Stand Up—Be True

By Elder K. Brett Nattress
Second Counselor, Pacific Area Presidency

As a young boy, I enjoyed reading faith-promoting experiences of our prophets when they were young. One of my favorite experiences comes from the life of President Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church. Joseph F. Smith was raised in a single-parent home. His father, Hyrum, was martyred at Carthage Jail with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Little Joseph F. was only six years old at the time.

Years later, at the age of 19, Joseph F. Smith was returning home from a mission with a group of other missionaries. His wagon-train journey took him through a dangerous area where enemies of the Church had vowed to kill the Mormons.

I quote now from a biography of President Smith:

“One day after the little company of wagons had . . . made their camp, a company of drunken men rode into the camp on horseback, cursing and swearing and threatening to kill any ‘Mormons’ that came within their path. . . . Some of the brethren when they heard them coming had cautiously gone into the brush down the creek, out of sight. . . . Joseph F. was a little distance from the camp gathering wood for the fire when these men rode up. When he saw them, he said, his first thought was to do what the other brethren had done, and seek shelter in the trees and in flight. Then the thought came to him, ‘Why should I run from these fellows?’ With that thought in mind he boldly marched up with his arms full of wood to the campfire. As he was about to deposit his wood, one of the ruffians, still with his pistols in his hands and pointing at the youthful Elder, and cursing as only a drunken rascal can, declaring that it was his duty to exterminate every ‘Mormon’ he should meet, demanded in a loud, angry voice, ‘Are you a ‘Mormon’?’

“Without a moment of hesitation and looking the ruffian in the eye, Joseph F. Smith boldly answered, ‘Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through.’

“The answer was given boldly and without any sign of fear, which completely disarmed the belligerent man, and in his bewilderment, he grasped the missionary by the hand and said: “Well, you are the —— —— pleasantest man I ever met! Shake, young fellow, I am glad to see a man that stands up for his convictions.’

“Joseph F. [Smith] said in later years that he fully expected to receive the charge from this man’s pistols, but he could take no other course even though it seemed that his death was to be the result.”

This incredible act of courage has been an inspiration to me over the years. Joseph F. Smith was unafraid to stand up and be true—“true to the faith that [his] parents [had] cherished” and “true to the truth for which martyrs have perished.” And yes, his father, Hyrum, was one of those martyrs.

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Knowing Who We Are

Our test of faith in this life may never be to defend our convictions while staring down the barrel of an evil man’s gun. More likely, it will be to live the gospel with conviction when there are so many distractions and enticing roads that lead nowhere. We need to know with certainty, as President Smith did, who we are and why we are here.

Our beloved prophet President Russell M. Nelson has often reminded us who we are. He said: “We are children of God. Our potential is unlimited. Our inheritance is sacred. May we always honor that heritage—in every thought and deed.”

The Sons of Mosiah

The sons of Mosiah were reminded by an angel, in a resounding way, of God’s great plan of happiness. Their conversion and subsequent service in the kingdom of God is inspiring. They stand as powerful examples of overcoming, repenting, serving, and succeeding. “They were men of sound understanding” who learned how to open the windows of heaven. And what were the keys to their spiritual success? Listen to this description from Alma 17:2–3:

“They had searched the scriptures diligently. . . .

“. . . They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting . . . and when they taught”—I would add, when they served—they did so “with power and authority of God.”

This is a great pattern for us to follow. Simply do three things each day:

1. Read the scriptures (I would recommend, specifically, reading the Book of Mormon).
2. Pray individually and as families.
3. Find someone to serve. Make a positive difference in someone else’s life. (There are so many ways to do this—a kind act, a thoughtful word, even a smile can brighten someone’s day.)

These simple measures, if done each day, will help us to stay on the covenant path.

As we do these simple things, we will be strengthened in our desire to enter the house of the Lord. We will be spiritually enlightened as we partake of the sacrament each week. We will become devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. We will become covenant keepers.

Let us strive each day to remember that we are sons and daughters of God and let us “always remember Him.”

NOTES
5. See Moroni 4:3; Moroni 5:2; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.

Starting and Growing My Business

Faithful Adelaide sisters find support and success through a Church self-reliance course.

For several years, the Pacific Area Presidency have encouraged the Saints to make spiritual and temporal self-reliance a priority. The Church has provided numerous programs and resources to support members as they strive to follow this counsel. As these three faithful sisters completed the ‘Starting and Growing My Business’ course together, they found faith in Jesus Christ, faith in themselves and a realisation that spiritual and temporal self-reliance are inseparable.

“Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable. The Giver of all life has proclaimed, ‘All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal’ [Doctrine and Covenants 29:34].”

Self-Reliance and Bohemian Exotic Jewellery

By Nicole Viljoen

I've always been passionate about the idea of creating something that is my own. Using the talents and skills the Lord has blessed me with in order to follow His counsel to be self-reliant is truly a blessing.

We have been counselled by our prophets to become self-reliant, and when we are given a commandment to keep, God will always help us keep it. Starting a business may seem like a temporal thing, but for me it has been a very spiritual experience. He has been with me every step of the way. He wants me to succeed.

I design and create exotic Bohemian-inspired jewellery using rare and precious gemstones sourced from all over the world.

The road to temporal self-reliance is not just about pouring over finances and saving for a deposit. It is a journey of self-discovery. It is the development of spiritual gifts and a way to deepen your relationship with your Father in Heaven as you find your individual purpose and path. Temporal and spiritual self-reliance are completely connected.

My business is not just a way to make money; it is a reflection of my nature and personality. My love of the beach and its beauty has been my inspiration. I have wonderful memories sitting at the edge of a cliff watching the sunset or just taking a walk along the seashore and gazing out at the ocean and its clear turquoise waters. Working with these beautiful gems reminds me of those beautiful memories, and from the first time I saw a turquoise gemstone, I knew that I wanted to work with them to create something beautiful.

Now I had the desire, but I needed to learn new skills. These were things that I knew nothing about. I went to the Lord in prayer and asked Him

Completing the ‘Starting and Growing my Business’ course together, they found faith in Jesus Christ and in themselves.

PHOTOS SUPPLIED

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what I needed to do to develop the skills I needed. As I read from 2 Nephi 28:30, I felt my testimony and connection to the Lord strengthened. It reads:

“For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more.”

I knew that He would support me on my journey and give me personal revelation to guide me on my way. I knew that He wanted me to achieve those righteous desires that I had.

The Church self-reliance course was very helpful. It helped me to refocus on the small and simple things and get back to the basics. I have learnt more about the Lord’s perfect way and how that pertains to every aspect of life, including my business.

As I have put my trust in the Lord, I have become more self-reliant. As I have become more self-reliant, I have become more able to help and serve those around me. This gives me so much joy and peace of mind.
Faith in God—and in Ourselves

Fuatai Moaga

I could feel the seeds of change being planted in our hearts. My husband was not happy in his job. He felt that the way his management position required him to treat people was not quite in line with his values. I had just begun the ‘Starting and Growing My Business’ course through the Church. I was very excited about this and was at that time making business cards for the start-up challenge.

Being unsettled and ready for change, my husband was thinking of buying into a national gardening services franchise. Gardening came naturally to both of us. With 28 years of experience growing up in Samoa, we thought that this could be our chance to start a new path, but the cost of buying the franchise was huge. The initial cost, continued monthly payments, cost of each referral and the very expensive training requirements were a lot to consider. My husband was just about to buy his ticket to Melbourne to start his training when we decided to stop and pray about it. Was this the right path for us? I had already received seven requests from my customers to do gardening for them. Was there a better way to find self-reliance than an expensive franchise? We knew that if we put our trust in the Lord, we could not go wrong, so we prayed sincerely that evening for guidance. The very next
morning we woke up, looked at each other and said, “No franchise!”
Instead, we were prompted to start our own gardening business together. The miracles and blessings have been abundant. In just six weeks, we paid off all our start-up costs. This gives us a peace of mind that the monthly payments of the franchise would not have allowed. I continued the business course, using the skills and understanding I’ve gained to help my husband make our business successful.

Simply being a good member of the Church has brought us professional success. Because we believe in being honest and fair and having integrity, we have a lot of repeat business and referrals that would have cost us extra if we’d bought the franchise.

As we have seen the Lord’s hand in our success, we have felt the desire to give back. We plan to start giving regular free services for those in need knowing that because we have been given much, we too must give. The Lord’s way is perfect. He gives us commandments, like having integrity, which make us prosperous so that we can serve others.

Our business is called T&T PRO’s. The PRO in our name is our secret to success: pray, read the scriptures and be obedient.

I encourage all members to use the self-reliance courses offered by the Church. They will help you see what you are capable of and show you the way to achieve those things. It is clear to me that Heavenly Father is willing to give us everything we need if we will have faith enough to follow his promptings. I have seen miracles from applying the things I’ve learnt in this course. It is hard work for my husband and I, but we are happy knowing that we are exactly where the Lord wants us to be.

One Opportunity at a Time
Laure Vincent-Allard

My journey to temporal self-reliance has been, before anything, a spiritual journey. The Lord has been there all along the way offering me practical and spiritual advice. He has helped me meet the right people at the right time, eased my fears and silenced my doubts.

I am a sole trader here in Australia. I work as a corporate and vocational trainer for national training organisations. I specialise in soft skills, individual and team development, and leadership. I also organise workshops and lectures in fine
art and painting in local art galleries. But it was not an easy route to get to where I am.

I have a deep passion for art. I started lecturing in art during my early twenties while at university. After completing my art degree, I was given a wonderful opportunity to work in the training field as a self-employed trainer. This was only a temporary assignment, but I really enjoyed it. More temporary assignments followed all over Europe. Eventually, I started my business working as a consultant. It didn’t happen all at once—it came one opportunity at a time.

Though I know that God’s hand was there every step of the way, the journey has had its challenges. After many years working successfully in Europe, I moved to Australia. The move was unsettling. I had to start from scratch. I struggled to fully fit in and understand the rules and the market in this new country.

Doing the ‘Starting and Growing My Business’ course through the Church helped me get organised and prioritise. It gave me a broader view of my situation and helped orient me in my new home of Australia. The support of those whom I did the course with was also very helpful. These courses are helpful if you are starting a business for the first time or, like me, just needed a bit of help during some professional challenges.

Running a business and being self-employed is not for everyone. It requires discipline, vision and a great deal of organisational skills. It takes hard work and determination. But we are not alone: field mentors, Church specialists and employment advisers are there to help as well as a loving Heavenly Father. If we are teachable, we can achieve all our righteous desires.

This journey into self-reliance has been a rewarding experience as it has stretched me professionally and spiritually. I have learnt to more fully rely on the Lord and then go and do my part with courage and creativity. It has enlarged my understanding of our potential as children of a Father in Heaven and it has taught me valuable lessons on agency, obedience and service.

**CALL FOR ARTICLES**

Our local pages section is produced by members in our own area under the guidance of our Area Presidency so that it can address the needs and experiences of members where we live. The inclusion of the local pages in each issue depends on the availability of local content. We are invited to contribute our faith-promoting thoughts and experiences by contacting our editor:

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Age Changes for Youth Progression and Ordination Announced

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced a change Friday designed to strengthen children and youth through increased faith in Jesus Christ, deeper understanding of His gospel, and greater unity with His Church and its members.

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