

THE **New Era**

SEPTEMBER 2010

COVER STORY:
STAYING ON
THE BALL,
P. 20

ONE STEP AT
A TIME, P. 2

GUIDED BY THE
SPIRIT, PP. 24, 28

YOU LIKE YOUR
PARENTS? P. 14



The First Presidency:

Thomas S. Monson,
Henry B. Eyring,
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

**The Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles:**

Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H.
Oaks, M. Russell Ballard,
Richard G. Scott, Robert D.
Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland,
David A. Bednar, Quentin L.
Cook, D. Todd Christofferson,
Neil L. Andersen

Editor: Spencer J. Condie
Advisers: Keith K. Hilbig,
Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Paul. B.
Pieper

Managing Director:
David L. Frischknecht
Evaluation, Planning, and
Editorial Director:
Vincent A. Vaughn
Graphics Director:
Allan R. Loyborg

Managing Editor:
Richard M. Romney
Assistant Managing Editor:
Janet Thomas
Associate Editors:
David A. Edwards,
Paul VanDenBerghe
Publications Assistant:
Sally J. Odekirk
Editorial Intern:
Charlotte Wood Wilson
Editorial Staff: Susan Barrett,
Ryan Carr, Jennifer L. Greenwood,
R. Val Johnson, Adam C. Olson,
Laurel Teuscher

Art Director: Brent Christison
Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus
Design and Production Staff:
Collette Nebeker Aune, Eric P.
Johnsen, Scott M. Mooy, Jane
Ann Peters, Scott Van Kampen
Prepress: Byron Warner

Printing Director:
Craig K. Sedgwick
Distribution Director:
Randy J. Benson

© 2010 by Intellectual
Reserve, Inc. All rights
reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid
at Salt Lake City, Utah. The *New
Era* (ISSN 0164-5285) is published
monthly by The Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E.
North Temple St., Salt Lake City,
UT 84150-3220, USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Distribution Services,
Church Magazines, P.O. Box
26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-
0368, USA.

Canada Post Information:
Publication Agreement #40017431.

**LINE UPON LINE, PRECEPT
UPON PRECEPT p. 2**



**The Message:
Line upon Line,
Precept upon Precept**

Elder David A. Bednar

*This pattern described in the scriptures
suggests we receive many small answers
over a period of time.*

2

**How I Know:
Truth Will Prevail**

Oliver Mayall

*When I told my mother, she said simply,
"That's your answer."*

8

**Mormonad:
Get a Grip**

11



Alex's New Sunday Suit

Jane McBride Choate

*I thought my dad was taking me shopping,
but instead we took Alex.*

12

Questions and Answers 14

*"Some of my friends say they don't like their
parents. They ask me how I can love my
parents. What do I say?"*

Seminary before Sunrise 16

Loran Cook

*With just two students studying together
every morning, early morning seminary
makes their day.*

Come Ready to Play 20

Adam C. Olson

*For this teen in Peru, succeeding at seminary
is a lot like winning in basketball.*

The Extra Smile 23

Guided to Do First Aid 24

Kyle Keim

*Trained as a lifeguard, this teen follows the
promptings of the Spirit and saves two lives.*

Changing My Music 27

Sarah K. Perry

*My choice in music was affecting my mood.
That changed when my brother left on a
mission.*



GUIDED TO DO FIRST AID p. 24



MAKING RIGHTEOUS CHOICES p. 40

Feeling the Spirit 28

Janet Thomas
For teens in the Ipswich England Stake, learning to feel the promptings of the Holy Ghost makes all the difference.

To the Point 32

Learning to Serve 34

Sally Johnson Odekirk
Learning to serve helps both those who give and those who receive.

What's Up? 38

Making Righteous Choices 40

Elder Paul V. Johnson
The choices you make now will shape your character and help to determine the person you will be years from now.

From the Mission Field: Miracle at a Stoplight 44

Benjamin Hayford
For some reason, this missionary knew he was supposed to talk to the man on the scooter.

Instant Messages 46

Running as a good example; testimony of Joseph Smith.

We've Got Mail 48

Poem: Not Just a Photograph 49

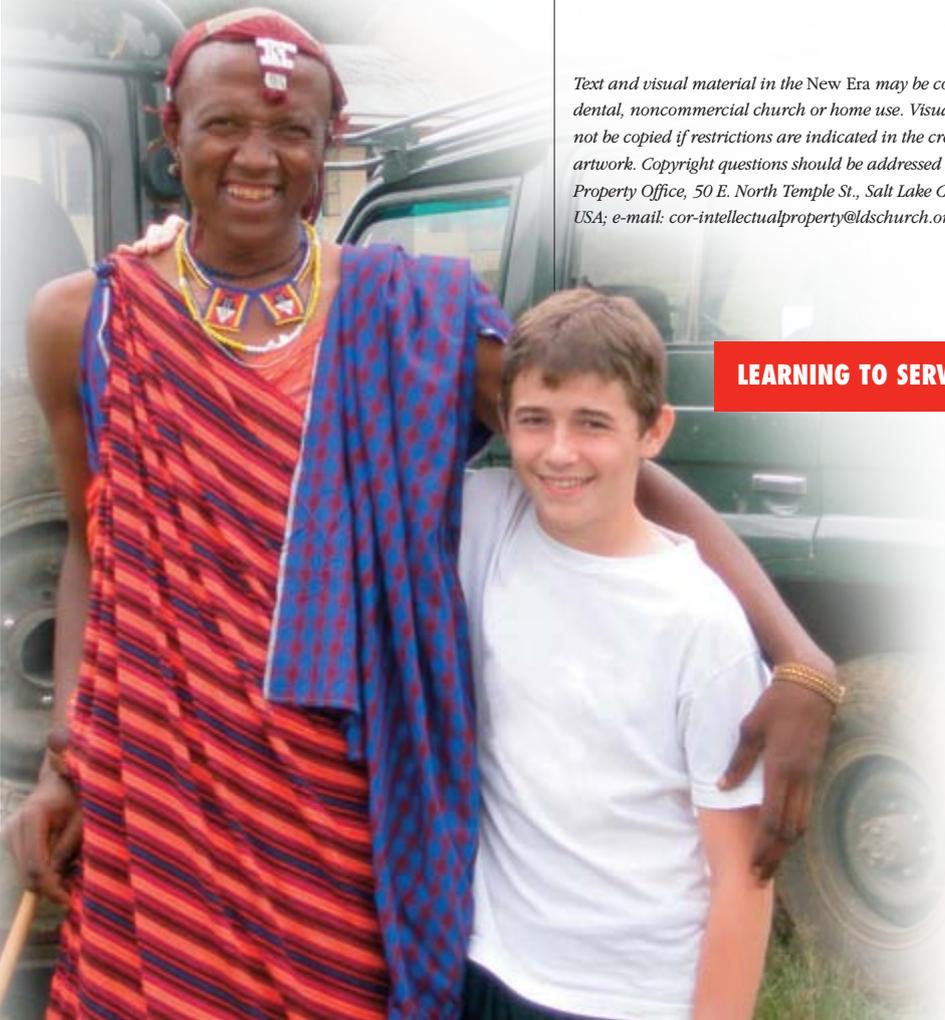
Heather E. Thomson

Photo 49

Elizabeth Gosney

Text and visual material in the New Era may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA; e-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

LEARNING TO SERVE p. 38



*The New Era Magazine
Volume 40, Number 9
September 2010*

*Official monthly publication
for youth of The Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints*

Editorial Offices:
New Era
50 E. North Temple St.
Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024,
USA

E-mail Address:
newera@ldschurch.org

To Change Address:
Send old and new address
information to:
Distribution Services
P.O. Box 26368
Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368,
USA.
Please allow 60 days for
changes to take effect.

*Cover: Roger Enrique
Velasquez Paredes, who
goes by Koki, is from
Peru and loves basket-
ball.*

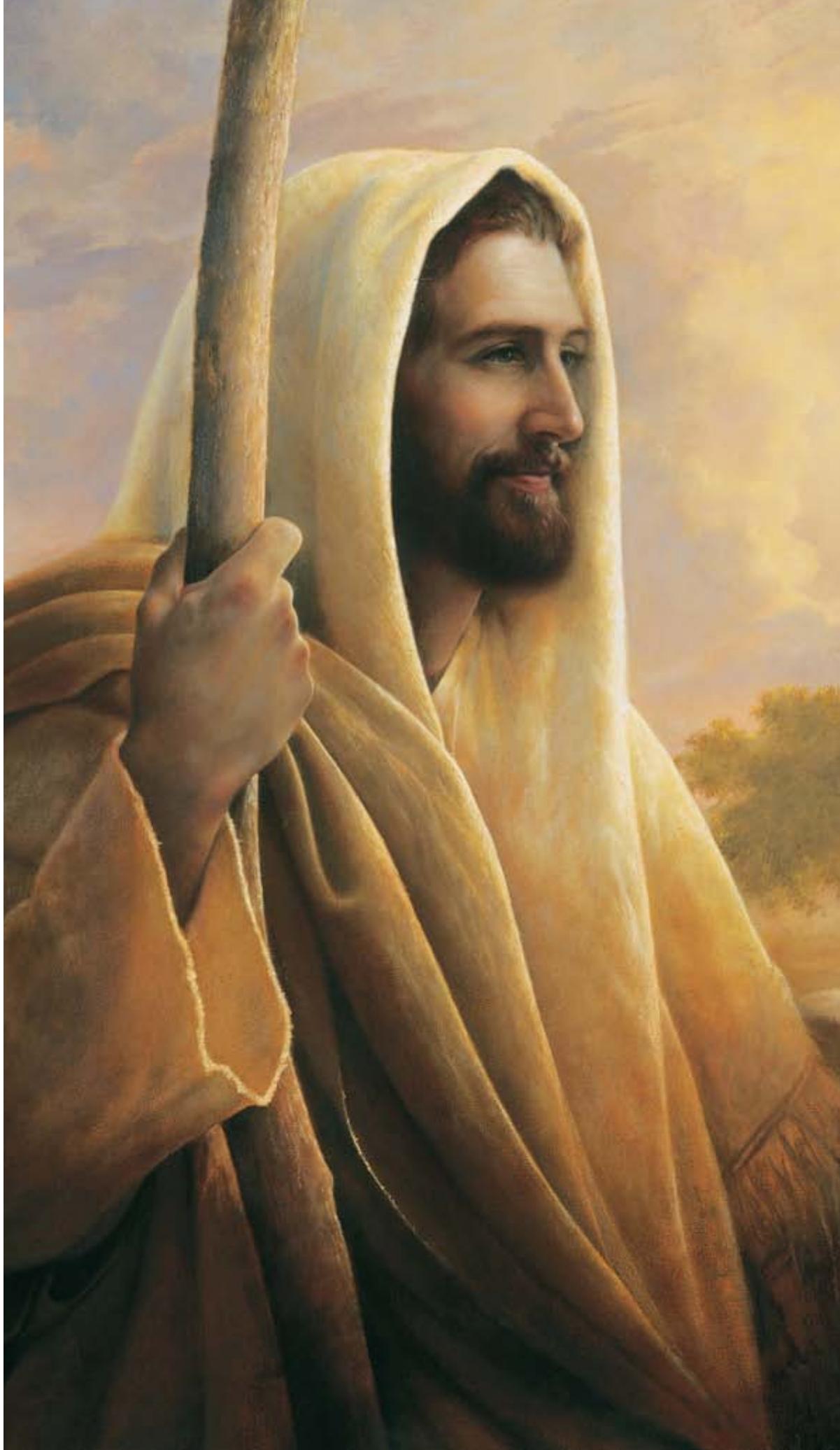
*Cover photography: Adam
Olson*

TO SUBMIT MATERIAL:
Send stories, articles, photos,
poems, and ideas online
at newera.lds.org. Click
Submit Your Material, and fill
in the form. Or e-mail or mail
them to the Editorial Offices
address above. For return,
include a self-addressed,
stamped envelope.

TO SUBSCRIBE:
By phone: Call 1-800-537-
5971 to order using Visa,
MasterCard, Discover Card,
or American Express.
Online: Go to [www.ldscat-
alog.com](http://www.ldscatalog.com). **By mail:** Send \$8
U.S. check or money order to
Distribution Services,
P.O. Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT
84126-0368, USA.

Visit us online at
www.NewEra.Lds.org.

If you and I would learn to discern the difference between our own emotions and the promptings of the Holy Ghost, then we must come to recognize the Lord's pattern and process for giving us spiritual knowledge. And the phrase "line upon line, precept upon precept" describes a central feature of the Lord's pattern.



“LINE UPON LINE, Precept upon Precept”

(2 Nephi 28:30)

Sister Bednar and I have learned much as we visit with the youth of the Church. You are eager and anxious to learn the doctrines of the restored gospel. You want direct and forthright answers to your gospel questions. And you have earnest desires to appropriately apply correct principles in your daily lives. One question is asked over and over again as we meet with you: *“How can I tell the difference between my emotions telling me what I want to hear and the Holy Ghost telling me what I need to hear?”*

My purpose today is to answer this important question. In the Book of Mormon, in 2 Nephi 28, we read: “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; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have” (2 Nephi 28:30, emphasis added).

The theme for my message is contained in the phrase “line upon line, precept upon precept.” If you and I would learn to discern

the difference between our own emotions and the promptings of the Holy Ghost, then we must come to recognize the Lord’s pattern and process for giving us spiritual knowledge. And the phrase “line upon line, precept upon precept” describes a central feature of the Lord’s pattern.

A Faulty Assumption and Erroneous Expectations

I believe many of us unknowingly accept a faulty assumption about the Lord’s pattern. And this faulty assumption then produces erroneous expectations about how we receive spiritual knowledge. And that faulty assumption and our misinformed expectations ultimately hinder our ability to recognize and respond to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Let me suggest that many of us typically assume we will receive *an* answer or *a* prompting to our earnest prayers and pleadings. And we also frequently expect that such an answer or a prompting will come immediately and *all at once*. Thus, we tend to believe the Lord will give us **A BIG ANSWER QUICKLY AND ALL AT ONE TIME**. However, the pattern repeatedly described in the scriptures suggests we receive “line upon line, precept upon



By Elder
David A. Bednar
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

precept,” or in other words, **many small answers over a period of time**. Recognizing and understanding this pattern is an important key to obtaining inspiration and help from the Holy Ghost.

Now, we all acknowledge that receiving a big answer quickly and all at once is possible and, in fact, does occur in some exceptional circumstances. Perhaps we give overmuch emphasis to the miraculous experiences of Joseph in the Sacred Grove, of Paul on the road to Damascus, and of Alma the Younger. If our personal experiences fall short of these well-known and spiritually dramatic examples, then perhaps we believe something is wrong with or lacking in us. I am suggesting that the particular spiritual process evidenced in these three examples with Joseph, Paul, and Alma is more rare than it is routine, more the exception than the rule.

As President Boyd K. Packer has explained: “I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently” (*That All May be Edified* [1982], 337). Most typically we receive a series of seemingly small and incremental spiritual impressions and nudges, which in totality constitute the desired confirmation about the correctness of the path which we are pursuing.

Remember, Nephi tried several different approaches before he was able to successfully obtain the plates of brass from Laban (see 1 Nephi 3–4). And he did not learn how to build a ship of curious workmanship all at one time; rather, he was shown by the Lord “from time to time after what manner [he] should work the timbers of the ship” (1 Nephi 18:1).

The Lord’s Pattern

Please notice the Lord’s pattern of providing spiritual knowledge in the following statement by President Joseph F. Smith:

“When I as a boy first started out in the ministry, I

would frequently go out and ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until he made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and until doubt and fear had been absolutely purged from me. He did not have to send an angel from the heavens to do this, nor did he have to speak with the trump of an archangel. By the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of the living God, he gave to me the testimony I possess. And by this principle and power he

will give to all the children of men a knowledge of the truth that will stay with them, and it will make them to know the truth, as God knows it, and to do the will of the Father as Christ does it. And no amount of marvelous manifestations will ever accomplish this. It is obedience, humility, and submission to the requirements of heaven and to the order established in the kingdom of God upon the earth, that will establish men in the truth” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 11th ed. [1959], 7).

It is interesting to note how as a young man President Smith expected a big answer quickly and all at one time. Ultimately, however, he received many small answers over an extended period of time, and thereby his testimony grew ever stronger.

Each of us must also appreciate the roles of faithfulness and diligence and obedience in the Lord’s pattern for receiving help from heaven. Please turn with me again to 2 Nephi 28:30. “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; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have*” (emphasis added).

“By the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of the living God, he gave to me the testimony I possess.”

Thus, those who faithfully hearken to and obediently heed the Lord's direction will learn wisdom and receive more. As described by Elder Richard G. Scott: "When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency" ("Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayers," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 30).

Please note how this principle is both reiterated and amplified in the following verses. "For he will give unto the *faithful* line upon line, precept upon precept; and *I will try you and prove you herewith*" (D&C 98:12; emphasis added).

"*If thou shalt ask*, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61; emphasis added).

"And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few, and with revelations *in their time—they that are faithful and diligent* before me" (D&C 59:4; emphasis added).

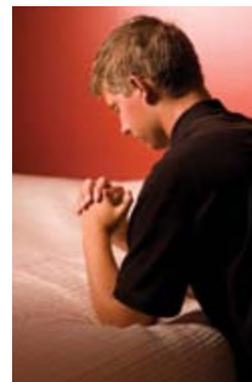
"That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, *and continueth in God*, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24; emphasis added).

If you and I would distinguish our personal emotions from the impressions placed in our hearts and minds by the Holy Ghost, then we must desire and seek, ask and discern, hear and obey, and then again desire and seek and ask and discern and hear and obey. Our faith and diligence and obedience are ongoing invitations for additional spiritual knowledge and insight. Faith leads

to obedience, which yields wisdom and an even greater desire for added light and truth.

The process of discerning between our will and God's will becomes less and less of a concern as time goes by and as we strive to rid ourselves of worldliness—and thereby cultivate the spirit of revelation in our lives. That is, as we mature spiritually, we begin to develop sound judgment, a refined and educated conscience, and a heart and mind filled with wisdom. It is not just that we have grown older, nor have we simply become smarter and had more experiences on which to draw, as important as those experiences are. Rather, the Holy Ghost has over time been expanding our intellect, forming our feelings, sharpening and elevating our perspective, such that we increasingly think and feel and act as the Lord would under similar circumstances. In short, we have made steady progress in obtaining "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

This ongoing cycle of gaining spiritual knowledge ultimately produces a precious and delicious fruit, but that fruit cannot and does not grow from a blossom to its ripened state overnight. Furthermore, such fruit cannot grow in barren soil. Obedience to God's commandments and our personal integrity and adherence to commitments provide the needed nutrients for fertile spiritual soil. It should be obvious to all of us that evil influences such as filthy language, immodest clothing and appearance, and pornography are bitter poisons that kill the soil and halt the spiritually subtle process of receiving help from heaven "*line upon line, precept upon precept*." There can be no shortcut around the law of the harvest; truly, we reap what we sow (see Galatians 6:7).



If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61).

Illustrations and Implications

Both the history of the Church and our personal lives are replete with examples of the Lord's pattern for obtaining spiritual knowledge "line upon line, precept upon precept." For example, the fundamental doctrines and principles of the restored gospel were not delivered to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove in a neatly organized binder. Rather, these priceless treasures were revealed line upon line as circumstances warranted and as the timing was right.

Another episode from Church history described by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) also illustrates the Lord's pattern. "Meekness is so necessary as to our readiness to learn not only these sweeping truths but particular truths as well, which come incrementally, 'line upon line, precept upon precept' (D&C 98:12). The Prophet Joseph Smith, for instance, first translated the thirteenth chapter of First Nephi in perhaps late 1828 or the spring of 1829. These verses note that certain things had been 'kept back' and 'taken away.' In June 1830, Joseph received the 'precious morsel' we know as the first chapter of Moses. Therein Moses was told by the Lord that of the scriptures Moses would write, certain individuals would 'take many of them from the book' (Moses 1:41). It was not until February 16, 1832, however, after a conference in Amherst, Ohio, that Joseph said it was apparent to him, 'from sundry revelations which had been received,' that 'many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled' (Preface to D&C 76). On that date, among other things, came the sunburst of celestial truths about the three degrees of glory (*Meek and Lowly* [1987], 73).

I want to highlight another example from the history of the restored Church. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught the following principle.

"This work of salvation for the dead came to the

Prophet like every other doctrine—piecemeal. It was not revealed all at once. When the Angel Moroni came to the Prophet Joseph Smith, one of the things he told him was that the hearts of the children should turn to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to the children, so that when the Lord should come the earth should not be smitten with a curse. That is significant. That was the first inkling the Prophet had concerning salvation for the dead, and he did not know just what it meant. He had a very vague idea of the meaning of the words that Elijah would come to 'plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers,' and I suppose he pondered over it a good deal" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:168).

That first small inkling given to the Prophet Joseph grew line upon line and precept upon precept—and eventually included the restoration of priesthood keys in the Kirtland Temple, the performance of essential ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple, and the availability of more than 130 temples throughout the world today. Truly progress has been made in this eternally important work, line upon line and precept upon precept.

I could recount many more examples from Church history about the Lord's pattern. However, I now want to highlight some personal examples to which I hope all of us can relate.

Sister Bednar and I frequently visit with youth who wonder about career choices and how to properly select a school at which to study and receive additional education. Many times a young person is perplexed—having felt as though *the* answer about a career or a school was received at one particular point in time, only to feel that a different and perhaps conflicting answer was received at another point in time. The question then is often asked, "Why did the Lord give me two different answers?" In like manner, a student may sincerely seek to know if the person he or she has been dating is "the one." A feeling of *yes* at one

Both the history of the Church and our personal lives are replete with examples of the Lord's pattern for obtaining spiritual knowledge "line upon line, precept upon precept."

time may appear to be contradicted by a different feeling of *no* at another time. May I simply suggest that what we initially believe is *the* answer may be but one part of a “line upon line, precept upon precept” ongoing, incremental, and unfolding pattern of small answers. It is clearly the case that the Lord did not change His mind; rather, you and I must learn to better recognize the Lord’s pattern as a series of related and expanding answers to our most important questions.

Sister Bednar and I knew each other for 19 months and dated for 15 months before we were married. I do not recall ever receiving a single, overwhelming spiritual confirmation that she was “the one.” I do recall that as we dated, as we talked, as we became better acquainted, and as we observed and learned about each other in a variety of circumstances, I received many small, simple, and quiet reassurances that she was indeed a remarkable and spiritual woman. All of those simple answers over a period of time led to and produced an appropriate spiritual reassurance that indeed we were to be married. That reassurance did not come all at once; rather, it was spiritually subtle and gradually distilled upon our minds as the dews from heaven, as described in the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants (see verse 45).

Now, please understand that I am not trying to suggest the experience Sister Bednar and I had is precisely what will or should happen to you. I am suggesting that we should not feel spiritually inadequate or unqualified if we do not receive a big and immediate answer to a request or plea for help the first time we ask. And we will be better served spiritually by studying and understanding the Lord’s pattern of revealing

things to us “line upon line, precept upon precept.”

A final statement by Elder Maxwell summarizes the importance of learning and applying the Lord’s pattern in our lives. “Paced progress not only is acceptable to the Lord but also is recommended by Him. Divine declarations say: ‘Ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now’ (D&C 50:40); ‘I will lead you along’ (D&C 78:18). Just as divine disclosure usually occurs line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, so likewise we will achieve our spiritual progress gradually (see D&C 128:21; 98:12)” (*Men and Women of Christ* [1991], 23).

As you ponder the principle of “line upon line, precept upon precept,” you will be able to discern more clearly the consistent help from heaven you have received in your lives. And your faith in the Savior will be stronger, and your hope for the future will be brighter. I pray you will recognize the Lord’s pattern and process for obtaining spiritual knowledge.

I declare my witness that these things are true. I have come to know the reality of the Restoration the same way most of you have come to know—line upon line and precept upon precept. I know that God lives; I testify and witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Eternal Father. And I know that the Holy Ghost is a revelator and the testator of all truth. I further testify that the fullness of the gospel has been restored to the earth in these latter days. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University—Idaho devotional given on September 11, 2001.



As you ponder the principle of line upon line, precept upon precept, you will be able to discern more clearly the consistent help from heaven you have received in your lives. And your faith in the Savior will be stronger, and your hope for the future will be brighter.

TRUTH WILL

*Should I serve a mission?
The answer I received was
rock solid.*

By Oliver Mayall

I grew up in an active Latter-day Saint family in England, the eighth of 10 children. Our faithful parents taught us the gospel and set good examples. But at about age 14, I began to find it difficult to attend early-morning seminary, go to various classes and firesides, and attend youth activities. Most of my friends were not members of the Church and had very different standards from the ones I was raised with.

I began to make bad decisions because I wanted so much to be like my friends and have the so-called fun they were having. By the time I was 15, I was completely inactive in the Church. As I became older, my

life grew even more worldly.

At the same time, however, I began to feel something deep down in my soul. Questions about the purpose of life and the destiny of man started to fill my mind. The world I once knew and thought I loved had become a very dark, cold, and lonely place. My soul was not fully satisfied with what the world had to offer. I had a feeling that I should be somewhere other than my hometown, a feeling that I was meant to do something else with my life.

After many weeks of these feelings and thoughts, I decided to pray and ask for help, the first time I had prayed in a long while. I decided to wait until night, when everyone was asleep. After my prayer, I thought and listened, but there was nothing. I continued in this way for weeks until it hit me: perhaps God would not answer me straight away simply

I chose a place in the hills on the moors where I would not be disturbed. I took my lunch, scriptures, and my journal and climbed to the top to offer the desires of my heart to my Father in Heaven.

because I had been raised in the gospel and unfortunately I had never seriously appreciated it.

One evening I changed my method. Instead of demanding an answer and expecting the Lord to give it straight away, I promised the Lord that if He would answer, I would serve Him as a missionary. For the first time, I prayed to know if the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and the Church teachings were true. I felt something so powerful yet so peaceful that it caused me to weep.

I went to my bishop, who happened to be my eldest brother, and

PREVAIL



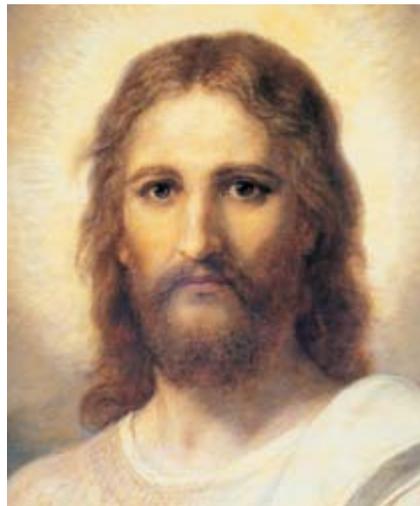
ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CALL

asked to serve a mission. I was nervous, but I knew that because the Lord had kept His end of the deal, I had to keep mine. Tears streamed down my bishop's face as I related my experience.

Then I began dating Kelly, a friend who was not a member of the Church. I related to her my plans to serve a mission. Kelly saw that I had changed and wondered why. This led to Kelly's having the missionary lessons and joining the Church, and I had the opportunity to baptize and confirm her. At this point I wondered if that missionary effort had fulfilled my service to the Lord. I wrestled with having to go, and I was determined to pray to find out if leaving Kelly and serving a mission was the right thing to do.

I chose a place in the hills on the moors called Saddleworth Dovestones, where I would not be disturbed. I took my lunch, scriptures, and my journal and headed out, climbing to the top to offer the desires of my heart to my Father in Heaven. As I prayed, I listened very carefully for an answer, maybe a peaceful feeling or a burning in my bosom, but I felt nothing.

As I walked back, I noticed a series of rocks on the ground carefully placed to spell out the words "Truth Will Prevail." "Curious," I thought, but nothing more. However, when I told my mother, she said simply, "That's your answer."



Only later would I understand what that early missionary understood: the Lord may choose the weak things of this world to preach His gospel, but truth will prevail and will prosper.

You see, when the Latter-day Saint missionaries first came to England in 1837, they began their labors in Preston. At that time the city was in the midst of a grand celebration of Queen Victoria's reign. As the missionaries alighted from their coach, they saw a banner overhead proclaiming in bold gilt letters "Truth Will Prevail."

It became a widely-used phrase in the Church and appeared in various publications. One elder, reporting on his mission to Indiana, wrote in a letter published in Nauvoo's *Times and Seasons* in 1841: "Although the Lord has chosen the weak things of

this world to preach his gospel, truth will prevail, and will prosper."¹

Trusting the Lord, I turned in my mission papers. On my 21st birthday, along with my birthday post, came my call to serve in the England London South Mission. Due to my years of inactivity, I still felt weak and inadequate. Only later would I understand what that early missionary understood: the Lord may choose the weak things of this world to preach His gospel, but truth *will* prevail and *will* prosper.

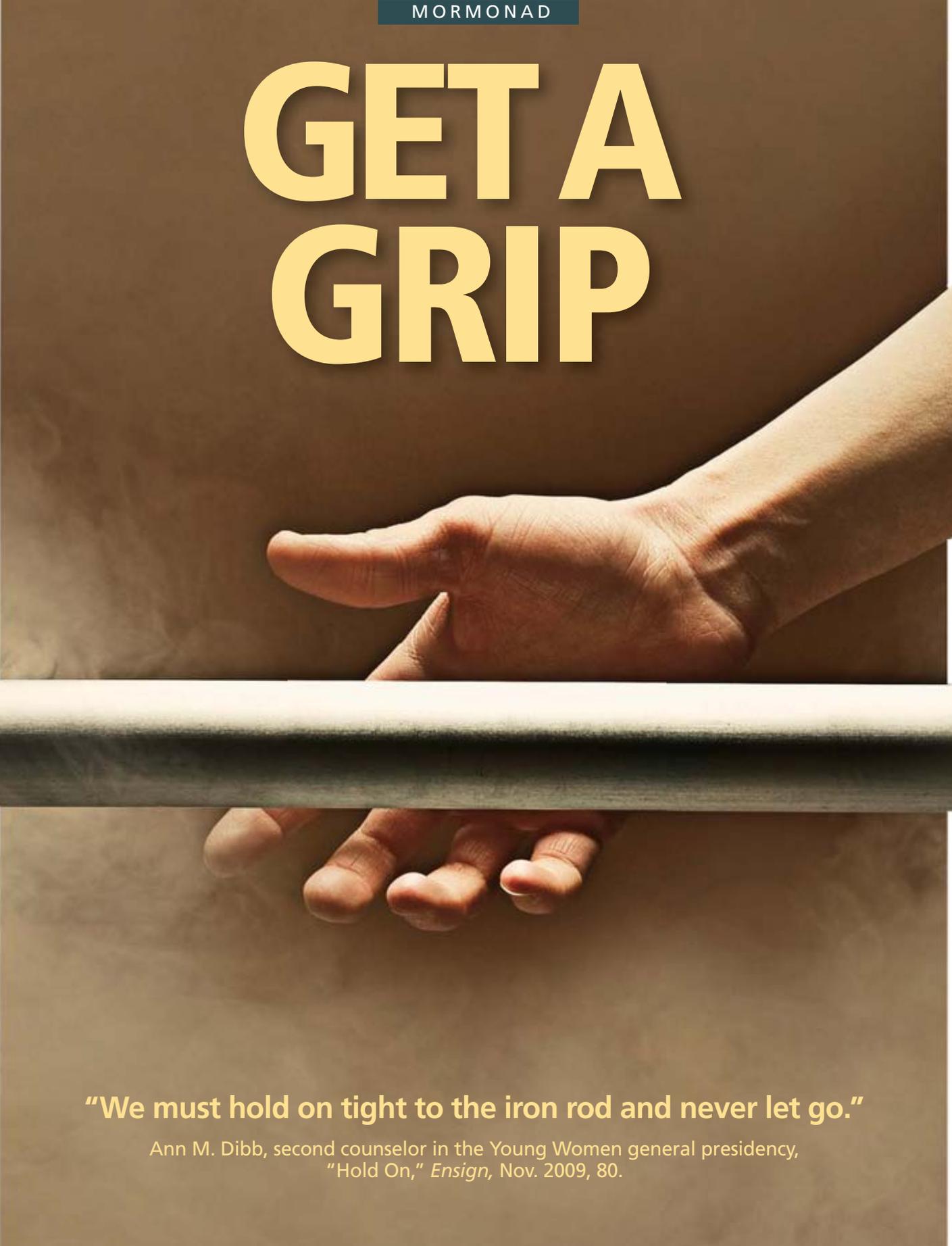
I went in faith to the temple to be endowed. When I came out of the temple, I met two missionaries who had served in my home ward. As we talked, I described my experience out on the moors. One of the elders smiled broadly and explained that on a particular preparation day, he and his companion had hiked up on the moors and at a certain point felt impressed to place some rocks across the hillside spelling out the familiar phrase "Truth Will Prevail."

Tears streamed down our faces as we realized what had happened. Those familiar with the area know there are miles and miles of trails amongst the moors. Yet I happened to choose the very spot where the missionaries had placed those rocks. I knew there and then that the Lord had answered my prayer in the hills that day. **NE**

NOTE

1. Jacob Gates, *Times and Seasons*, Dec. 1, 1841, 621.

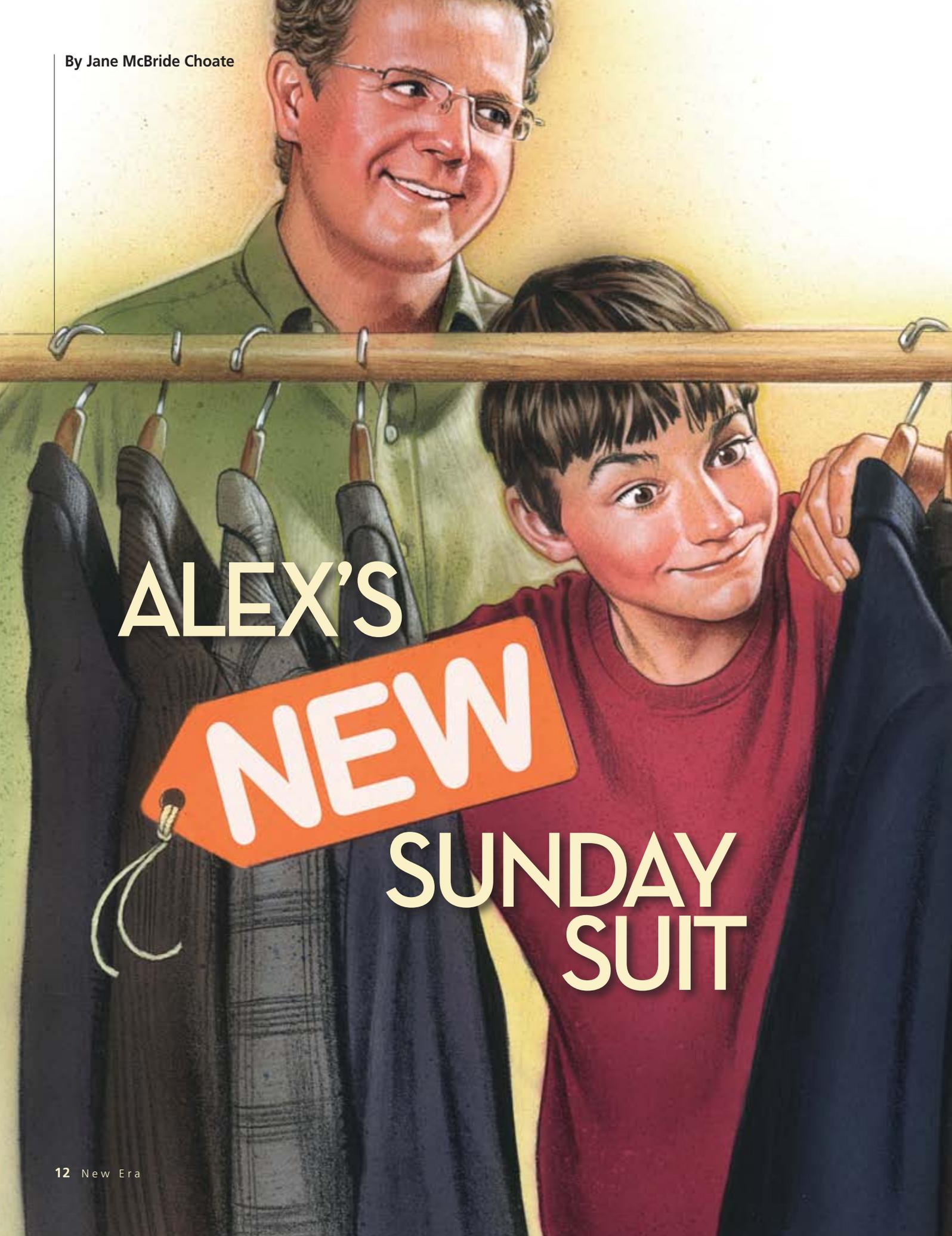
GET A GRIP

A photograph of a hand holding a horizontal bar, symbolizing strength and support. The hand is positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers wrapped around the bar. The background is a solid, dark brown color. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the bar.

"We must hold on tight to the iron rod and never let go."

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency,
"Hold On," Ensign, Nov. 2009, 80.

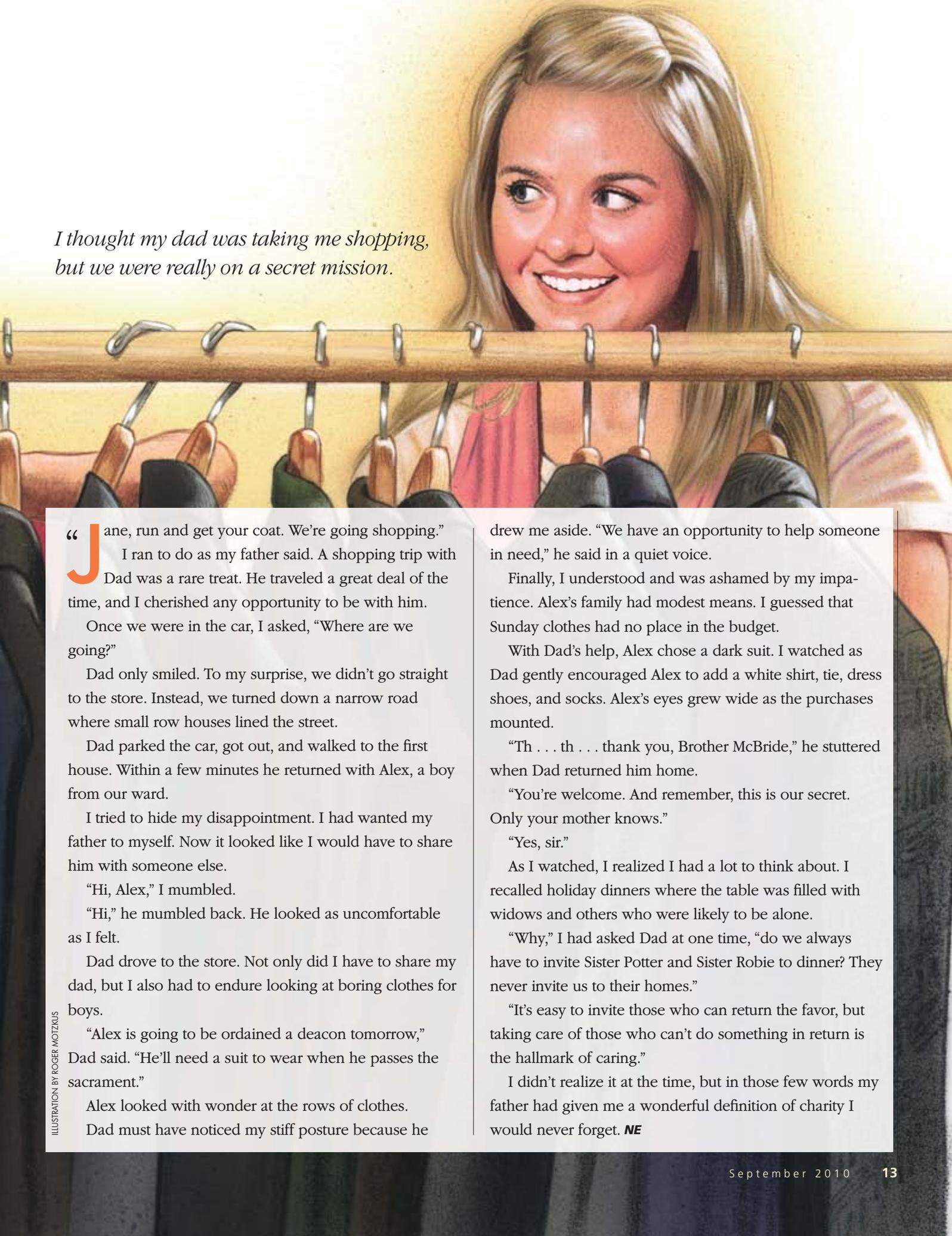
By Jane McBride Choate



ALEX'S

NEW

SUNDAY
SUIT



*I thought my dad was taking me shopping,
but we were really on a secret mission.*

“Jane, run and get your coat. We’re going shopping.”

I ran to do as my father said. A shopping trip with Dad was a rare treat. He traveled a great deal of the time, and I cherished any opportunity to be with him.

Once we were in the car, I asked, “Where are we going?”

Dad only smiled. To my surprise, we didn’t go straight to the store. Instead, we turned down a narrow road where small row houses lined the street.

Dad parked the car, got out, and walked to the first house. Within a few minutes he returned with Alex, a boy from our ward.

I tried to hide my disappointment. I had wanted my father to myself. Now it looked like I would have to share him with someone else.

“Hi, Alex,” I mumbled.

“Hi,” he mumbled back. He looked as uncomfortable as I felt.

Dad drove to the store. Not only did I have to share my dad, but I also had to endure looking at boring clothes for boys.

“Alex is going to be ordained a deacon tomorrow,” Dad said. “He’ll need a suit to wear when he passes the sacrament.”

Alex looked with wonder at the rows of clothes.

Dad must have noticed my stiff posture because he

drew me aside. “We have an opportunity to help someone in need,” he said in a quiet voice.

Finally, I understood and was ashamed by my impatience. Alex’s family had modest means. I guessed that Sunday clothes had no place in the budget.

With Dad’s help, Alex chose a dark suit. I watched as Dad gently encouraged Alex to add a white shirt, tie, dress shoes, and socks. Alex’s eyes grew wide as the purchases mounted.

“Th . . . th . . . thank you, Brother McBride,” he stuttered when Dad returned him home.

“You’re welcome. And remember, this is our secret. Only your mother knows.”

“Yes, sir.”

As I watched, I realized I had a lot to think about. I recalled holiday dinners where the table was filled with widows and others who were likely to be alone.

“Why,” I had asked Dad at one time, “do we always have to invite Sister Potter and Sister Robie to dinner? They never invite us to their homes.”

“It’s easy to invite those who can return the favor, but taking care of those who can’t do something in return is the hallmark of caring.”

I didn’t realize it at the time, but in those few words my father had given me a wonderful definition of charity I would never forget. **NE**

“Some of my friends say they don’t like their parents.

They ask me how I can love my parents. What do I say?”

The teen years are a time to develop your independence and yet remain close to your parents so that you can benefit from their wisdom and experience. Some teens try to become too independent too quickly, while their parents are still trying to give them guidance. This can cause some friction. These teens might rebel because they feel like their parents are holding them back. They probably love their parents but don’t want to feel like their parents are controlling their lives so much.

Try to help these friends see that they need to find a balance between becoming independent and relying on their parents. Help them see that liking their parents doesn’t mean they can’t grow up. Part of growing up is learning how to keep good relationships with important people, including parents. If it’s appropriate, you may even talk to your friends about why God commanded children to honor and obey their parents (see Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1–3).

You could also share some of the ways you keep a good relationship with your parents. Maybe you’re good at appreciating the things they do for you. Or maybe you’re good at understanding that family rules are evidence that your parents love you. Lastly, remind your friends that a good relationship with their parents can be a blessing for the rest of their lives. **NE**

Parents Understand



Tell them that their parents understand them more than they think. Their parents care for them. All parents used to be kids and had some of the same problems then that the youth do growing up in this time. You can explain that it is also a commandment to honor our parents. By listening, respecting, and obeying your parents, you can gain a stronger relationship and grow to love them more.

Ethan S., 14, Arizona

Parents Are Trying to Help

I get along well with my parents. However, sometimes I don’t agree with my dad, but I know he still loves me. My dad is trying to teach me to be a better person. My dad is a convert to the Church and had a different kind of lifestyle than we do now. He doesn’t want me to make the same mistakes he made before he joined the Church. He wants me to realize the difference between worldly pleasures and eternal happiness. So even though your friends might think their parents are being hard on them, they are just trying to help them stay strong and make good decisions.

Makenzie G., 16, Massachusetts

Think of Parents’ Strengths



It’s a tragedy that so many children dislike their parents. I won’t pretend that I too am not guilty of sometimes becoming frustrated with my parents. When I do, I sit down and start writing down what it is about my parents that’s making me so upset. Next, I contrast these downsides with my parents’ strengths. Within a few minutes, I find that I’m reminiscing about my childhood, which my parents worked to ensure was a great one. I love my parents, and I know that there are probably sacrifices that they’ve made for me that I will never even be aware of.

Misty M., 17, Arizona

Say Thanks



I would say that I can think about how grateful I am for them. They loved and cared for me since I was born—showing me the greatest compassion in my life. Some days you can feel that you don't like or respect your parents much. I always pray for strength, and I always go forward with a smile. Tell your friends that simple gestures will mean a lot to your parents—things like saying, "Good morning," "I love you," or "Thank you." These things will help them bond better with their mum and dad.

Matthew Y., 13, New Zealand

Set an Example

Let your friends know that you realize your parents aren't perfect but you love them anyway. You could also set an example for your friends by the love you show to your own parents and the relationship that you have with them. No one wants to have a terrible relationship with his or her parents. Your example in showing love towards your own parents could help your friends show a better attitude to their own parents.

Rachel R., 14, Georgia

Think of Good Things Parents Do



I think you should first think of all the good things about your parents. For example, you could think of ways they've helped you with everyday life. My parents help me with problems like schoolwork and looking after me when I need it most. Another good thing to think about is that maybe your friends just don't know their parents like they think they do.

Bennett W., 13, Florida

Try to Understand Parents

I hear all the time at school that youth don't like their parents for one reason or another. I would reply and say: I love my parents because I know they want to help me make good decisions. They may sometimes be embarrassing, but I know they mean me no harm. They love me, and that is how they show their love. It also helps if you get to know them and understand the reason why they may keep you from doing certain things.

Amy W., 13, Utah

Families Are a Support



Heavenly Father put us in families because He knew we would need an immediate support system. You can tell your friends that you love your parents because you know they love you! Although at times it may seem like parents are strict, they are looking out for our best interests because they love us.

Annie W., 18, Arizona

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.



REMEMBER WITH HONOR

Here is my counsel to children.

The Lord gave you a commandment with a promise: 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land.' It is the only one of the Ten Commandments with a promise. You may not have parents that are living. In some cases, you may not feel that your parents are worthy of the honor and respect of their children. You may not even have ever known them. But you owe them life. And in every case, even if your life is not lengthened, its quality will be improved simply by remembering your parents with honor."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Our Perfect Example," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 73.

NEXT QUESTION

"I like family home evening, but my brother and sister seem not to like it, and they make it difficult for everyone.

What can our family do?"

Send us your answer and photo by October 15, 2010.

Go to newera.lds.org, click Submit Your Material, and then select Questions and Answers.

You can also write to us at:

newera@ldschurch.org

or

New Era, Q&A, FHE

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA



While others are still sound asleep, these Latter-day Saints in Alabama are already on the move—and for good reason.

SEMINARY

By Loran Cook

At 5:40 in the morning, when most people are still asleep, Jay McKinley and Amy Fuqua of the Monroe Branch of the Mobile Alabama Stake are at church with their scriptures and seminary manuals. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said that seminary is one of the most significant experiences that any youth can have, and he encouraged youth to “regularly attend seminary and be a seminary graduate.”¹ It is a while until sunrise, but these two students and their teacher know the importance of the blessings they receive from following the prophet’s counsel to become seminary graduates.

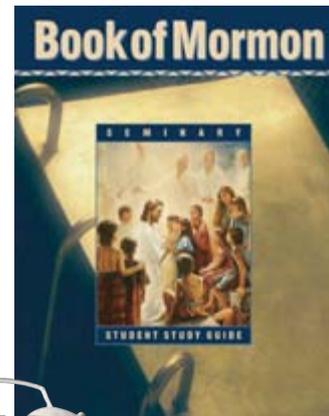
“Sometimes it is really hard to get up at 4:45 a.m., but it’s totally worth it,” says Amy. “I love the feeling I get when I have the Spirit with me so early.” All three agree that the early starts are tiring and hard to manage, but all know that the benefits of early morning gospel study far outweigh the challenge of juggling each of their schedules, chores, and lives on top

of seminary. Amy says, “When I think about it, having class at 5:40 a.m. isn’t a sacrifice at all.” The opportunity to learn more about the Savior is worth every effort, she says.

Jay and Amy’s seminary teacher, Sister Miranda Smith, agrees, and Jay says, “I have to go to bed earlier than normal in order to get up around 4:30 a.m. Sometimes when I have a lot of homework, my big brother will take over my chores.” In Monroe, seminary really is a group effort, even for those who don’t attend seminary. One of the reasons for the early seminary is that Jay’s school is an hour’s bus drive away and his bus driver picks him up from the chapel immediately after seminary.

One of the benefits gained from the early start is the friendship that comes from spending quality time together. “Sister Smith, Amy, and I have become close. We really didn’t hang out together, even at church, unless we had to,” says Jay. “Now we like being around each other and really are friends.”

BEFORE SUNRISE



Of course friendship is not the only reason for being in seminary; the true goal is the gospel knowledge that comes from studying the scriptures. All three who attend the class can see the benefits. Sister Smith says the best thing about early-morning seminary is “getting to start and end my day with a gospel lesson.” Not only is she the seminary teacher, but she is also a mother of four and a Cub Scout den leader, so she normally waits for her children to

These Alabama teens don't think of waking up early as a sacrifice, but rather see it as an opportunity.



THEIR JOY WAS FULL BY WALTER RANE

Through studying their scriptures in early-morning seminary, youth like Jay and Amy find strength and comfort.

go to bed so that she can have some quiet time to study the lessons and prepare for the next day's class.

Amy agrees that seminary has brought many spiritual benefits into her life. "I have a better understanding of the scriptures," she says. "Sometimes during the day I find myself thinking about scripture masteries I've learned, especially Moses 1:39."

When asked what their favorite lessons from the past few months have been, both Amy and Jay agree that they enjoyed the lessons about Nephi's journey to the promised land with his family in 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi. Jay says these chapters have been the most memorable so far.

"Whenever I read those chapters, I think about how I can make it through any trial that is placed in my way. Just like it says in 1 Nephi 3:7, 'I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.' He had such great faith and trust in the Lord, and in turn

the Lord placed great trust in him. That is something that I want."

Jay and Amy's efforts have not been lost on Sister Smith. Not only does she get up to teach them, but she is also inspired by her students. "They are definitely the reason I keep doing this," Sister Smith says. "I know they expect me to be there just as much as I expect them to be there. I've enjoyed seeing Amy and Jay grow in the gospel this year. Amy has been a member only for a few short years. She's always excited about the gospel and has a beautiful testimony. Jay tends to be a little quieter, but I know he has a strong testimony and knowledge of the gospel as well."

So what is it like to have early-morning seminary earlier than most schools have their classes? Jay says, "I find that I have more peace and patience as I go through school and other activities. It is such a blessing to have the scriptures in my life." Jay, Amy, and Sister Smith are forgivably tired at times but cheerful and positive about regularly attending seminary. They find strength and comfort in overcoming obstacles and fulfilling a prophet's advice to be seminary graduates. **NE**



NOTE

1. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Young Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 81; and "To the 'Youth of the Noble Birthright,'" *Ensign*, May 1986, 43.



PREPARED BY BOOK OF MORMON PROPHETS

Jay and Amy aren't the only faithful teens taking early morning seminary. In Medicine Lodge, Idaho, Dax Tomlinson and Tate Staker, enjoy seminary taught by Dax's mother, Lana Tomlinson. Sister Tomlinson is preparing them not only for the day ahead but also for missions, and both Dax and Tate are excited to serve.

Dax and Tate have been impressed by Book of Mormon prophets who have helped them in their missionary preparation. Tate was particularly impressed by Samuel the Lamanite. Sister Tomlinson had the two young men stand on chairs, and the three of them took turns throwing marshmallows at each other to show how hard it was to speak while things were being thrown at you.

"That was fun," said Tate. "That story helped show that if you have enough faith, you can do anything. I really felt the Spirit when we were talking about Samuel."

Dax was impressed by the stripling warriors. In Alma 53:21 it says, "Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him."

"It teaches me to remember the commandments and choose the right all the time and follow the Lord," said Dax.

With missions in the near future, these young men are definitely being prepared through seminary to be "exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted" (Alma 53:20).



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE TOMLINSON FAMILY

Dax, Tate, and Dax's mother, Lana, discuss Book of Mormon prophets during early-morning seminary. Fresh pancakes are an added bonus.



Just showing up isn't enough.

COME READY

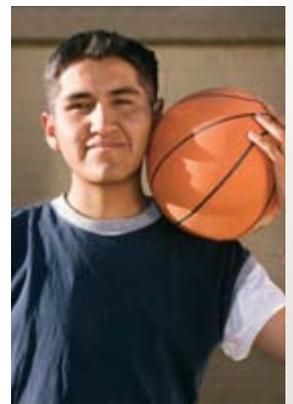
Basketball is one of the most important things in the life of Roger Enrique Velasquez Paredes, who goes by Koki because it's much easier to say when the clock is running down and the game is on the line.

Koki, a member of the Victoria Ward, Puno Peru Central Stake, is a starting forward on the Benson Jazz under-17 boys' team, a community league team sponsored by Church members in Puno, Peru. Koki's team went undefeated going into the championship game each of the last two seasons and took second both years.

His experience on the team has taught Koki not only a lot about basketball but also a lot about living the gospel and making seminary worthwhile.

"Seminary and basketball aren't so different," he says, then laughs. "I have to wake up early for both."

Joking aside, Koki *does* see some important similarities between the game he loves and the gospel he lives: you have to listen to the coach, apply what he's teaching, and not stop practicing what you've learned.



Hearken unto Thy Coach

Koki says his coach is great, but it doesn't matter how good your coach is if you don't listen. Seminary is no different.

"In both basketball and seminary, I have a good coach," Koki says. "But if I don't listen, I don't get any better."

A coach tries to teach a player things that will make him or her better, like how to shoot. "The teacher is doing the same thing," Koki says. Among other things, teachers try to help students succeed against their opponent in life. "They try to teach us how to leave the world and strengthen us against temptation."

Whether it's on the basketball court, in seminary, or in Church callings, Koki Velasquez Paredes of Puno, Peru, knows the importance of listening to a coach's advice and practicing what you learn.



TO PLAY

Alma taught that the Lord teaches people based on the “heed and diligence” they give Him (or their listening and putting into practice what He says): “He that will not harden his heart, to him is given the *greater portion* of the word . . . and they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the *lesser portion* of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries” (Alma 12:9–11; emphasis added).

Koki has learned that just showing up, whether in basketball practice or at seminary and church, isn't enough to make you better. You have to listen to the coach.

Practice What Is Preached

Koki tries to listen while the coach is explaining something new. But he has learned that if he really wants to



understand what the coach is saying, he'll have to put it into practice.

Putting something into practice, or applying it, is an important part of learning, Koki says. A coach can talk all day long about good shooting form and even demonstrate over and over, but until you practice doing what he says, you won't have learned how to do it yourself.

"That's how I learned about prayer," Koki says. He had been taught that consistent personal prayer would invite the Lord's help. "But it was only after I tried it that I found it was true."

Putting gospel principles into practice gives the Holy Ghost an

opportunity to testify to us that the principle is true.

"If we learn something new but don't apply it, it's like we never really learned it," Koki says.

Use It or Lose It

Koki listened when his coach taught about shooting, and he tried to apply what he learned. Now, in order



to improve, Koki has to be diligent in practicing.

Diligence means dedication or persistence in applying what you've learned even in the face of opposition.

"I have to be dedicated," Koki says. "If I stop training, my skills will get rusty."

That's an important lesson he learned after he couldn't practice for a while because he broke his nose in a rough pickup game with some older players.

"If we don't practice, we don't just stop progressing—we lose ground," Koki says. "It's the same spiritually. If we pay attention and apply what we

learn, we can learn more. If not, we lose what we have."

Don't Give Up

Koki's teammates have done their best to listen to the coach and apply what he's taught them. They practice for hours to keep what they've learned.

They've also learned that after all of that, it is possible—and disappointing—to fall short of perfection. "We worked hard," Koki says. "It was discouraging to lose the championship again."

But while immediate perfection isn't guaranteed, it would be impossible if they gave up trying. In the meantime, Koki has seen that there are many rewards, including improvement and progress, that come from trying.

Koki, who is serving as a ward missionary, has seen rewards for being diligent off the court as well. He helped organize movie nights, campouts, and sports activities in order to interest two young men in his ward who hadn't attended church for some time. "At first we'd have to go get them, or they wouldn't come," he says. "Now they come on their own. It took a little time and a lot of visits, but they're coming regularly now."

Between playing basketball, going to seminary, and serving in the Church, Koki is learning what King Benjamin meant when he said we must be diligent to "win the prize" (Mosiah 4:27).

He's also learning that both on the court and off, the rewards are worth the work. **NE**



RYAN STOKER

"I'm glad I earned my backpacking merit badge this summer. It really helped me get ready for school!"



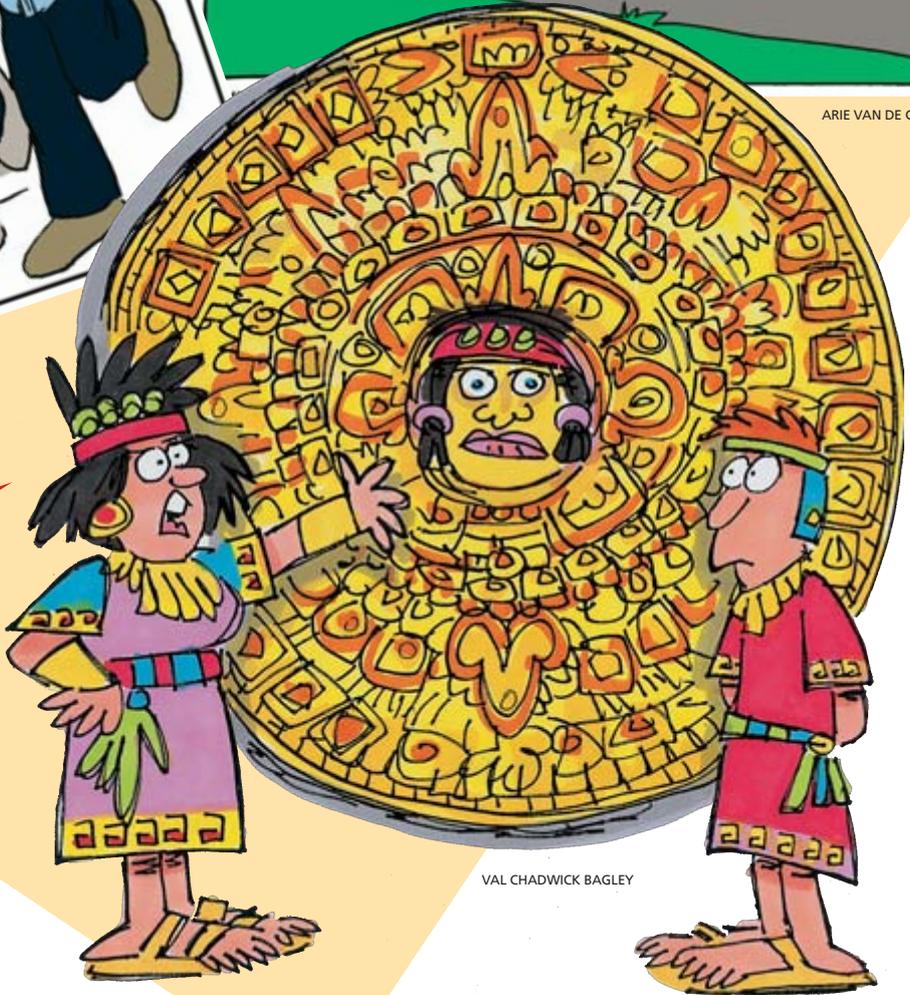
KEVIN BECKSTROM



"Why didn't you just text me?"

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"How could you forget Mom's birthday?! We have it marked on the calendar."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

NEmore
See a different
Extra Smile
online every
week at
newera.lds.org.



Neither of them were breathing when I came to their aid, but the Lord prepared me to save their lives.



GUIDED TO DO FIRST AID

When I started my first summer as a lifeguard, I thought I might have the opportunity to help save someone at work. I had no idea that most of my training would be put to use on the way to and from work.

On my way to work at a water park in Mesa, Arizona, I found myself behind a van with a handicap symbol on the license plates and an elderly woman behind the wheel. I thought, “Great, I’m driving behind Grandma.”

I had been gaining on her and was about to pass her, when to my surprise she swerved off the road into the gravel. I was prompted to get off the road immediately. Many scriptures on the Holy Ghost speak of a “still small voice,” but in this case, it seemed to yell at me to pull over.

As I pulled up, the driver fell out of the van face first onto the rocks and didn’t move. I ran to her and gently rolled her over. She looked like she was about 65 years old. She was scratched, pale, and unconscious.

To the Rescue

I had my rescue pack on my hip ready for work, so I quickly put on my latex gloves and mask. She was not breathing, so I delivered two rescue breaths. Then I checked for a pulse. She had a pulse but still was not breathing, so I began rescue breathing. After five cycles, I again checked for a pulse and breathing. This time she had neither pulse nor breathing. This meant that I had to start CPR.

Doing CPR properly often means you will break ribs. I will never forget the sound her ribs made when they broke. My training and the Spirit helped me to remain calm and

focused during this process. I then continued CPR for two minutes and checked for vital signs. Still no pulse or breathing. I ended up doing three more cycles of CPR before finally she began to cough. I helped her into the recovery position, and at that point I was able to dial 911.

Although we were on a very busy highway, no one stopped to offer assistance. While we waited for help to arrive, I discovered that she had blacked out and didn’t recall why she swerved off the road in the first place. I learned her name and that she was raising two of her grandchildren because their parents had died in a car crash. Finally, a sheriff’s deputy driving by stopped to see what the problem was, and he radioed for an ambulance.

A Police Escort

After the ambulance took her to the hospital, the officer, knowing that I was late for work, gave me a police escort—probably one of the only times those police lights might mean good things for me instead of a ticket. Driving home that afternoon, I thought about what had happened. I had acted like the Good Samaritan. I was the only one who pulled over and helped. I have learned from this experience that if you listen to the Holy Ghost, God can make you a powerful instrument in His hands.

Two weeks later I had another experience where the Spirit prepared me to help someone else. This time I was on the way home from work, driving behind a neon-green motorcycle. Suddenly I saw a large vehicle swerve across several lanes of traffic, going way too fast. The vehicle clipped the back tire of the motorcycle driving in front of



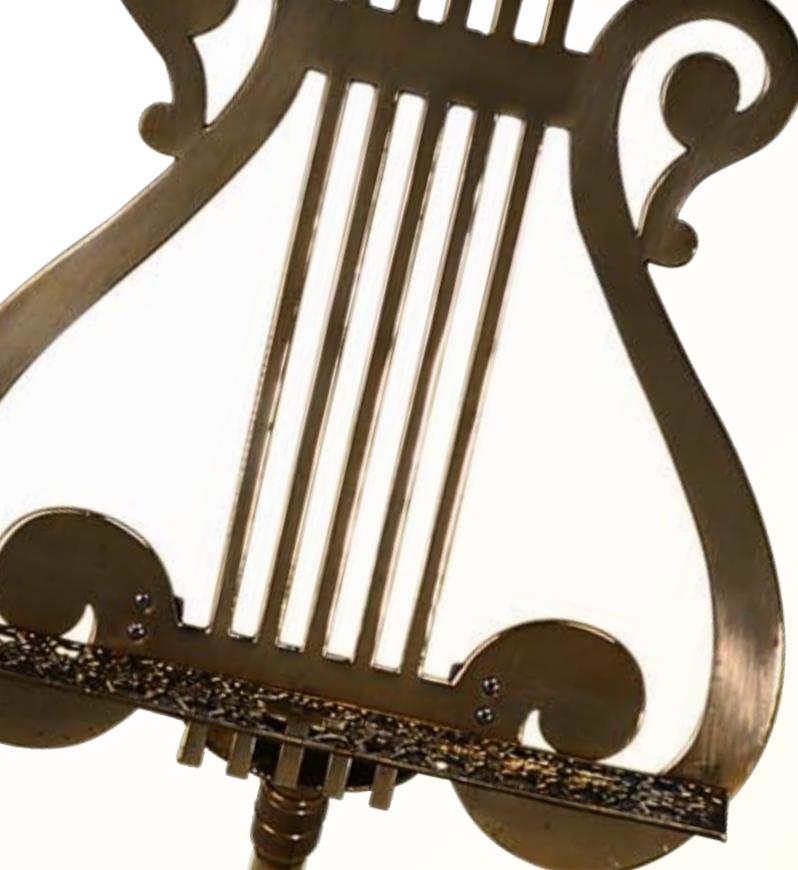
me. While the vehicle swerved left and sped away, the man on the motorcycle went flying. He and his motorcycle rolled down the freeway, finally landing on the side of the road. I immediately pulled over to help. Three other cars also pulled over, but none of the adults seemed certain as to what to do. My training as both a lifeguard and an Eagle Scout kicked in, and, feeling guided by the Holy Ghost to be there at the right time, I took control of the situation. I told the other people to call 911 and assist me with the motorcycle rider.

Stop the Bleeding

The victim's upper left arm had been impaled by a piece of metal tubing. He was bleeding profusely from this injury, and it was very gruesome. I had to get the bleeding stopped before he bled to death, but I didn't have any bandages or gauze. Earlier in the day, before I had left for work, I had felt impressed to put a pocketknife in my truck. Because of this I was able to get my knife and use it to cut up my lifeguarding shirt to use as a bandage to stop the bleeding.

After the bleeding was controlled, I checked the victim's breathing for 10 seconds. He was not breathing and did not have a pulse, so I started CPR. I did two rounds of CPR. Finally he started to cough. I tried to communicate with him, but he lost consciousness and stopped breathing. I completed two more rounds of rescue breathing and was on the third round when the paramedics arrived. The paramedics prepared him for transport. When the paramedics put the victim in the ambulance they said he was alive and stable.

It would be a cool ending to the story if I could say that I know that the man lived, but confidentiality laws prohibited me from finding out what happened to him. However, I once again went home with the knowledge that the Holy Ghost had guided me to be prepared to do my best to help someone in need. **NE**



Changing My Music

JAMMING THE CHANNELS OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATION

The world grows increasingly noisy. . . . Raucous music, with obscene lyrics blasted through amplifiers [is] gaining wide acceptance and influence over our youth. . . .

"This trend to more noise, more excitement, more contention, less restraint, less dignity, less formality is not coincidental nor innocent nor harmless.

"The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer.

"Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Reverence Invites Revelation," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22.

By Sarah K. Perry

I didn't know how much I was affected by the music I listened to, but my brother's mission set me on a path to greater happiness.

I used to listen to music at every possible moment. It got me up for seminary and then on to school. I couldn't drive unless I had a CD to play. The thing was, the music I used to listen to was not happy. It wasn't necessarily bad, but it didn't make me feel good.

I listened to it because it was cool, and because I always listened to it, I never felt good. It changed my attitude about everything I did, the way I saw the world and the people in it. I didn't know how to get out of this cycle of negative emotion. It was a part of my identity, and there seemed to be no way out.

When my brother left on his mission, I was impressed by his willingness to adhere to the strict lifestyle so readily. He wouldn't be able to choose whatever he wanted to read or listen to for two years. I thought about my music, and how I could be doing so much better. I decided that if he could go two years only listening to hymns and Primary songs, then I could at least reconsider my own listening habits.

It was hard, but I immediately gave away some CDs and threw away others. The music that I was so attached to was part of my high school identity, but thinking about my brother's example gave me courage and resolve to change.

For nine months straight I listened to nothing but classical, instrumental, and easy listening. I noticed very quickly that I was happier, I thought more clearly, and my days seemed to go smoother. I was more prepared to feel the Spirit and learn in seminary each morning. My entire outlook on life changed for the better.

After my brother returned, I gradually started listening to some popular music, but I gravitated to positive, upbeat, and clean songs. Going through that musical cleansing period made me more sensitive to how music affected the way I thought and felt. I chose music that made me feel good instead of what was considered popular or cool. I know that these choices brought the Spirit back into my life, and because I have the Spirit with me, I feel lighter, happier, and I am able to enjoy life more fully. **NE**

PHOTOGRAPHS © GETTY IMAGES

FEELING THE Spirit



Teens in the Ipswich England Stake talk about how they know when the Spirit is guiding their lives.



By Janet Thomas

Church Magazines

Three years ago, Edward Pentreath was attending a large youth activity in England, where he lives, when he remembers feeling the Spirit in an overwhelming way.

“After the evening fireside, I went back to my room. I was praying, and suddenly I realized that this gospel is all true. I was so happy. All I could say was, ‘It’s true. I know it’s true.’ I remember calling a good

friend of mine. When he picked up the phone, all he could hear was me saying, ‘It’s true! It’s so fantastic!’ ”

Now when Edward, a member of Ipswich England Stake, describes the feeling he had that night when the Holy Ghost testified of the truthfulness of the gospel, he describes it as a “warm shiver and a tingle which went through my body.” He has learned to recognize that feeling. He says he feels the Spirit often now that his friends are going on missions and as they have opportunities to bear their testimonies at camp, at youth conferences, or in church.

Edward was just one of the teens the *New Era* interviewed in the Ipswich England Stake.

When we began talking about what it is like to feel the Spirit, a change came over each group. As they talked about this special subject, the teens sat up a little straighter, they were focused on what their friends were saying, and their eyes sparkled. When they told of their own experiences, just like Edward, they could remember in vivid detail what it was like to feel the Spirit.

“I felt comforted that everything would be OK.”

Strengthening Each Other

The teens from the different wards in the Ipswich stake enjoy being around each other. They really like going to youth conferences—or conventions as they are sometimes called—where something as simple as singing together can bring the Spirit. Rebecca Fagg remembers attending her first youth convention as a 14-year-old. “I was struggling a bit and finding attending church to be quite a lot of effort. Then I went to the youth convention.

The power of all the youth together made me realize how great it is to be able to go to meetings like that. When we sang, I was overwhelmed by the Spirit. I just burst into tears.”

Music was mentioned several times as a way to feel the Spirit. Seth Spencer, remembering how he felt at youth conference, said, “When you come together and hear about 1,000 people behind you singing, it’s so powerful.”

Simply attending church and doing the things they are asked to do helps these teens in their search for truth. James Mateer said, “I’m deacons quorum president now, and I look out for a few people. I like feeling of the Spirit guiding me. It’s peaceful. I feel happy.”

Parents Can Help

“I didn’t know what feeling the Spirit felt like until the start of this year,” said Tiago Pereira. “I was speaking to my dad, and he really



COMING BACK

Cliff Frances had, as he describes it, “slowly drifted away” from the gospel in his early teens. Three years later, he was invited to attend stake camp with the Young Men. He remembered loving these camps, so he agreed to go. Cliff was unaware that for several years his friends and family members had been praying that something would touch his heart.

Camp was great fun. Then came the last night’s testimony meeting around a campfire. Cliff felt he needed to be there, but he also felt he had slipped so far from the gospel that it may be impossible for him to change. “Something just told me this is the place to be. This is the right Church. It shocked me. While listening to the speakers, I was asking questions in my mind, and every time I asked anything, I would get an answer, literally every few seconds.”

As testimonies were borne, Cliff continued to get answers. “I would think of some doubt, then someone would stand and bear their testimony and tell a story relating to what I was thinking about and would answer my question.”

Overwhelmed, Cliff asked his best friend if he could go to church with him the next day. Thrilled by the news, his friend invited him to come with him. Cliff told him, “I don’t want to come just once. I have to come every week. There’s no way that I can deny it now.”

And Cliff’s life changed. Now he attends church every week. He’s also at seminary too. And he says, “Since I’ve come back to church, I feel the Spirit strongly.”



helped me understand. We were just driving along, and my dad asked me if I had a testimony. At first I said, ‘Well, I’m not really sure.’ Then he asked me to describe the feelings I had when I felt the Spirit. As we were talking, I felt

the Spirit again during our conversation. Both of us were crying by the end. It was good. From then on, it’s been easier to understand when I feel the Spirit.”

Seth Spencer summed up the way many of these youth feel about their parents. “My parents are my great teachers and have taught me since I was young to always listen to the Spirit. Whenever you have that warm feeling, that sort of little whisper in your ear, just follow it.”

“One of my favorite times is every night when I start reading the scriptures.”

Speaking Out

Since the teens in Ipswich are often the only members in their school classes, they are sometimes put into the situation of teaching their friends, not just about the Church but about truths in life.

In Lucy Fagg’s case, she had to stand up for the gospel in class.

The teacher was discussing some things about the Church that were wrong. Lucy tried to avoid confronting her, but her friends kept looking at her and asking, “Is this true?”

Lucy raised her hand. “The Spirit really helped me to know what to say, to tell her and my whole class that I was a member. I also felt comfort, and I was helped to answer the questions that everyone was asking me.”

Mary Mateer had an experience similar to Lucy’s. “One time a girl in my class asked a question, and I couldn’t sit and not say anything. It felt like the Spirit was pushing me. My heart was pounding the whole time. I just remember hearing the Spirit say to me, ‘Speak about Noah. Speak about Moses.’ It was the most amazing experience I’ve ever had. The words concerning Noah were in my mind,

clear as day. I remember looking around the room at the people who were listening. You could see they were really listening. I could tell they felt the Spirit and that what I was saying was true.”

“My parents are my great teachers.”



JOY AND THE SPIRIT

“When we understand that being filled with joy involves being filled with the Holy Ghost, we realize that true happiness comes from repenting of our sins and living worthy of the Spirit. In addition, when feeling the Spirit, we can find great joy in knowing that we are being sanctified before God.”

Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Seventy, “Lessons from the New Testament: The Joy of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 19.

Such experiences give the teens here confidence. They know that they are not alone. They can rely on the Lord for help.

Reaching the Lord through Prayer

For some teens, feeling the Spirit is a daily occurrence. “One of my favorite times is every night when I start reading the scriptures. The Spirit is so strong,” says Joshua Donker. “Every day I look forward to reading my scriptures and writing in my journal.”

When Diogo Serra has a little time left after he has finished taking a school exam, he prays. At first he said very short prayers, but he started thinking that he would pray longer. He says that now “I have a conversation with my Heavenly Father. I tell the Lord about my week, what I’ve done, and ask for help or advice. That really makes me feel closer to Him.”

Times of Comfort

Some of the teens in Ipswich have felt the comforting Spirit of the Lord when they were in frightening situations. Tirion Guy told a story about being on a boat on the River Thames during a windy, stormy day. “The river was choppy, and it seemed to be getting worse. I remember

some of the plates in the kitchen smashed, and the chairs were going everywhere. We had to walk up the sides of the boat so we wouldn’t fall over. While I was on the boat, I felt comforted that everything would be OK. But when we got off, when we were safe and it was calm, then I cried. When I was going through it, I can’t really describe it, but I was comforted.”

Always with Us

Diana Nunes described one thing about the Spirit that everyone seemed to feel but hadn’t put into words. Diana remembered when she had been sent ahead to live with relatives and start school before the rest of her family moved to England. Her father had given her a blessing, promising her that she would have confidence while they were apart. Diana said, “When he finished the blessing, I knew that when I was feeling alone and no one, not even my parents, could help me, the Spirit would be there to comfort me.”

These teens in Ipswich know that there is a place to turn for comfort, for answers to their questions, and to find peace, because they know that the gift of the Holy Ghost has been given to them. **NE**



TO THE POINT

I often ask my nonmember friends to come to church with me.

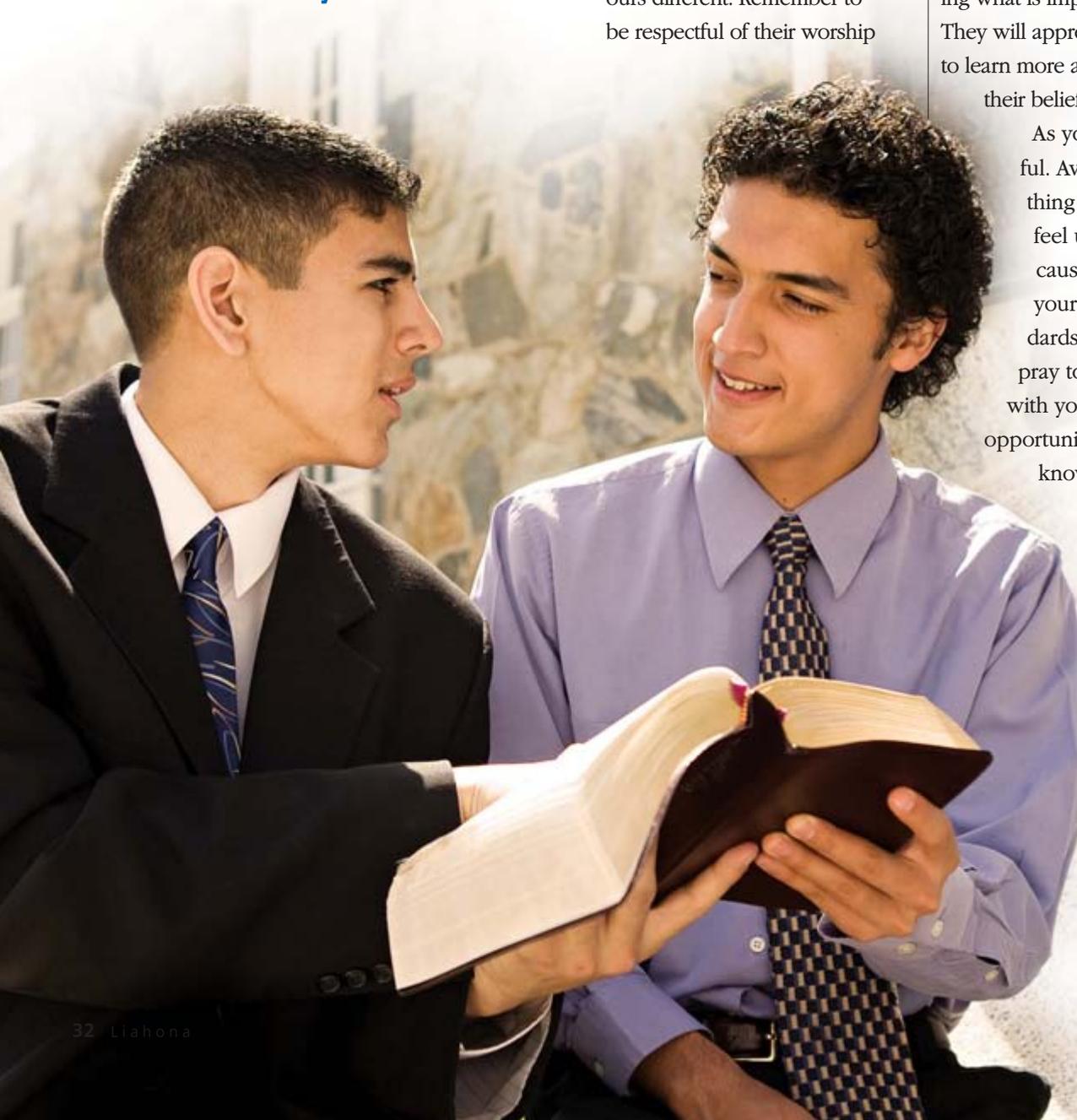
Is it OK to go to church with them if they ask me to?

While you shouldn't ever skip your own Church meetings to go to another church with a friend, it's OK to occasionally go with friends to see their religious services. You'll get a chance to learn about other religions and what makes ours different. Remember to be respectful of their worship

services, just as you hope they will be respectful of ours.

Learning about your friends' religions will probably allow you to talk more openly with them about spiritual topics. Understanding what is important to them can be helpful in explaining what is important to you. They will appreciate your efforts to learn more about them and their beliefs.

As you do this, be careful. Avoid doing anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or causes you to question your beliefs and standards. Before you go, pray to have the Spirit with you. Then enjoy the opportunity to expand your knowledge of different religions and, at the same time, understand more about your own. **NE**



**I wish I could tell the whole world
about the gospel.
But when I try,
I feel inadequate.**

How can I learn to share what I believe?

People share their testimonies in many different ways. Some people can easily bear their testimonies to those around them. Others can write their testimonies in a beautiful style. Others share their faith through music or art. Testimonies are also shared through example, by the way we live.

By sharing your testimony, it will grow, and you will gain confidence not only in yourself but also in your testimony. Pray for help and strength to better develop your ability to share what you believe with others. The Lord has promised that if you open your mouth, it will be filled (see D&C 33:8).

If you fear speaking in front of others, try writing your testimony and reading it to yourself out loud. This may help you feel more comfortable in sharing your testimony. Start by sharing it with family and close friends. Take small, simple steps, relying on the Lord, and over time you will feel more comfortable bearing your testimony in meetings or with anyone you meet.

Don't worry what others might think of you. If they are ready, your testimony will invite the Holy Ghost to touch them. Remember that your testimony

is yours and that it is special to the Lord and to you.

President Thomas S. Monson said: "You possess a testimony; share it. Never underestimate the far-reaching influence of your testimony" ("A Code to Live By," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 8). **NE**



If you fear speaking in front of others, try writing your testimony and reading it to yourself out loud. This may help you feel more comfortable in sharing your testimony.

**In my Sunday School class
some people are irreverent.**

**I've talked to the teacher and
to my bishop. What else can I do?**

First, set an example for the others in your class. Show interest in what the teacher has prepared. If they see that you want to learn, they may realize that what is being taught has value.

Class members will pay more attention when they are involved, so participate yourself and draw them in by asking and responding to questions that will encourage discussion and deeper thinking about the topic.

Pray to have the Holy Ghost bring a calming and inspiring influence to your class so that all of you can learn from the lesson.

Finally, love and forgive those who cause the distractions.

Although you may dislike their behavior, they aren't likely to change if they feel you are constantly angry or that you're looking down on them. Instead, pray for them and serve them. When they see that you care about them and are enthusiastic about the lesson, your enthusiasm could spread. **NE**

Set an example. Show interest in what the teacher has prepared. Participate and draw others in by asking and responding to questions.



By Sally Johnson Odekirk

Church Magazines

*Service is not a one-way street;
it blesses both the receiver and
the giver.*

BE ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

“Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

“For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.”

D&C 58:27–28.

Mowing a neighbor’s lawn, spending time listening to someone who is lonely, lighting up a child’s face with a simple gift. These are examples of service that lift the burdens of others. And to those who offer such service come unexpected and important lessons that also brighten their lives.

Learning Gratitude from Service

John Weir goes to an international school and had the opportunity to do humanitarian service in both Tanzania and Nepal. He feels that he gained as much as he gave from his efforts to help others.

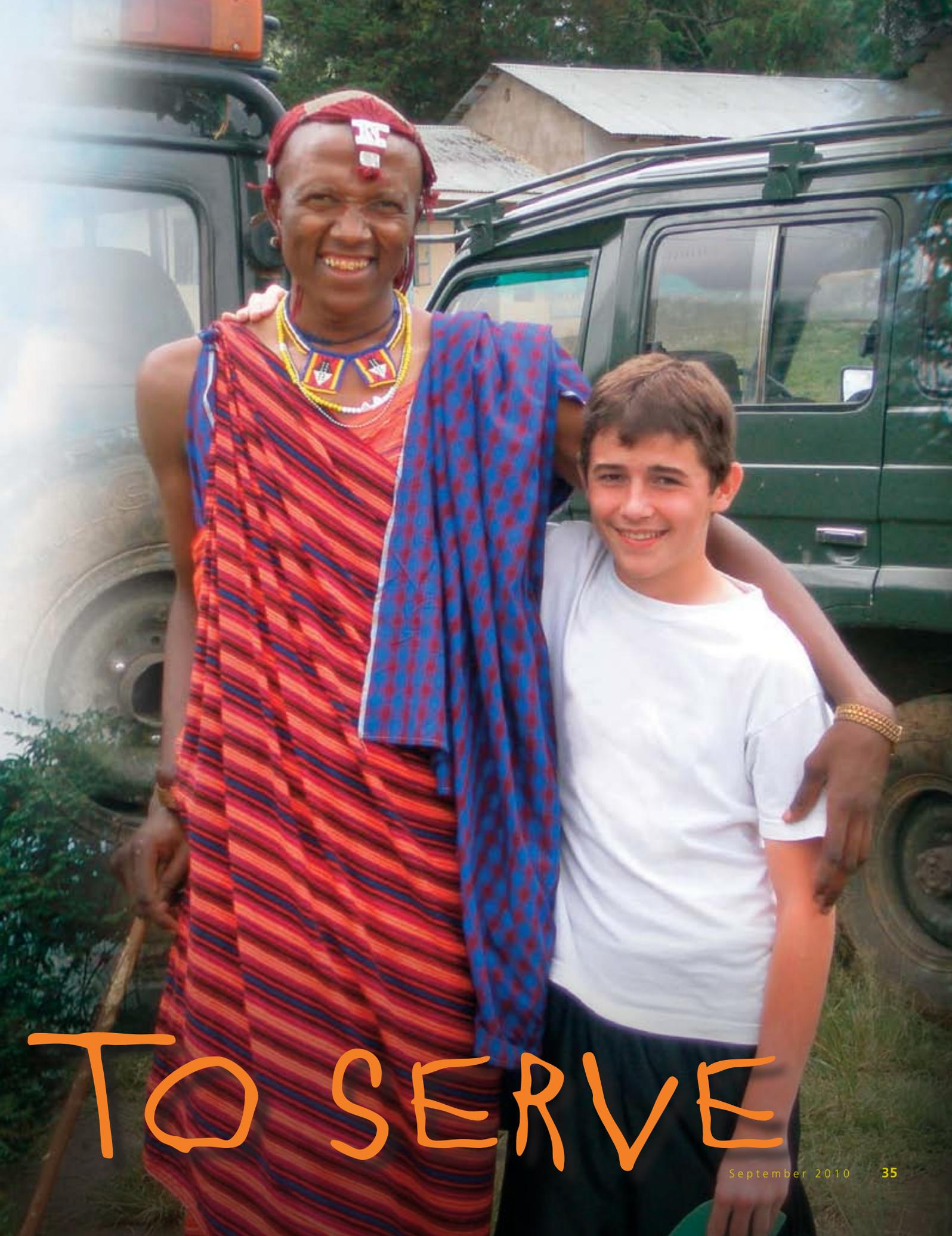
He went to these countries thinking he would see only death, pain, and misery. He says, “I was completely wrong. The people of Tanzania were the most joyful and loving people I have ever met. They were so grateful for everything they had and were always looking out for each other no matter what the conditions were. I had never seen so much joy in someone’s eyes when they received a pencil or a journal from their teachers. I was amazed that something so simple and common in my eyes could be so treasured in someone else’s. I was happy that I could be one of the people who brought them joy.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JOHN WEIR

“The following year I was excited to serve in a children’s hospital in Nepal. The hospital in the mountains of Nepal was a beautiful place except for the injured children with missing limbs and no family. I wanted to turn these children’s frowns upside down. As we talked and played games with them, I discovered that they were strong-willed, fun, and intelligent. This was a surprise to me, because in their circumstances they could be crying every day and looking at the bad things in life. Instead, they did the exact opposite. They were optimistic and tried their hardest to learn and to find enjoyment in life. This taught me to look at the good in life and not dwell on the bad.”

LEARNING



TO SERVE



WHY SERVE?

The Savior set the example of service when He was on earth, and He beckons us to follow Him. He knows that as we serve each other, we become more like Him and can experience joy. He taught: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

Prophets have also given wise counsel and shown us the way:

“What is our greatest potential? Is it not to be Christlike ourselves? And what are the qualities we must develop to achieve such greatness? We might consider intelligence, light, knowledge, and leadership. But perhaps the most essential godlike quality is that of compassion and love—compassion shown forth in the service to others, unselfishness, that ultimate expression of concern for others we call love. Wherever our Father’s children magnify their opportunities for loving service, they are learning to become more like Him” (President Spencer W. Kimball [1895–1985], “President Kimball Speaks Out on Service to Others,” *New Era*, Mar. 1981, 47).

Learning to Serve with Love

Brad Sorensen of the Rose Park Seventh Ward in the Salt Lake Rose Park North Stake learned important lessons about service when he was growing up. His elderly neighbor,

Sister Sparks, had some health problems, and whenever she worked in her yard, his mother noticed and persuaded him to go over and help. At first he didn’t understand why he had to stop what he was doing to go help his neighbor.

“During those years I spent helping Sister Sparks, I learned that there are two different ways to serve others. The first way was when I felt forced, or compelled, to serve. I learned that this is not a good way to serve. Maybe you say, ‘I’ll do it as fast as I can so I can come back and watch TV.’

But the love for the person you are serving is not present. There is no joy in this kind of service. This is how I was at first.”

But then Brad learned about serving with love. “It came to the point that I would go to her house every week and mow her lawn without being asked. I know this was a big help to her, but it was a big help to me, also.

“I found this to be a much more satisfying way to serve. Serving with love is pure, whole-hearted, and full of unselfish concern for the person you are helping. The feeling of accomplishment and love for the person you served cannot be found in any other way. It is an all-around good feeling.

“My acts of service were nothing big, but they were done with love. If you do an act of service with love for the person you are doing it for, you will be much more satisfied with the results. I learned that it doesn’t matter how big or small a service project is; it is still important.”





Learning to Serve Unselfishly

Sister Lee Vashti, Ma On Shan Ward, Hong Kong Tolo Harbour Stake, learned a similar lesson when the young men and young women in the Hong Kong stakes and their parents gathered to assemble gift packages for elderly single residents of the city. Then they separated into small groups to clean the apartments of the elderly and to spend some time talking with those who live alone and typically have few, if any, visitors.

Lee says, "I felt slightly put off when I first realized that I was assigned to clean someone's apartment in the unbearably hot and humid Hong Kong weather. What's more, I was working with another ward's youth who were almost total strangers to me. Only now do I realize that this service activity was about helping others and not about spending a morning with friends."

As she helped clean the apartment and spent some time visiting, she gained firsthand knowledge of how important it is to give time and attention to someone who appreciates the chance to visit.

She says, "The senior's house was well organized, and everything had its own place in the small apartment: a long bench off to the side of the wall with a small TV right across from it and a bunk bed in

the corner of the room. There wasn't much for my group to do, but we still wiped the top of the walls and the lights, and visited with our senior friend. I gained a valuable lesson about my attitude. This was not about me. This was about forgetting my wants and going to help another. Once I understood this simple concept, I realized that I had had fun—even without my friends. Not only had I given service to someone, but I also had made new friends." **NE**

NEMore

For more on service, see "On the Way to a Miracle," Mary Ellen Edmunds, *New Era*, Mar. 1988, 12.

From their service experiences, Brad, Lee, and John each learned valuable lessons about love, reaching out to others, and gratitude. Brad explains the importance of what they learned when he says, "The smallest service is still meaningful to those who receive it, especially when it's given with love."



“I HOPE THAT WE WELCOME AND LOVE ALL OF GOD’S CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WHO MIGHT DRESS, LOOK, SPEAK, OR JUST DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency “You Are My Hands,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 68.

MOVING MOUNTAINS OF MUD



This was not your typical Sunday morning. On this particular February Sunday, members were encouraged to gather after sacrament meeting, and some leaders even ended services early, sending volunteers to help their neighbors.

Over 150 youth and adults from the La Crescenta California Stake gathered with shovels, wheelbarrows, and their bright yellow Mormon Helping Hands vests to help move mud. Torrential rains, combined with

mountains of earth exposed because of burned-off vegetation, had sent rivers of mud down residential neighborhoods in their area. Homes had three to four feet of mud surrounding them and several feet of mud inside as well.

Volunteers cleared pathways through the mud so that homeowners could get to their belongings and salvage what had not been destroyed. Katie Callister, a Mia Maid in the La Canada Second Ward, said, “I really wanted to help shovel the mud out of the damaged homes, but when I got there I saw the terrible destruction. Seeing the residents’ faces turn from devastation to gratitude was such an amazing experience. It made me feel so happy to know that I was helping someone so much and at the same time serving the Lord.”

Tons of mud, rock, debris, and people’s belongings were moved that day by the youth and adults wearing those yellow vests. Many residents commented that they were touched that teenagers would give up their Sunday afternoon to help strangers.



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

2 Nephi 2:13

This scripture says that there really is a God. It says that if there were no sin, then there would be no righteousness. There must be opposition. It is a scripture that testifies of God.

Maria H., 15, Hesse, Germany

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Go to newera.lds.org and click on Submit Your Material.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID A. EDWARDS



MAKING **RIGHTEOUS** CHOICES

will help get you on the path of righteousness and make sure you don't wander.



By Elder Paul V. Johnson
Of the Seventy

A number of years ago, I attended my 20-year high school reunion. I hadn't seen many of my former classmates since graduation day, and I was excited for the opportunity to see them again. Some of these classmates surprised me; a few who were formerly well-behaved youth had since gotten into trouble or seemed to have otherwise changed for the worse. A few others who used to have lower standards were now active Church members, and I could see that the power of the Atonement had been at work in their lives.

However, I noted with interest that the majority of my former classmates were on the same path they had been following in high school. The decisions they had made so many years ago had largely determined where they were today. Many who had been good, righteous teenagers were now righteous adults. And many who had started down the wrong path so long ago were still on that course.

As a teenager, you are faced with decisions every day that can influence the course of your life and will decide what kind of

person you will become. You cannot see exactly where your future will lead, but you can ensure your future happiness by making righteous decisions now. Here are some guidelines that will help you when making important decisions. They will help get you on the path of righteousness and make sure you don't wander.

Gauge Your Decisions against the Standards

Several years ago, I was in the market for a van. My wife and I had nine children, and we needed a larger vehicle. One day, I saw a big 12-passenger van for sale. I contacted the owner, who let me take it for a test drive. I was worried about the height of the van, so I decided to drive it home to see if it would fit in our garage.

I eyeballed the van and the garage door, and it looked like the van was too tall. I got a tape measure and measured the van, then the garage door. Sure enough, the van was too tall. But I wanted the van so badly; I wanted it to fit! So I called my wife out and said, "Come out and watch this. I'm going to





try to pull the van into the garage and see if I can make it.” Luckily, before I actually tried to pull the van in, I thought, *Wait a minute, I know I can't make it!* I realized that I had two reliable standards already. When I looked at the van, I could see it was too tall. And when I measured the door and the van, I could see the van wouldn't fit. Yet I was almost willing to risk damage to the van and the garage by trying to drive it in. My personal desires almost kept me from trusting the standards.

When you have difficult choices to make, use your parents, your leaders, words of the prophets, and the scriptures as standards to see if your decisions fit, so to speak. The *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet is another terrific resource. There's no need to spend a lot of time worrying about many of the choices you're faced with, because the answers are right there in that little pamphlet. It contains very specific guidelines for music, media, dress, and so forth. Follow the standards it contains. Don't be like those who think, "If I look at this standard from a different angle, maybe my unrighteous decision will fit."

Ask If It Leads to Christ

You will find joy as you make choices that help you follow the Savior. Everything our Heavenly Father does is calculated to bring us joy and happiness. "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). On the other hand, Satan's devices always lead to misery. But he tries to disguise this fact. He tells us, "Commit this sin and it will make you happy." But it's a lie. Sin always leads to misery. Remember Alma's words to Corianton: "Wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10).

Mormon's counsel in Moroni 7 is very wise. In verses 16 and 17 he says: "Wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

"But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil."

When you are faced with an important decision, be sure that your choice will lead you nearer to Christ.

Be Courageous

It is important that you come to understand how the Holy Ghost works in your life. Learn to recognize and understand the Spirit's gentle promptings, and have the courage to always follow them. When you are faced with a hard decision, following the Holy Ghost can make all the difference.

I remember once, while on a break from high school, a friend and I decided to go hiking through the slot canyons in southern Utah. We drove for several hours to our destination and then hiked to a nice campsite by the river and spent the night.

When we got up in the morning, all my excitement for our hiking trip was gone. Instead, I had a feeling that we ought to return home. For more than two hours this feeling kept bothering me; then suddenly, it went away. I felt so relieved because, frankly, I was afraid to share my feelings with my friend. We'd spent so many hours driving and hiking to our campsite and planned to spend

several more days hiking and camping. I was afraid of what my friend would think of me if I said, "I think we ought to go home."

After lunch, my friend left the campsite to be alone for a few minutes. When he returned, he said, "I think we'd better go home."

"I do, too," I said. We cut our trip short and went home.

Today I still think about that experience. I didn't listen to the Spirit—or at least I didn't act on the promptings I felt—and the Spirit left me. I am grateful that my friend had the courage to listen and follow.

You also have the Holy Ghost to give you direction. You know what is right. You can feel it. You know when you're not supposed to watch a certain movie or play a particular video game. You may be tempted to ignore or go against the promptings of the Spirit because you are afraid of how others will react to your decision. Be courageous and do what you know is right.

Now Is the Time

As a teenager, you face challenging decisions on a regular basis. The choices you make now will shape your character and help to determine the person you will be years from now. Don't wait until you're an adult to figure out how to recognize the Spirit; learn now. The Lord will be generous in providing you with opportunities to *feel* what is right. If you learn to recognize and follow the Spirit, your life will be blessed forever, and you will receive the guidance you need in making important choices. **NE**

When you are faced with an important decision, be sure that your choice will lead you nearer to Christ.

Miracle at a Stoplight

He was on a scooter, waiting for the light. I had only seconds to talk to him.

By Benjamin Hayford

As my missionary companion, Elder Platt, and I were walking through a market in the streets of Taichung, Taiwan, we stopped at a main intersection and waited at the red light. Just after stopping, I heard a familiar sound behind us. As several scooters pulled up beside us, I turned to see who we could talk to. At that moment, a distinct impression filled my heart and my mind. No voice was spoken, no words were uttered, but I felt impressed that I needed to talk to the man on the scooter just a few steps to my left.

I moved with a sense of urgency to speak with the man. It felt as if someone was actually pushing me from behind and moving my feet for me. I opened my mouth and asked the man, “Are you having a good day today?” He looked at me and responded that he was having a bad day. At that instant the stoplight turned from red to green, and my heart fell. I was afraid the man would drive away. I had said nothing to him of the Restoration of the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, of the

Prophet Joseph Smith, or of the Book of Mormon. I had not even told him the name of the Church.

The people around us began to drive off, but the man did not. He suggested that we move to the side of the road to talk more. I was shocked, but I gratefully complied with his suggestion. At the side of the road, Elder Platt and I shared with him the name of the Church and much more.

A few weeks later, that man, Su Meng-Wei, and his two sons and two daughters were baptized and confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

From that experience, I learned that as we faithfully strive to do the Lord’s work in His way and on His timetable, we are sometimes privileged to witness miracles. The prophet Moroni declared that “God has not ceased to be a God of miracles. Behold, are not the things that God hath wrought marvelous in our eyes?” (Mormon 9:15–16). Miracles can come with the touching of hearts and the changing of lives.

Preach My Gospel contains this

promise to missionaries and members of the Church: “The Lord is preparing people to receive you and the restored gospel. He will lead you to them or He will lead them to you.

... Such people will recognize that you are the Lord’s servants. They will be willing to act on your message.”¹ It was no accident that Elder Platt and I were at that specific stoplight at that exact time.

Heavenly Father knows and loves each of us individually. In no coincidental way, He provides a way for all of us to come to a knowledge of the restored gospel. The Lord was mindful of the challenges and difficulties in Su Meng-Wei’s life. He knew that Su Meng-Wei had recently become unemployed. He knew that contentious words had been spoken in the Su house that morning.

The gospel has brought more peace to the Su family and has strengthened their family relationships.





It has helped them find greater happiness and direction in life. They have found the power to face life's challenges with hope and without fear.

We may not see it at first, but those who have been prepared will recognize that we are the Lord's servants. They will notice something different about us. They will see goodness and will want to know more about it. As they feel the Holy Ghost, they will be willing to act on our message. Just as this message has touched the hearts and changed the lives of the Su family in Taiwan, so it can and will touch the hearts and change the lives of those we know, wherever in the world we may be.

Praying for guidance, we can daily ask ourselves this question: whom do I know that the Lord is preparing to come to a knowledge of the restored gospel? Exercising our faith in this way, we will be ready to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost and open our mouths to share the precious truths we are blessed to know.

Marvelous opportunities are sure to follow. **NE**

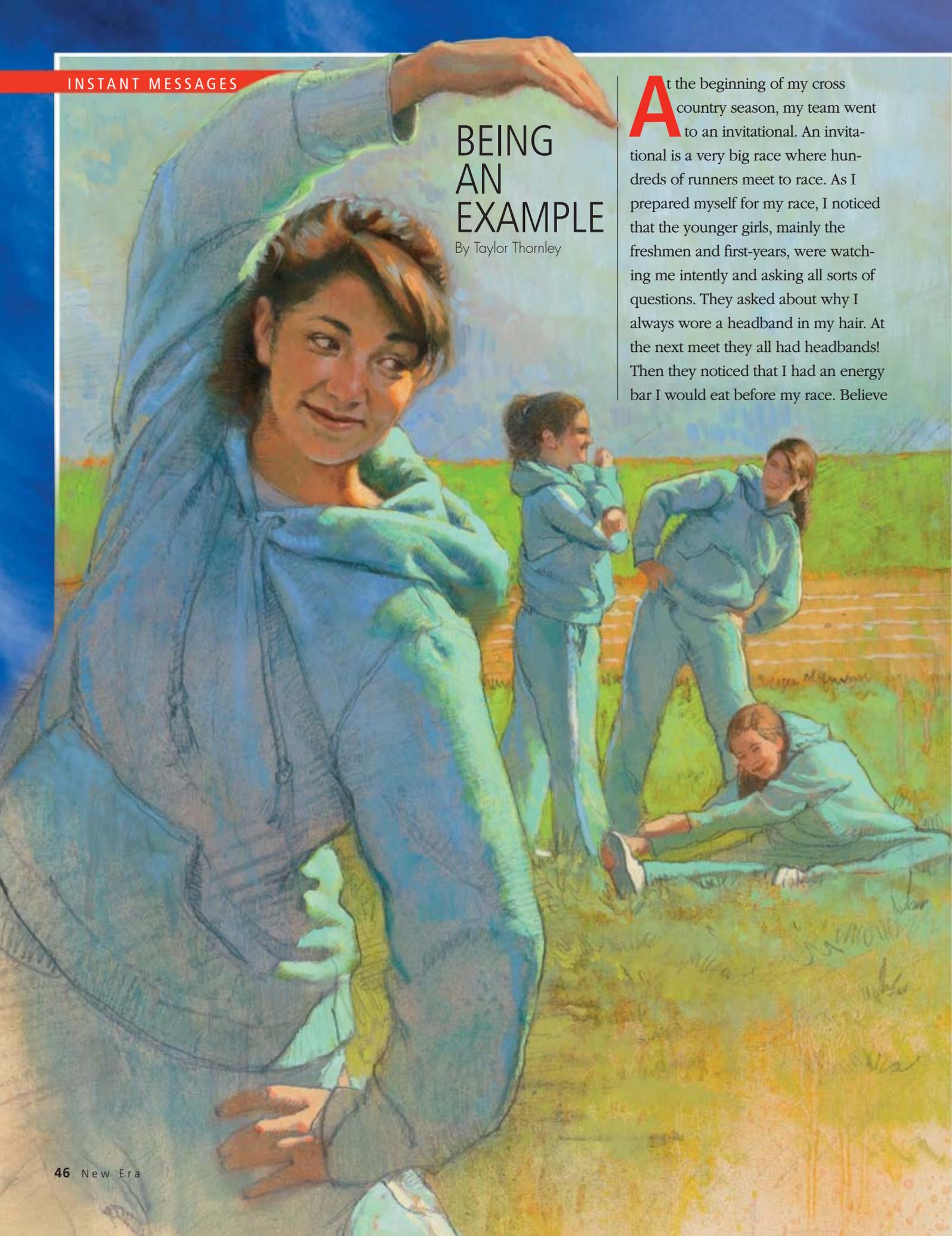
NOTE

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 155, 156.

BEING AN EXAMPLE

By Taylor Thornley

At the beginning of my cross country season, my team went to an invitational. An invitational is a very big race where hundreds of runners meet to race. As I prepared myself for my race, I noticed that the younger girls, mainly the freshmen and first-years, were watching me intently and asking all sorts of questions. They asked about why I always wore a headband in my hair. At the next meet they all had headbands! Then they noticed that I had an energy bar I would eat before my race. Believe



it or not, at the next meet they all had energy bars, and they were the exact same flavor! At first it caught me off-guard because I wasn't used to being the experienced one, and not too long ago I was doing the watching, trying to learn from the older kids who seemed to have so much knowledge and wisdom. This was a really interesting experience for me, and it was really quite cool. I felt like a celebrity.

To a large majority of the world, we are considered a different kind of people. We live a clean, mellow life in contrast to the partying lifestyle. I had the opportunity to travel to several different colleges throughout the United States on recruiting trips. While this was an extremely fun and exciting experience, it was also a huge eye-opener for me. The girls on the teams I was being recruited by had never even heard of Mormons. On every single trip, I ended up explaining my beliefs. They were shocked by some of the things I told them, but this was a real testimony builder. As I told them what I believe, I felt an even stronger testimony growing inside me.

It was on one of my last trips when I had a really neat experience. I was just reading my scriptures before going to bed, and my host (the girl on the team assigned to me for the recruiting trip) asked me about what I was reading. That opened up an incredible conversation in which we ended up talking late into the night. After that, she thanked me and explained how much she had needed to hear what I had to say at that time. I know without a doubt that the conversations I had on my other trips had helped me prepare for this time, and since I was ready, I was able to say the

MY TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH SMITH

By Steven Martineau

I wanted to prepare for my mission and was pondering some things that would strengthen my testimony. I knew that building up my testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith would greatly strengthen me and prepare me for my mission in the future.

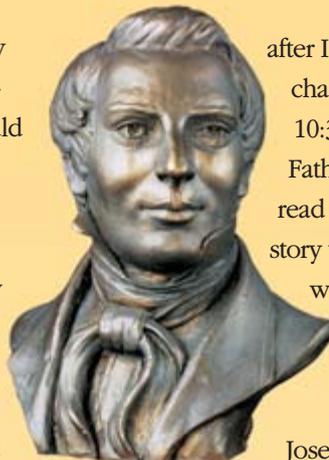
At about this time I heard Elder Glenn L. Pace speak at the Cape Girardeau Stake and then at general conference. His words went deep into my mind.

He challenged everyone to prayerfully read and study the Joseph Smith story. I had read the story before but had not read it prayerfully. I decided now was the time to do so. After general conference I found myself with some free time, and I was inspired to prayerfully read the Joseph Smith story. I desired a testimony of Joseph's story so that my faith would be unshaken and so that the Book of Mormon would mean more to me.

As I prayerfully read the holy scriptures, I was filled with the Spirit, and

things I needed to by inspiration.

Being an example is so vital to spreading the gospel. Many times in my life I have been surprised by how much people really watch me, like with my experience in cross-country. I know that people watch us a lot more than we realize, so what can we do but live the gospel and be an example in our daily lives. Just by living the right way and upholding our standards, people will notice that and respect it. On my



after I read, I took Moroni's challenge found in Moroni 10:3–5. I prayed to Heavenly Father asking if what I had read about the Joseph Smith story was true. I felt a burning within my bosom that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, and I knew that the things Joseph Smith told were true.

I am so thankful for my

testimony of Joseph Smith. I know that Joseph Smith did see God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and that Joseph, through the ministering of angels, did restore the only true Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days. I am thankful for my testimony because I know that this is a good start in preparation for a future mission. I am also thankful for my testimony because now I am certain that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God and that no one can shake this testimony. We can all gain a testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith by prayerfully studying the Joseph Smith story with an intent to gain a testimony, and this knowledge fills my heart with joy. **NE**

visit I refused to go running on Sunday and was extremely surprised when they just respected that and didn't give me any more hassle. By being an example, we can be models to those who might be looking for direction in their lives. Just like those younger girls in cross country, people will often imitate the qualities they want to attain that they see in us. After that experience I have always tried to be a good example in all of my actions. **NE**

DATING ISSUE

Thank you so much for the April 2010 issue. It gave me a lot of pointers, and I especially enjoyed "What's the Deal with Boys/Girls?" Thank you for the support and spirit you bring into my life.

Chandler A.

I am living in the United Kingdom, and out here casual dating is a dying tradition. Many go straight into serious relationships and become too emotionally attached too quickly. They attend many Church activities but do not meet anyone new as they spend their time with their date. I have learned for myself that dating before 16 is not the way forward. It can distract you from what is important in life. I feel that the time before we are 16 is when we need to draw closer to God, gain a testimony, and work to become the best person we possibly can. Serious dating should be saved for when you are mature enough to understand it and to meet new people and learn how to interact with members of the opposite sex. Soon I will turn 16, and I hope that the Lord will give me the knowledge that I need to be the best date I can be and to look at what qualities I wish to have in my future spouse.

Jacob W., United Kingdom

SCOUTING

I enjoyed "A Pillar Supporting the Priesthood" (Feb. 2010) and the example of Brandon Campbell helping kids play sports. I am

I feel that the time before we are 16 is when we need to draw closer to God, gain a testimony, and work to become the best person we possibly can.

enjoying the Aaronic Priesthood and Scouting. My deacons quorum works together to earn a lot of merit badges. I am striving to have the right attitude and do what is right so that I can be a missionary just like my older brother. The priesthood and Scouting allow me to move toward that goal, with all of the fun activities, friends, and service projects.

Nic H., Wyoming

GOING TO THE TEMPLE

I had just gone to the temple for the first time the day before I read the article "I Loved Going to

the Temple" (May 2010). She had all the same feelings I did, and I'm glad to know that she loved going to the temple, too.

Lindsay T., North Carolina

STORIES ABOUT REPUTATION

I have some health issues that weaken my body and mind, but I am thankful that I can understand and enjoy the *New Era* articles. Recently I read the February 2008 issue, and I was so impressed with two of the stories that I read them out loud to the rest of the family so they wouldn't miss out. I really appreciated the articles "Too Fast" and "What I Learned from Lisa." They reminded me of an experience when I went to a rental car agency where I had worked 10 years earlier. When I asked if I could test drive a car, the sales manager remembered me and told me that I could drive any car I wanted to. He said, "One thing I remember about you is your integrity and honesty." I was honored that someone would remember that about me a decade later. I hope I can always be worthy of that type of reputation.

Bryan N., Idaho

We love hearing from you. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking Submit Your Material.

Or you can e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org

*or write to
New Era,
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420,
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024.*





Not Just a Photograph

By Heather E. Thomson

Black and white faces on the page—
Their solemn eyes stare into mine.
Ancestors from a different age
Are calling me through space and time.

Oh, what are held in dusty faces
Behind the stern and fixed stare?
What lies beneath the frills and laces
Of fancy gowns the women wear?

Their lives could not be simply names
And dates and places of the past.
The stories of these men and dames
Will live again—be told at last.

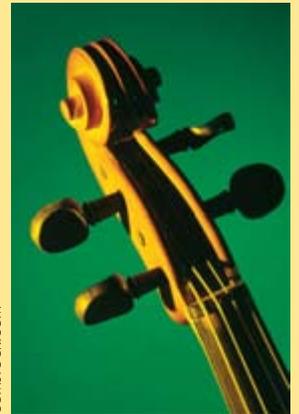
WHAT'S ONLINE



Want a glimpse inside the temple? You can have an open house experience by visiting a scale model of the Salt Lake Temple. Go to newsroom.lds.org and look for the news story from May 28, 2010. You'll also find information about how the 88-inch tall replica, now on permanent display in the South Visitors' Center on Temple Square, was created.

Eager to share the gospel? Invite a friend to visit the new Mormon.org, which includes stories and testimonies from members of the Church all over the world.

Tired of the same old tunes? Here's an inspiring alternative—music that explores gospel themes on the Mormon Channel at radio.lds.org. Each of 20 episodes focuses on a gospel subject, such as faith, repentance, service, charity, and sacrifice.



COMSTOCK.COM

What's on the New Era Web page? Review the gallery of Mormonads, read the experiences of LDS youth, download music, find links to videos, get answers to your gospel questions, and more, at NewEra.lds.org.

