At first I ignored the prompting because I was cooking an ordinary weekday meal. Surely such simple food would not do justice to such a special occasion.

But the prompting would not leave me. I called my husband at work, hoping he would agree that the idea was a bad one. Instead, he encouraged me to call Sister Morgan and tell her I was bringing over dinner.

Embarrassment over my simple meal and what I thought was presumptive behavior on my part kept me from calling my friend, but I could not shake the feeling that I should share my dinner. So I put the food on a serving dish and nervously walked across the street.

As I entered their yard, I found Brother and Sister Morgan getting into their car. I announced that I had brought dinner for their anniversary and that I hoped they didn't mind.

A smile spread over Sister Morgan's face. She explained that they had resigned themselves to celebrating their anniversary at a local fast-food restaurant because her cancer treatments

left her too tired to cook or go anywhere else. She looked relieved to be able to stay home for dinner.

A sense of relief and happiness washed over me as they accepted my simple meal.

Not more than two months later, just as Sister Morgan had completed her cancer treatments, her dear husband passed away from a sudden illness. Their anniversary just weeks before was their last.

I learned a great deal that summer about following the Spirit's still, small voice in serving others. The service we are asked—or prompted—to give may be uncomfortable, inconvenient, or simple in our eyes, but it may be just what is needed. This experience gave me courage to serve in any capacity the Lord needs me, and it increased my faith to do "the errand of angels" ("As Sisters in Zion," *Hymns*, no. 309). ■

Jennifer Klingonsmith, Utah, USA



TRUSTING IN THE Assurances OF THE LORD

We may not always be delivered from our trials, but as we seek the assurances of the Lord, we can know that all is well even in trying times.

By Mindy Anne Leavitt
Church Magazines

I sat in the celestial room of the temple, contemplating the direction my life was taking—certainly off course from what I'd planned. As with many other young adults, worries monopolized my mind: How could I balance good grades and

a social life? Should I quit my job? find a second one? How could I save money when I didn't have any? Why wasn't I married yet? The list went agonizingly on and on. I had gone to the temple seeking comfort, praying for the assurance that my life was in Heavenly Father's hands. "Is everything going to be all right in my life?" I questioned. The answer came swiftly and surely to my mind: "All is well."

In that moment, I understood that even though my life wasn't going as I had planned, it was still going according to *His* plan and He was in control. That sweet assurance that He is aware of and taking care of me, even if He doesn't always take away my trials, has carried me through many hardships. As we come to understand, seek, and wait for these assurances, we can know that the Lord supports us through the burdens placed upon us.

Assurance over Deliverance

Clearly, immediate delivery from our trials is not always the Lord's answer to our pleadings. Instead, He may bless us with invaluable moments of assurance through personal revelation—assurance that He is guiding our lives and will deliver us from our trials. These assurances might not deliver us from our trials but perhaps will give us the strength we need to deliver ourselves, even if that deliverance is simply the comfort of the Holy Ghost. I've noticed many examples in the scriptures of how the Lord often sends assurances before deliverance.

While Helaman was leading his 2,060 stripling warriors and other Nephite forces, they experienced an assurance of the Lord. After waiting many months for provisions and reinforcements, they were on the brink of starvation when food arrived with a small band of men. Fearing that this meager addition to their numbers

was not enough, they finally turned to the Lord and “did pour out [their] souls in prayer to God, that he would strengthen [them] and deliver [them].” After they prayed, Helaman recounts, “the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him” (Alma 58:10–11). These assurances gave Helaman and his warriors strength to persevere and triumph over their enemies.

Joseph Smith also received an assurance of the Lord while imprisoned in Liberty Jail. As he prayed fervently, he was told:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

This assurance gave Joseph the courage and fortitude to carry on through near-incapacitating hardships.

In these and many other examples (see, for instance, Mosiah 24:8–16), the Lord didn’t just deliver the faithful from their trials right away. Rather, He visited them with the *assurance* that He *would* deliver them in His own time. These assurances, to borrow the words of Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, are



THE ASSURANCE OF HIS POWER

“We all must deal with adversity. . . . It will comfort us

when we must wait in distress for the Savior’s promised relief that He knows, from experience, how to heal and help us. The Book of Mormon gives us the certain assurance of His power to comfort. And faith in that power will give us patience as we pray and work and wait for help.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Adversity,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 24.

like “packets of spiritual sunlight” that Heavenly Father places in our path “to brighten [our] way.”¹ Sometimes that assurance is all we need to persevere through trials, knowing that there will be an ultimate deliverance.

Seeking Assurances

Life is hard. There are times when we question, when we lack confidence in ourselves and in our abilities to triumph over adversity, when we lose hope. Often it can feel like our trials will never end. And although

some assurances come through no effort on our part, more often than not we need to seek out those assurances that tell us there will be reprieve from our trials.

The assurances of the Lord often come through the voice of His servants: local leaders, institute and Sunday School teachers, and especially His prophets and apostles. Carol F. McConkie, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, reminded us that “in their words we hear the voice of the Lord and we feel the Savior’s love.”²

These assurances also come through the voice of the Spirit as we sincerely commune with Heavenly Father through fervent prayer, as we read and ponder the scriptures, as we attend the temple and our Church meetings, as we serve others and try to do what’s right. In short, the assurances of the Lord come when we “seek him with all [our] heart and with all [our] soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29) and obey His commandments.

Helaman and his armies received an assurance after many sincere prayers; Joseph Smith received an assurance after praying and pondering. In both situations, the Lord tested their patience and faith before giving an assurance—a good reminder that during trials we should hold on to our faith and practice patience.

Waiting for Assurances

As with any other test of patience, the Lord's assurances might not come how or when we expect. We may need to pray to have "eyes to see" (Ezekiel 12:2) the hand of the Lord and His assurances in our lives. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about how the tender mercies of the Lord can include these assurances and said that they "do not occur randomly or merely by coincidence. Faithfulness and obedience enable us to receive these important gifts and, frequently, the Lord's timing helps us to recognize them."³

Often, waiting for either deliverance or an assurance of deliverance takes more patience than we think we possess. We may have to face serious trials before receiving any kind of assurance. As Elder Scott explained, the "packets of spiritual sunlight" the Lord provides "often come after the trial has been the greatest, as evidence of the compassion and love of an all-knowing Father. They point the way

to greater happiness, more understanding, and strengthen [our] determination to accept and be obedient to His will."⁴ As we remain faithful and obedient through our trials, the assurances of the Lord will come to help us continue to be so.

Our Greatest Assurance

Ultimately, no matter how many assurances we receive that Heavenly Father is aware of us and our situation, it won't be enough to help us endure to the end if we don't have faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Through His Atonement, we can have the absolute hope that we will one day be delivered from all of our trials. We can also know that our Savior is there to empathize perfectly with us, for He has "descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things" (D&C 88:6). He understands our trials and our sorrows because He "suffer[ed] pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . that he may know . . . how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "Of greatest assurance in God's plan is that a Savior was promised, a Redeemer, who through our faith in Him would lift us triumphantly over those tests and trials. . . . It is only an appreciation of this divine love that will make our own lesser suffering first bearable, then understandable,

and finally redemptive."⁵ Learning of Him and His Atonement is an assurance in and of itself.

All Is Well

As we understand, seek after, and wait for assurances from the Lord, they will surely come. We ought to remember those priceless moments, write them down, and think about them often. Most important, we need to trust in them and believe, as Helaman and his men and the Prophet Joseph believed, that the Lord will fulfill the promises He has made to us. He reminds us of those promises through His assurances, and even though they may not make our trials disappear, we can know that Heavenly Father is there with us to support and sustain us through anything.

After my experience in the temple that day, my trials didn't lessen. I didn't suddenly have perfect grades or more money or a lot of dates. But what I did have was a calm assurance that despite my trials, I would be OK because the Lord still intended on keeping His promises to deliver me. With that assurance I know that all *is* well. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17.
2. Carol F. McConkie, "Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 77.
3. David A. Bednar, "The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 100.
4. Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," 17.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 40.

The "packets of spiritual sunlight . . . often come after the trial has been the greatest, as evidence of the compassion and love of an all-knowing Father. They point the way to greater happiness."




By Lena Hsin-Yao Cho

I left my home in NanTze, Taiwan, to serve as a full-time missionary in northern California in 2005. The area my companion and I were assigned was small enough that within four and a half months we had knocked on doors of every street in the main town area. The missionary work was difficult, and people often yelled at us. We had few investigators. It seemed to me that the work was not going anywhere. After about four months there, I was ready to leave. I was convinced I would be transferred.

Sunday night I waited by the phone until my zone leader called. When he reported that I was assigned to stay in the same area for another six weeks, I couldn't believe my ears. I thought there must have been a mistake!

The following week was a total disaster for me and probably for my companion and the people under our stewardship as well. I refused to believe this was the right decision. Still, I put on a big smile whenever we saw or talked to people, but deep inside I remained unhappy. In my pride I continued to tell myself that I was not where I was supposed to be. I still hoped that my mission president would call and tell me that I was being transferred to another area.



N Transfer

My mission president must have made a mistake—what could I possibly learn from staying longer in this area?

How Reassurance Came

The next Sunday morning while I was grudgingly getting ready for church, the phone rang. It was the mission president. He greeted me with his usual kind, sincere voice and then said, “Sister Cho, yesterday at lunch I thought of you and had a feeling that I needed to call you to let you know you are in the right place. You are where you’re supposed to be.” I teared up when I heard his words.

I thanked him and hung up the phone. As I began to cry, a crystal-clear feeling came strongly to my heart that there *were* unfinished assignments waiting for me in our area. I also knew that my Heavenly Father knew my thoughts and frustration. He understood my weakness, and He sent His servant to reassure me.

After that phone call, I began to pull myself together. I prayed for strength every day, asking to see more clearly how I could do what the Lord expected me to do. Throughout the next five weeks, my companion and I witnessed many miracles as we exercised enough faith to work hard. A very prepared investigator moved into our area and was baptized within that transfer.

We were also invited into homes of people who originally hadn’t welcomed us. We met many new people who were having a hard time and were blessed to share the comforting words of God with them. Although some didn’t then choose to be baptized, I will never forget their shining faces or how the Spirit and the love of God touched their hearts—and mine.

What I Learned

I learned that the Lord is truly aware of every one of us; He doesn’t send His missionaries to places without a reason. I learned that when we are assigned to an area, the Lord wants to use us there as instruments to accomplish His work. When we put ourselves in His hands, miracles happen and hearts soften, even when we don’t see how this is possible.

Importantly, I learned that my mission president, like other Church leaders, was truly called of God to be His servant. The Lord qualifies our leaders to receive the revelation and inspiration we need for the welfare of our souls.

I am forever grateful for the experiences that came as a result of *not* being transferred. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

LIVING *in a Fast-Paced* WORLD

If life and its rushed pace and many stresses have made it difficult for you to feel like rejoicing, then perhaps now is a good time to refocus on what matters most.

Have you ever been in an airplane and experienced turbulence? The most common cause of turbulence is a sudden change in air movement causing the aircraft to pitch, yaw, and roll. While planes are built to withstand far greater turbulence than anything you would encounter on a regular flight, it still may be disconcerting to passengers.

What do you suppose pilots do when they encounter turbulence? A student pilot may think that increasing speed is a good strategy because it will get them through the turbulence faster. But that may be the wrong thing to do. Professional pilots understand that there is an optimum turbulence penetration speed that will minimize the negative effects of turbulence. And most of the time that would mean to reduce your speed. The same principle applies also to speed bumps on a road.

Therefore, it is good advice to slow down a little, steady the course, and focus on the essentials when experiencing adverse conditions.

The Pace of Modern Life

One of the characteristics of modern life seems to be that we are moving at an ever-increasing rate, regardless of turbulence or obstacles.

Let's be honest; it's rather easy to be busy. We all can think up a list of tasks that will overwhelm our schedules. Some might even think that



Relationship with God

their self-worth depends on the length of their to-do list.

The wise resist the temptation to get caught up in the frantic rush

of everyday life. They follow the advice “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”¹ In short, they focus on the things that matter most.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.”²

The search for the best things inevitably leads to the foundational principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the simple and beautiful truths revealed to us by a caring, eternal, and all-knowing Father in Heaven.

How Can I Learn What Is Most Important?

I think most of us intuitively understand how important the fundamentals are. It is just that we sometimes get distracted by so many things that seem more enticing.

Printed material, wide-ranging media sources, electronic tools and gadgets—all helpful if used properly—can become hurtful diversions or heartless chambers of isolation.

Yet amidst the multitude of voices and choices, the humble Man of Galilee stands with hands outstretched, waiting. His is a simple message: “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). And He does not speak with a powerful megaphone but with a still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:12). It is so easy for the basic gospel message to get lost amidst the deluge of information that hits us from all sides.

The holy scriptures and the spoken word of the living prophets give emphasis to the fundamental principles and

doctrines of the gospel. The reason we return to these foundational principles, to the pure doctrines, is because they are the gateway to truths of profound meaning.

The Basics: Four Key Relationships

As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves. As we evaluate our own lives with a willing mind, we will see where we have drifted from the more excellent way. The eyes of our understanding will be opened, and we will recognize what needs to be done to purify our heart and refocus our life.

First, our relationship with God is most sacred and vital. We are His spirit children. He is our Father. He desires our happiness. As we seek Him, as we learn of His Son, Jesus Christ, as we open our hearts to the influence of the Holy Spirit, our lives become more stable and secure. We experience greater peace, joy, and fulfillment as we give our best to live according to God’s eternal plan and keep His commandments.

We improve our relationship with our Heavenly Father by learning of Him, by communing with Him, by repenting of our sins, and by actively following Jesus Christ, for



Relationship with our families

“no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Christ]” (John 14:6). To strengthen our relationship with God, we need some meaningful time alone with Him. Quietly focusing on daily personal prayer and scripture study, always aiming to be worthy of a current temple recommend—these will be some wise investments of our time and efforts to draw closer to our Heavenly Father. Let us heed the invitation in Psalms: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).



Relationship **with our fellowman**

Our second key relationship is with our families. Since “no other success can compensate for failure”³ here, we must place high priority on our families. We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple

things together, like family dinner and family home evening and by just having fun together. In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time. Taking time for each other is the key for harmony at home. We talk with, rather than about, each other. We learn from each other, and we appreciate our differences as well as our commonalities. We establish a divine bond with each other as we approach God together through family prayer, gospel study, and Sunday worship.

The third key relationship we have is with our fellowman. We build this relationship one person at a time—by being sensitive to the needs of others, serving them, and giving of our time and talents. I was deeply impressed by one sister who was burdened with the challenges of age and illness but decided that although she couldn’t do much, she could listen. And so each week she watched for people who looked troubled or discouraged, and she spent

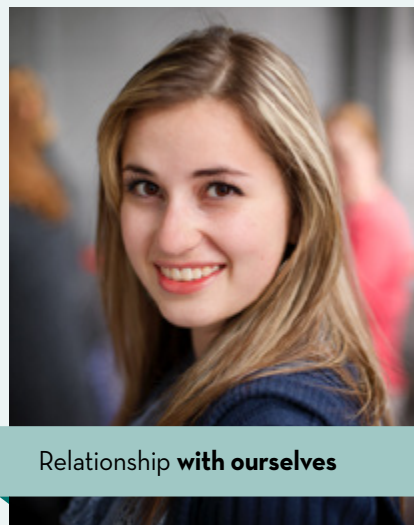
time with them, listening. What a blessing she was in the lives of so many people.

The fourth key relationship is with ourselves. It may seem odd to think of having a relationship with ourselves, but we do. Some people can’t get along with themselves. They criticize and belittle themselves all day long until they begin to hate themselves. May I suggest that you reduce the rush and take a little extra time to get to know yourself better. Walk in nature, watch a sunrise, enjoy God’s creations, ponder the truths of the restored gospel, and find out what they mean for you personally. Learn to see yourself as Heavenly Father sees you—as His precious daughter or son with divine potential.

Strength in Simplicity

Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most.

Let us simplify our lives a little. Let us make the changes necessary to refocus our lives on the sublime beauty of the simple, humble path of Christian discipleship—the path that leads always toward a life of meaning, gladness, and peace. ■



Relationship **with ourselves**

From a talk given in the October 2010 general conference.

NOTES

1. Mahatma Gandhi, in Larry Chang, *Wisdom for the Soul* (2006), 356.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 107.
3. J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; see also Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.

OUR SPACE

AN UNEXPECTED INTERVIEW QUESTION

After my mission I struggled to find work. Eventually I received an interview. The position would be a great opportunity, but I worried I was not skilled enough. My turn for the interview came, and I sat nervously in front of the manager. As I glanced at his table, I saw a paper with the questions he was asking applicants. My heart pounded. The questions used difficult terminology.

The manager found my résumé and started asking about my work experience. When he read “full-time missionary,” he asked if I could tell him what I taught on my mission.

I talked with him about prophets, the plan of salvation, and eternal families. He smiled and said, “I want you to come and meet my family.”

He again grabbed the paper with the interview questions. My nervous

feelings returned. He asked, “Do you have a place to stay here in Manila?” He didn’t wait for my response and said, “Well, you need to look for one. You’ll start tomorrow.”

It was a miracle. I’ll never forget how serving a mission helped me in my job interview. ■

Alvin A., Philippines

PEACE IN PERSECUTION

I straightened up in my seat when I heard the topic of the next speaker: why the Mormon Church is wrong and why Mormons are hypocritical haters. During the speech, I felt my cheeks burn, and shock and betrayal settled within my chest. How could my very own friends, knowing I was a Latter-day Saint, choose to say slanderous remarks in front of my entire English class?

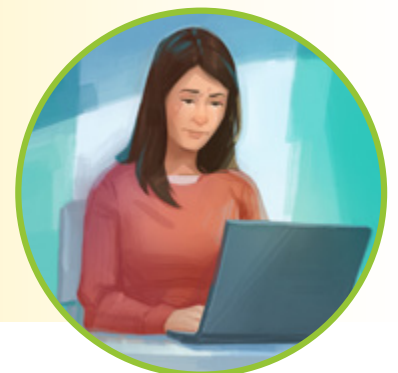
After the bell rang, I was approached by the speaker and some of my other friends. With the Spirit burning inside me, I told them what had been said was wrong and that the Church doesn’t hate people who don’t live our beliefs. In return, they bombarded me with

false statements and accusations. I felt alone. I thought, “How is it fair that when I am living what I know to be true, I must be persecuted?”

When I got home from school that day, I saw an email from my grandmother. In it she told me to look up Matthew 5:11–14. With tears in my eyes, I read: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. . . . Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

The Holy Ghost filled my heart as I read those words. I know that persecution will strengthen our testimonies, and I know that the blessings in heaven will be well worth the pain we go through here on earth. The Savior made it possible for us to find peace when we are being persecuted for living His gospel, and for that I’m truly grateful. ■

Beka F., Montana, USA





MY MUSIC ESCAPE PLAN

While riding the bus on a school field trip, I was sitting in front of a girl who kept making rude comments and jokes that made me feel uncomfortable. My teachers and other students told her to stop, but she kept going. I didn't know what to do, so I decided to pull out my MP3 player and listen to some of my favorite music.

I turned it on shuffle and one of the first songs that came on was a song from youth.lds.org/music. I was about to skip over it when something inside told me that I should just listen to the music. I kept listening to

inspirational music for the next 20 minutes. The lyrics encouraged me to hold on, and they reminded me that I was a beloved daughter of Heavenly Father.

Later in the week my school held a dance. Even though they used the clean versions of popular dance songs, many people in my grade began screaming out the removed word in one particular song.

Once again I felt uncomfortable. The teachers were sitting nearby and didn't seem to notice. I looked down at my wrist. I saw my bracelet from

youth conference that said, "Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved (D&C 87:8)."

I knew that where I was standing wasn't a holy place, so I left until a new song came on.

I know that music can have a profound influence in our lives. I know that listening to the inspirational music on my MP3 player a couple days before had helped give me the courage I needed to leave the dance. These experiences helped me get much closer to my Heavenly Father. ■
Alix B., Netherlands

SHARING THE GOSPEL LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST

You can help prepare people for the Savior's Second Coming, just as John the Baptist did for the Savior's first coming.



By Ryan Carr
Church Magazines

Unlike John the Baptist, you won't serve a mission in the "wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1). Your clothes won't be made of "camel's hair" (Matthew 3:4). You won't be eating "locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4). But your purpose in sharing the gospel is the same as John the Baptist's: you prepare people for Jesus's coming by declaring, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

John the Baptist's mission was clear: to "come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord" (1 Nephi 10:7). But his mission was not easy. The last prophet before him was Malachi, over 400 years earlier. "Without a prophet, people in the land began to divide into parties and groups, each claiming the right to interpret the scriptures and lead the people. The true understanding of Jehovah diminished

among these groups."¹

Despite the challenges in John's day, multitudes came out into the wilderness to hear him preach, and he baptized many. Two of the future Apostles, John the Beloved and Andrew, became acquainted with Jesus through John (see John 1:40).

Sharing the gospel today is just as challenging. Modern life has provided many distractions. Worldly philosophies lead people astray. More and more people are failing to live up to high moral standards. Some see no need for religion.

In these circumstances, how can you succeed in sharing the gospel, as John the Baptist did? Here are a few lessons from his life that can help.

John knew what his mission was. He knew he had been called to help people come unto Christ (see Luke 1:16). When he saw the Savior, John testified, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Instead of encouraging people to follow himself, John helped them become disciples of Jesus Christ. Speaking of the Savior, John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

John taught the basic principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He taught the people about justice, mercy, honesty, morality, fasting, prayer, repentance and confession of sins, baptism by immersion, resurrection, and the Judgment (see Matthew 3; Luke 3).

His teaching could be described as the Savior's was: "They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority" (Mark 1:22).

John lived differently than the world. Jesus contrasted John with worldly teachers: John was not "a man clothed in soft raiment . . . gorgeously apparelled . . . in kings' courts" (Luke 7:25). He drank "neither wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1:15). John was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare

ye the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3). Because he taught with the power of God, the people felt the Spirit and were converted.

John was dedicated. One scholar summarized John's qualities: "His singleness of purpose, his total dedication to his special calling, and his complete loyalty to the Son of God. These traits, coupled with his divine priesthood authority, fearless disposition, and personal righteousness, make him one of the greatest characters of the scriptures."²

As you study the life of John the Baptist, you see that he was more than just the one who had the unique blessing of being able to baptize Jesus Christ. You see that his life and mission were about preparing people for the Savior's coming, just as yours is. ■

NOTES

1. S. Kent Brown and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The Lost 500 Years: From Malachi to John the Baptist," *Ensign*, Dec. 2014, 56; *Liahona*, Dec. 2014, 30.
2. Robert J. Matthews, "John the Baptist: A Burning and a Shining Light," *Ensign*, Sept. 1972, 79.



WHY ARE YOU ON THE EARTH AT THIS TIME?

"You and I will rejoice in His coming and thank the Lord that He sent us to earth at this time to fulfill our sacred duty of helping prepare the world for His return."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Preparing the World for the Second Coming," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 52.

BUT WHAT IF...?

Questions about Serving a Mission

As your time to serve a mission approaches, you may ask yourself, “Can I really do this?” Yes, you can! It may not be easy, but you will never regret it.

Preparing to serve a mission can be scary. There are lots of things you might worry about—money, knowledge, shyness—but no matter the concern, you can find the reassurance and courage you need. Here are some common questions and answers to help you overcome your fears and find the faith to go forward.

What if I don’t know enough about the scriptures or the gospel?

Mission preparation should definitely include learning about the gospel, but you don’t have to know everything before you go. For example, as a young man, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was worried he wasn’t prepared to serve a mission. He said, “I remember praying, ‘Heavenly Father, how can I serve a mission when I know so little?’ I

believed in the Church, but I felt my spiritual knowledge was very limited. As I prayed, the feeling came: ‘You don’t know everything, but you know enough!’”¹

Knowledge of the gospel will come as you faithfully work to learn gospel principles and study the scriptures, and you won’t be alone. The Holy Ghost will guide you, and you’ll have companions, missionary leaders, and your mission president to help you in your efforts. Remember what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve of Apostles has taught: “The size of your faith or the degree of your knowledge is not the issue—it is the integrity you demonstrate toward the faith you do have and the truth you already know.”²

What if I’m not sure I have a testimony?

Gaining a testimony is a vital part of mission preparation. You may feel

that your testimony is weak, but it will grow as you make sincere efforts to build it. Just remember:

- *Find quiet moments to study and pray.* You need time when you can feel the inspiration of the Spirit.
- *Live the gospel.* See John 7:17 to find out why this will help your testimony grow.
- *Build a little at a time.* “[Your] spiritual journey is the process of a lifetime. We do not know everything in the beginning or even along the way. Our conversion comes step-by-step.”³

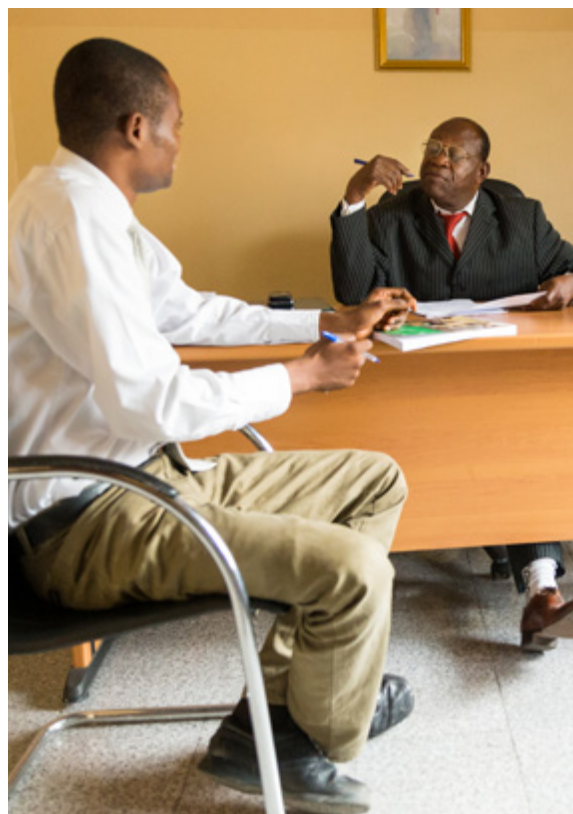
Also remember that your testimony may be stronger than you think. Elder Holland shared this story: “A 14-year-old boy recently said to me a little hesitantly, ‘Brother Holland, I can’t say yet that I know the Church is true, but I believe it is.’ I hugged that boy until his eyes bulged out. I



told him . . . that *belief* is a precious word, an even more precious act, and he need never apologize for ‘only believing.’ I told him that Christ Himself said, ‘Be not afraid, only believe.’ . . . I told this boy that belief was always the first step toward conviction. . . . And I told him how very proud I was of him for the honesty of his quest.”⁴

What if I don’t feel worthy?

If there is something wrong in your life, you can take care of it. Your bishop or branch president will help you know what you need to do to become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “I urge you not to pray to know whether you should go [on a mission]; rather, ask the Lord to guide you in whatever may be necessary to become a worthy, empowered full-time missionary.”⁵





YOUNG WOMEN: MAKING THE MISSION DECISION

As a young woman, you don't have the obligation to serve, but you do have the opportunity. As you decide whether or not to serve, you might have questions like:

- ▶ Will a mission be right for me? How will I know?
- ▶ Should I be preparing today for a full-time mission?
- ▶ What are the reasons I should consider serving?
- ▶ Would I even make a good missionary?

Find answers and guidance in the article “Young Women and the Mission Decision,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2013, 32–35.

Rebekah S. from Russia shares her experience: “Although I had repented, guilt and pain made me think that I could not serve a mission because my mistakes were too bad. However, my bishop and stake president helped me to realize the healing power of the Atonement in my life. I am so grateful for repentance. Being worthy is everything on a mission. You cannot teach by the Spirit if you are not worthy of it (see D&C 42:14). You have to have a peace in your heart to serve with all of your heart. It makes all the difference.”

How can I leave my family and friends?

It's hard to leave loved ones, especially knowing things will be different when you get back—for your friends, for your family, and especially for you. You might worry about how your family will manage financially without you or how they will react to your mission. But the Lord will take care of those you love and bless them for your service (see D&C 100:1). Although you'll miss them, the Lord needs you to help other families find the happiness of the gospel. Believe

that Heavenly Father wants what is best for you and your family, and remember, “Faith trusts that God has great things in store for each of us.”⁶ The Lord has amazing blessings waiting for you and your family as you find the faith to go forward.

What if I don't think I can pay for it?

The cost of a mission can seem like a big sacrifice, but the Lord knows what He wants you to do. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “I speak to that young man who doesn't have any idea how he can finance a mission. I do not know either. But I do know this: if you have faith and determine that you will go, there will be a way.”⁷

Loran C. from England had this experience: “I was just starting my mission papers when the bank told me I had major credit card debt. My bishop and I set up a budget plan for how much I'd pay toward my debt, my mission, my tithing, and my other expenses. It took a lot of sacrifice, and I thought I wouldn't be able to reach my goal. However, I faithfully paid my

tithing and the Lord stepped in. A gift from a stranger gave me the money I needed to pay off my debt and fulfill my mission goal.”

What if I’m shy about talking to people?

The idea of spending all day, every day talking to people you don’t know can be hard. Sam L. from California, USA, recalls: “For someone who doesn’t even like answering my door, the thought of knocking on a total stranger’s door to talk about the gospel seemed beyond the bounds of possibility.

“At a stake youth conference, we were asked to go out with missionaries and preach the gospel. Going with real missionaries? to real people? I was nervous, but then I remembered a scripture: ‘For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee’ (Isaiah 41:13). I prayed for that help, and although I was still my awkward self,

I felt empowered through the Holy Ghost and even gave out two copies of the Book of Mormon.”

What if it messes up my education or my career?

You may think that taking the time off for a mission when you are preparing for college or a career is risking your future, but the opposite is true. The Lord wants you to succeed, and He’ll help you. Nothing you give up will be worth as much as your missionary service.

A lot of young people have had to make similar decisions. William H. from Australia left a promising rugby career, not knowing if he would have any opportunities to play when he got home (see “Time-Out for a Mission,” *Liahona*, June 2012, 50–52; or *New Era*, June 2012, 20–22). Joseph B. from the Philippines walked into the office of the college secretary, prepared to give up a once-in-a-lifetime chance

for an education (see “For a Burnt Offering,” *Liahona* or *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 40–42). Whether or not what you hoped for happens after your mission, no opportunity will be worth more than your service as a missionary.

No Regrets

Heavenly Father wants us to be happy, and He won’t ask us to do things that won’t bless and help us. If you faithfully do what the Lord asks of you, even when it’s hard, you’ll find the blessings that come are way better than anything the world has to offer. You’ll never regret serving a mission. ■

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 13.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94.
3. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” 13.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” 94–95.
5. Richard G. Scott, “Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 90.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Best Is Yet to Be,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 27; *Liahona*, Jan. 2010, 21.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1983, 71.



“One of my friends wants to try something bad just once so she can relate when people talk about it. How can I help her understand that’s not a good idea?”

One of the best things you can do is help your friend remember why we have commandments. Heavenly Father gives us commandments because He loves us and knows they will make us happy and help us become like Him.

In the New Testament, the Savior said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Help your friend realize that choosing the right shows love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and gratitude for His Atonement and gospel.

You can also remind her that doing bad things leads to bad consequences, even if it’s just once. We can’t experience sin and avoid its effects. Willfully disobeying the commandments is like stepping away from Heavenly Father and telling Him that He doesn’t matter as much as our friends or other people do.

Heavenly Father loves us, and He will bless us with the Spirit’s guidance when we keep His commandments. If we are obedient, the Spirit will teach us more than we could ever learn by experimenting with sin.



We Don’t Need to Experiment

I would teach your friend that “whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil” (Alma 5:40). I would also explain that every act has consequences and that we should not do anything that could harm us. We don’t need to experience evil. There is already so much evil around us, and it’s easy to see that many people live in misery because they don’t keep the commandments.

Vinicius S., age 17, São Paulo, Brazil



Tell How You Overcome Temptation

Tell your friend that what’s really important is her standing before the Lord. We must not give up our eternal salvation in exchange for a temporal experience. Also, you’ll be much more helpful to your friend if you can tell her how you overcame temptation.

Emily G., age 19, Puerto Rico

We Have Divine Potential

You can kindly explain to your friend that while one bad choice might seem harmless, it can lead to more serious sins. You could also share this scripture: “I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31). Remind your friend that even one experience with sin can



desensitize us to the voice of the Spirit. Most of all, let her know that you love her and that making right choices is part of her divine potential as a daughter of God.

Adriana F., age 17, Arizona, USA

Just Once Will Hurt

All bad things, even if you do them just once, will drive away the Spirit. If the Spirit leaves, it will be easier for Satan to tempt you to do more bad things. Also, you will need to repent of all your sins no matter how many times you commit them, and repenting of serious sins can be a long and painful process.

Emily L., age 14, Utah, USA



Stay Strong

Reassure her that you love her and want to help her choose the right. I know from personal experience that we don't need to make the same choices as someone to identify with that person. As we live the gospel, the Spirit will help us know how to relate to people. Remind your friend that she needs to stay strong so she can help others obey the commandments. Pray that you'll be able to help and serve her.

Vanina P., age 19, Buenos Aires, Argentina

You Might Not Be Able to Stop

I would tell my friend to not even think about it. It's not a good idea to do something bad one time because

you might not be able to stop once you've started. Heavenly Father gave us commandments to help keep us safe and happy.

Douglas B., age 13, California, USA

It Starts Small

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland once said that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, so watch your step" ("Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 45). I would help my friend understand that Satan uses small temptations to start us down an evil path. When you try something bad even once, you are allowing Satan and his followers to start tempting you to do it again and again.

Similoni F., age 18, Utah, USA



WHY NOT TRY IT?

"Years ago, one of our sons asked me why it wasn't a good

idea to try alcohol or tobacco to see what they were like. . . . I replied that if he wanted to try something out, he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. 'Ooh, that's gross,' he reacted.

"'I'm glad you think so,' I said, 'but why don't you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While you're proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don't you apply that principle to some others?'"

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Sin and Suffering," *Tambuli*, Apr. 1994, 32; *Ensign*, July 1992, 73-74.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My parents swear, listen to loud music, and watch inappropriate TV shows. What can I do to feel the Spirit at home, especially on Sundays?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 1, 2015, at liahona.lds.org, by email to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail (see address on page 3).

The following information and permission must be included in your email or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



THE SCRIPTURE STUDY PUZZLE

Like putting together a puzzle, each time you study the scriptures, you get a larger and larger view of God's truths.

By Cody Phillips

In September 2011, students at a university in Vietnam set a new world record by putting together the largest jigsaw puzzle in the world. It took 1,600 students 17 hours to put all 551,232 pieces in place.

They created a 48-foot by 76-foot (15 m by 23 m) puzzle showing a lotus flower with six leaves representing people, geography, history, culture, education, and economy. Think of it—more than half a million tiny pieces interlocking to form one giant picture. Each piece of that puzzle might seem unimportant and uninteresting by itself, but the puzzle is incomplete if just one piece is missing.

The scriptures are like a jigsaw puzzle: the more pieces you put together, the more you see the truths of God's plan. As your view of that plan grows, you'll see that the scriptures are interesting and relevant to your life.

Here are a few scripture-study suggestions to help you see the big picture—and the tiny details. As you put these pieces together, you'll see the amazing truths that await you in the scriptures.

Doctrine: Large Pieces That Teach Eternal Truths

The scriptures teach the doctrines and principles of the gospel. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Timothy 3:16). Since we can be saved only through Jesus Christ (see John 14:6), we need to learn about Him and His doctrine. That's why the Lord asks us to "search the scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

People: Colorful Pieces That Teach Lessons


There are hundreds of people to read about in the scriptures. Which of them do you admire most? Maybe you look up to Ammon for his courageous obedience in the face of danger. Or maybe you think of Job and his unwavering faith and integrity.

Have you read about the donkey that talked to its master (see Numbers 22)? or the wicked king who was willing to give up his kingdom to be forgiven (see Alma 22)? or the woman who was known by her whole city as a virtuous person (see Ruth 1–4)?

There are also people in the scriptures who weren't so admirable. What can you learn from them and the poor choices they made?

Pay attention to people you read about in the scriptures, and ask yourself how you can follow their good examples





and avoid their mistakes. The puzzle pieces of their lives are some of the most interesting and colorful pieces of all. Their experiences are a memorable way to learn and remember the principles of the gospel!

Symbolism: Uncovering Hidden Pieces

Sometimes the scriptures use symbols to teach gospel principles. You'll be missing some puzzle pieces if you

don't see the symbolism. In addition to Church and seminary classes, study helps like the Guide to the Scriptures or seminary and institute manuals can help you find the missing pieces.

For example, the story of Abraham and Isaac (see Genesis 22) is inspiring, but it takes on a deeper meaning when you discover that it is symbolic of our Heavenly Father's sacrifice and of the Savior's atoning sacrifice for us (see Jacob 4:5).



GOD SPEAKS TO US

“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.

The Holy Ghost: Finding Pieces That Connect

Some puzzle pieces look like they go together, but they don't quite fit. The Spirit can help you see which pieces really do go together. As you invite His help through prayer and pondering, the Spirit will help you see how verses you have studied before connect to what you're studying now as well as how those teachings connect to your life. Ideally, you'll receive inspiration from the words in the scriptures but also from the Spirit as you ponder on the things you read.

Application: Putting the Pieces Together

You won't see what picture the puzzle is forming if you don't put the pieces together. Similarly, the doctrines, principles, and commandments you learn from the scriptures will not help you very much unless you live what you learn (see John 7:17). As you try each day to live by the principles of the gospel taught in the scriptures, your faith and testimony will grow stronger, and scripture study will become an essential part of your life. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



SISTERS IN THE GOSPEL

Because I could see the blessings of the gospel in my life, I wanted to share it with my friend.



By Paola Sarahí Hernández Cruz

I love my friend Lupita like a sister. We met in sixth grade and were both in the school marching band.

The next school year we became even closer and really started relying on each other. She told me about the challenges she was having at home because her dad wasn't there and her mom couldn't give her the attention she needed. I knew she was sad that her parents weren't a big part of her life. She was lonely, but she always had me.

I feel blessed to have been born into a home where we had the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has brought into my life a peace that many of my friends don't have. Because I could see the blessings the gospel brought me, I wanted to share it with Lupita.

I talked to her about the Church and invited her to go with me to Mutual. She accepted and started coming to church and to ward activities with me and my family. I introduced her to the missionaries, who taught her the gospel and invited her to be baptized. She gained a testimony, and when she asked her

mother if she could be baptized, her mother said yes.

Her baptism day was very special because she made covenants with our Heavenly Father to remember Him and keep His commandments. I bore my testimony to her that day and told her that she was in the right place and that Heavenly Father must be proud of her. I love Lupita and am so happy that she is my friend and now my sister in the gospel. I know that her life will be happier because she and her future family will enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

Lupita has told me she is grateful I decided to share the gospel with her. She says that since she started attending church, her life has been much better and she has felt peaceful. I know that this is the Spirit confirming the truth to her. She also says that someday she will be married in the temple. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father because I found my friend and because of the joy I feel when I share the thing that is of most worth to me. ■

The author lives in Mexico State, Mexico.



By Elder
L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles
*The members of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles
are special witnesses
of Jesus Christ.*

How can I be guided by the Holy Ghost?

A good horse needs just
a gentle tug from the driver
to do what he wants it to do.
This gentle tug is like the
still, small voice.

We must always be
ready to receive the gentle
tug of the Holy Ghost.

If we listen carefully
for the gentle promptings
of the Holy Ghost, they
will guide us back to our
Father in Heaven.



*From "Obedience
through Our
Faithfulness,"
Ensign or Liahona,
May 2014, 100–103.*

The Holy Ghost

(Simplified)

Words and music by
Jeanne P. Lawler

Simply ♩ = 126-138

C A⁷ G⁷ C

1. When Christ was on the earth, He prom - ised He would send The
2. And when we are con - firmed By sac - red priest - hood pow'r, The

F Fm G⁷ C

2
Ho - ly Ghost to com - fort us, Our true, e - ter - nal Friend. The
Ho - ly Ghost is giv'n to us To guide us ev - 'ry hour. Oh,

Caug F B Em

5
Ho - ly Spir - it whis - pers With a still, small voice. He
may I al - ways lis - ten To that still, small voice, And

A⁷ Dm G⁷ C

5
tes - ti - fies of God and Christ And makes our hearts re - joice.
with His light I'll do what's right Each time I make a choice.

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The Good Shepherd

By Erin Sanderson

One day Jesus told a story (or parable) about a shepherd who loved his sheep so much that he would even give his life to protect them. We are like the sheep in that story. And the shepherd is like our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is sometimes called the Good Shepherd.

Jesus showed His love when some parents brought their children to see Him. He said, “**Suffer** little children to come unto me, and **forbid them not:** for of such is the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16). Then He held them in His arms and blessed them.

Close your eyes and imagine the Savior holding you in His arms and giving you a blessing. You can feel His love when you learn or think about Him. The Holy Ghost helps you feel the love of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



LEARN MORE

suffer—let or allow

forbid them not—don't stop them

FAMILY TALK

Read John 10:1–5, 11–16. Then make a list of ways Jesus is like a shepherd and tell about times when you have felt the Savior's love.

Song: “I Think When I Read That Sweet Story” (*Children's Songbook*, 56)

Scriptures: Luke 18:15–17; John 10:1–5, 11–16

Videos: “Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me” and “Jesus Teaches that We Must Become as Little Children” (Biblevideos.org)

OUR GOOD SHEPHERD

Remove this picture. Fold it like a fan along the white lines. Then open it up and look at it from the right and from the left. How do you feel the love of our Good Shepherd?

SCRIPTURE TIP

Look up “Gospels” in the Guide to the Scriptures for a chart that tells which books tell about each event or teaching. Only the book of John tells about the Good Shepherd. Three books—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—tell about Jesus blessing the children.



OUR PAGE



I couldn't wait for the day I would be baptized. Last year, when I turned eight, my father, my mother, my family, and my friends from church were at my baptism. It was such a great experience for me. It was wonderful to know that heaven was celebrating my decision to be baptized and become a disciple of Jesus Christ. When we get baptized, we make a covenant with Heavenly Father. I know that He was pleased with my decision because it was right and worthy.

Sariah Z., age 8, Honduras



I painted Helaman's warriors on my T-shirt. I want to be faithful, courageous, and obedient to God's commandments, just like them!

Z. Yu-en, age 6, Taiwan



This is my family at the temple.

Sherriza T., age 8, Mexico



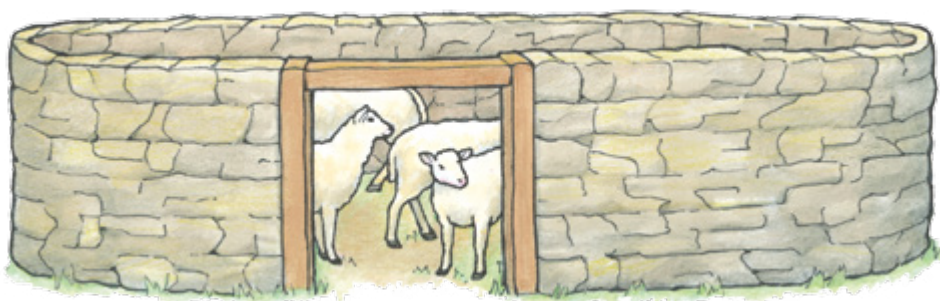
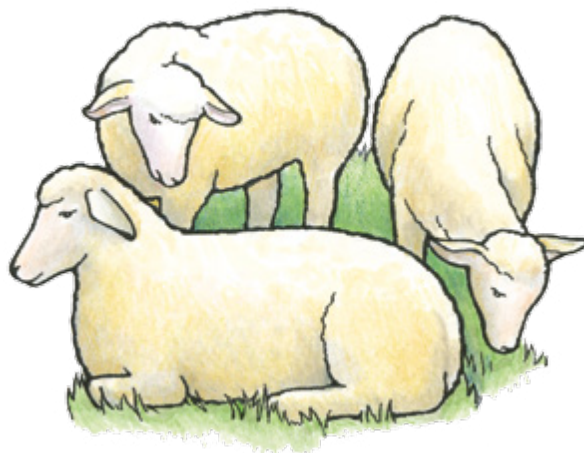
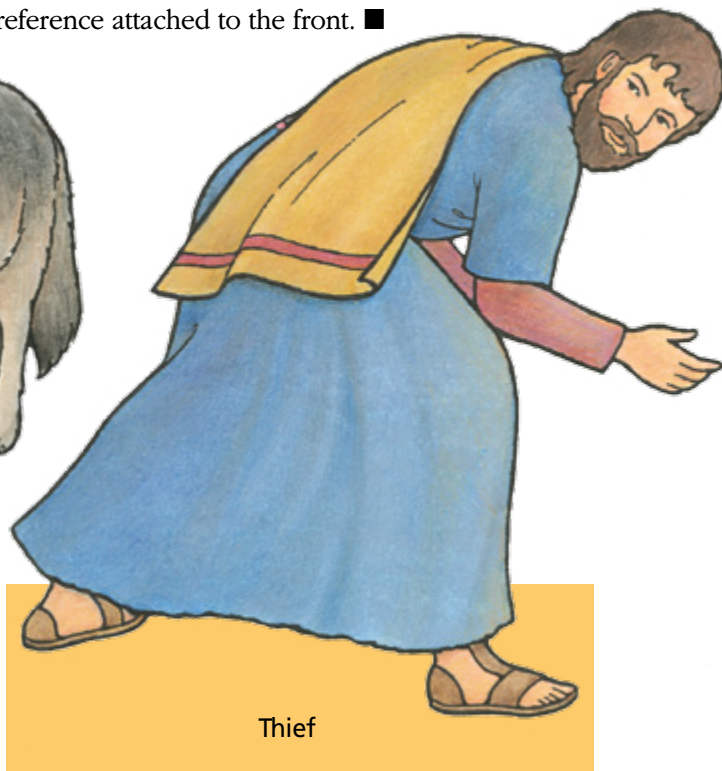
We love when our parents take us to the temple because it's a beautiful place and we feel closer to God when we're there.

Nephi and Bryan V., ages 6 and 9, Ecuador

The Good Shepherd

John 10:1-5, 11-16

Glue this page to heavy paper or cardboard. Then cut out the figures and attach them to craft sticks or paper bags. Store in an envelope with the scripture reference attached to the front. ■



You can print more copies at liahona.lds.org.

Steven's First Future Father's Day

By Kellie George Purcill

Based on a true story

Steven rolled up his tie right under his chin as the rest of the Primary kids practiced the new song. Nope, no way was he going to sing this song.

The father of our home leads our family . . .

Steven looked out the window and up at the ceiling. He moved around so much in his chair that he was almost dancing. He couldn't sing even if he wanted to. Something big and uncomfortable was stuck in his throat. The rest of the Primary kept singing, learning the new words one line at a time.

With wisdom's light in all that's right;

My father's good to me ("Fathers," *Children's Songbook*, 209).

Steven felt a tap on his arm. His mum, who had been quietly watching from the Primary room doorway, tugged gently on his arm. She led him out into the hall. Away from his friends in Primary, Steven couldn't stop the tears from falling. Mum pulled him close into a warm, strong hug.



"It's OK to be upset," Mum said, patting his back. "I know hearing and singing that song is hard."

Steven nodded, then wiped his eyes. "I don't want to sing at Father's Day because I don't have a dad." Steven's eyes burned, and he bit his lip. "I don't want to call him Dad anymore. I haven't seen him in ages, and he doesn't even *want* to be my dad."

Steven tried really hard to not cry—but he could still hear them singing. That song just made him hurt deep inside. Just like when his dad wrote and said he and his new wife had decided that he wouldn't see Steven or his brother anymore.

Mum pulled him in for another hug, and Steven let a few more tears soak into her shirt. "I'll talk to the Primary president. You don't have to sing if you don't want to. But hey—I have an idea." Mum looked straight into his eyes. "This year we won't celebrate Father's Day—we'll celebrate *Future* Father's Day!" She smiled, and he stared back.

"Huh? Celebrate *what*?"

"Future Father's Day—we're going to celebrate how amazing you

and your brother are going to be as dads someday. We'll have presents and a cake and your favorite soft drink!"

Mum kissed his forehead and then tried to fix his mangled tie. "You, Steven, are going to be a *brilliant* dad—I can tell already. Because you are already thinking about what you are going to do with your kids and planning what kind of dad you'll be."

The more Steven thought about it, the bigger his smile grew. He

hugged Mum and went back to Primary feeling much better.

Two weeks later Steven stood in front of the mirror, straightening his cool new bow tie. Mum had given it to him that morning for his first ever Future Father's Day! Steven picked up his scriptures and walked to the front door to head to church.

He smiled at his mum.

"Happy Father's Day, Mum."

Mum grinned. "Happy Future Father's Day, Steven." ■

The author lives in Queensland, Australia.



PLAN WITH PURPOSE

"Whatever your age, whatever your circumstance, I admonish you to **plan your life with purpose.**"

President Thomas S. Monson, "Come, All Ye Sons of God," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 67.



Mia's Testimony



By Amelia Hawkins

Based on a true story

“The Holy Spirit whispers with a still, small voice. He testifies of God and Christ and makes our hearts rejoice” (Children’s Songbook, 105).

It was past her bedtime, but Mia wasn’t in bed. She was sitting on the floor of her room, thinking about something Sister Duval had read in Primary: “The time will come when no man or woman will be able to stand on borrowed light.”¹

“A testimony is like a light inside of us,” Sister Duval had explained. “And each of needs one of our own. Then we can be strong when life is hard and Satan tempts us.”

Mia leaned her head against her bed. “I want a testimony that the gospel is true,” she thought. But how exactly did you *get* a testimony? She knew that praying was part of it.

“I’ll pray,” she decided. She would pray and wouldn’t stop until something happened to let her know the Church was true. She was ready to pray all night if she had to!

She got on her knees. “Dear Heavenly Father,” she whispered, “I want to know if the Church is true. I want to feel it in my heart and just know.”

Mia waited. She didn’t feel anything except for the soft feeling she usually felt when she prayed. What was she doing wrong? Where was her testimony?

She had been on her knees for what seemed like a long time when the door to her room opened a little and her dad peeked in.

“I saw the light under the door,” he said. “Are you up reading again?” Then he saw tears on Mia’s cheeks. He knelt down and put his arm around her. “What’s wrong?”

She was quiet for a minute. Then she asked, “Daddy, how do you get a testimony?”

Daddy hugged her tight. “That’s a good question. *Wanting* a testimony is one of the first steps.”

Mia felt the lump in her throat start to go away.

“Getting a testimony doesn’t usually happen with one prayer. And even when you have a testimony, you need to keep working on it.”

“But where does a testimony come from?” Mia asked.

“A testimony comes from the Holy Ghost,” Daddy said. “Have you ever felt warm and good during family home evening or at church?”

Mia thought about that. “When you gave me a special blessing

before school started, I felt good.” She thought some more. “And I always feel warm inside when I hear President Monson talk in general conference. And when I’m nice to my friends or when I’m reading my scriptures, I feel good then too.”

Daddy smiled. “Those feelings are the Holy Ghost speaking to you. He gives you those feelings when you do something that’s right or when you hear something that’s true.”

“I feel warm and happy now,” Mia said. “Is that the Holy Ghost?”

Daddy hugged her again. “Yes. He’s telling you that the things we’re talking about are true. And *that’s* how you get a testimony.”

When Mia went to bed later, she didn’t think she had a whole testimony yet, but she still had that good, warm feeling that what Daddy told her was true. She knew this feeling was just the beginning.

Mia snuggled into her warm blanket and closed her eyes. Just before she drifted off to sleep, she whispered, “Thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for helping me have a testimony. And thank Thee for my daddy.” ■

The author lives in Missouri, USA.

NOTE

1. Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1967), 450.

The House That Tithing Built

By Janele Williams



This is Jack. These are Jack's coins that jingle and jangle. This is Jack's tithing, 10 percent.

This is the bishop who shook Jack's hand when he paid his tithing, 10 percent.





This is the prophet, cheerful and prayerful, who said, “Let’s build a temple,” with the tithing sent from the bishop who shook Jack’s hand when he paid his tithing, 10 percent.



This is the temple, shiny and white, a house of the Lord filled with light.

This is the house that tithing built because the prophet said, “Let’s build a temple,” with the tithing sent from the bishop who shook Jack’s hand when he paid his tithing, 10 percent.



This is Jack's smile, broad and bright, when he goes to the temple, shiny and white, to be sealed to his family in God's sight. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Where Is Jack's Tithing?

Help Jack find all eight of his tithing coins that jingle and jangle!





**By President
Boyd K. Packer**

President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles

LEAVE IT ALONE

My friend's world was shattered. He had lost his wife.

If you suffer from worry, from grief or shame or jealousy or disappointment or envy, from self-recrimination or self-justification, consider this lesson taught to me many years ago by a patriarch. He was as saintly a man as I have ever known. . . .

He grew up in a little community with a desire to make something of himself. He struggled to get an education.

He married his sweetheart, and presently everything was just right. He was well employed, with a bright future. They were deeply in love, and she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was to be born, there were complications. The only doctor was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick. . . .

Finally the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon had things in order. The baby was born and the crisis, it appeared, was over.

Some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

John's world was shattered.



Everything was not right now; everything was all wrong. He had lost his wife. He had no way to tend both the baby and his work.

As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. "That doctor should not be allowed to practice," he would say. "He brought that infection to my wife. If he had been careful, she would be alive today."

He thought of little else, and in his bitterness, he became threatening. . . .

One night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, "Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you."

"Daddy" was the stake president. . . .

This spiritual shepherd had been watching his flock and had something to say to him.

The counsel from that wise servant was simply, "John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back. Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone." . . .

He struggled in agony to get hold of himself. And finally, he determined that whatever else the issues were, he should be obedient.

Obedience is powerful spiritual medicine. It comes close to being a cure-all.

He determined to follow the counsel of that wise spiritual leader. He would leave it alone.

Then he told me, ". . . It was not until I was an old man that I could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part.

"He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay.

"I was an old man," he repeated, "before I finally understood! I would have ruined my life," he said, "and the lives of others."

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise spiritual leader who counseled simply, "John, leave it alone." ■

From "Balm of Gilead," Ensign, Nov. 1987, 17–18.

INSIGHTS



What attitude is important in life?

"This life is the time to prepare to meet God. We are a happy, joyous people. We appreciate a good sense of humor and treasure unstructured time with friends and family. But we need to recognize that there is a seriousness of purpose that must undergird our approach to life and all our choices."

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

TRUSTING IN THE **Assurances** OF THE LORD

We may not always be delivered from our trials, but we can always be assured that the Lord is aware of and willing to help us through them.



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FOR YOUTH



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But What If...?

Questions about Serving a Mission

Worried that you don't know enough about the gospel? that your testimony isn't strong enough? that you're too shy? Find answers to common pre-mission questions and concerns here.

FOR CHILDREN

Mia's Testimony

Mia wanted to get her own testimony of the gospel. Find out how she did it!



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