

Liahona

POINTING US ALL TO JESUS CHRIST

PRAYER: HOW TO RECOGNIZE ANSWERS, 2

WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES? 8

THE INVITATION TO PRAY

MARCH 2025



“We believe all that
God has revealed,
all that He does now
reveal, and we believe
that He will yet reveal
many **great** and
important
things pertaining to the
Kingdom of God.”

—Articles of Faith 1:9



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Photograph by
Leslie Nilsson



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

HEAVENLY FATHER WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU

Let your faith in Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son help you part the veil and receive the Father's voice.

We are sons and daughters of God, sharing the earth together far from our heavenly home. This is our mortality, a time to receive our body, choose good over evil, “taste the bitter, that [we] may know to prize the good” (Moses 6:55), grow our faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and His sacred Atonement, and embrace our Father’s plan of happiness. We are here to become more like our Heavenly Father.

Without a memory of our premortal life, we, at times, feel lonely for the world we left behind. Our Father has given us a spiritual gift to remain connected to Him and to receive guidance, direction, and comfort from Him. We know this gift very well; it is called prayer.



PRAY TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

To Adam and Eve and all who would follow them, an angel instructed, “Thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:8).

Jesus taught: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). “When thou prayest, . . . pray to thy Father . . . in secret” (Matthew 6:6). “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9).

Jesus prayed continually to His Father. “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). “And . . . he departed into a mountain to pray” (Mark 6:46). “And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray” (Mark 14:32). While on the cross, Jesus prayed for the soldiers who crucified Him: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The scriptures counsel us to “pray always” (Luke 21:36; 2 Nephi 32:9; 3 Nephi 18:15; Doctrine and Covenants 10:5; 19:38; 20:33; 31:12). “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good” (Alma 37:37). In addition, we “render all the thanks and praise which [our] whole soul has power to possess” (Mosiah 2:20), recognizing all that our Father does for us.

President Russell M. Nelson explained: “Spiritual self-esteem begins with the realization that each new morning is a gift from God. . . . He preserves us from day to day and supports us from one moment to another (see Mosiah 2:21).”¹

Nephi said, “If ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

With the example of our Savior and the counsel of angels and prophets through the centuries, we clearly know to pray daily to express gratitude for our blessings, and to keep a prayer in our heart constantly. We have the responsibility to communicate with our Father.

But even more glorious, our Father in Heaven responds to our prayers. A thoughtful question in this mortal world is, how do we better receive and understand the answers, direction, and comfort coming from our Father?

Through my more than seven decades of life, I know that our Father speaks to us. We are not alone. Heavenly beings watch over us and help us as we seek to follow the Savior.

Receiving answers to our prayers begins with our faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36). We trust in Him, do our very best to keep the commandments, and look for His hand in all things. “In nothing doth man offend God . . . save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:21).

God’s hand in our lives does not mean that He causes the evil or terrible tragedies that are in our world. However, it does mean that in your times of difficulty and unfairness, He will stand by you, strengthen your abilities, comfort you, and “consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain” (2 Nephi 2:2).

HEAR HIS VOICE

As we have faith in Him and keep His commandments, we naturally learn to better hear His voice.

In September 1993, my first year as a General Authority, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, invited my wife, Kathy, and me to attend a Brigham Young University devotional with him. Remember, 1993 was before the widespread availability of smartphones, social media, and the internet.

In his talk, titled “The Voice of the Spirit,” President Faust warned: “In your generation you will be barraged by multitudes of voices telling you how to live, how to gratify your passions, how to have it all. You will have up to five hundred television channels at your fingertips. There will be all sorts of software, interactive computer modems, databases, and bulletin boards; there will be desktop publishing, satellite receivers, and communications networks that will suffocate you with information. . . . The voice you must learn to heed is the voice of the Spirit.”²

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught of the still, small voice of the Spirit in recounting an experience of John Burroughs, a naturalist, as he was walking with friends through a crowded park. Here are President Packer’s words:

“Above the sounds of city life [Mr. Burroughs] heard the song of a bird.

“He stopped and listened! Those with him had not heard it. He looked around. No one else had noticed it.

“It bothered him that everyone should miss something so beautiful.

“He took a coin from his pocket and flipped it into the air. It struck the pavement with a ring, no louder than the song of the bird. Everyone turned; they could hear that!

“It is difficult to separate from all the sounds of city traffic the song of a bird. But you can hear it. You can hear it plainly if you train yourself to listen for it.”³

President Packer’s teachings of the Holy Ghost occurred in 1979, a time when life was much quieter and the noise of the world was much more subdued than it is now.

President Nelson taught, “If you are paying more attention to feeds from social media than you are to the whisperings of the Spirit, then you are putting yourself at spiritual risk.”⁴

President Faust said, “If we are to hearken to the voice of the Spirit, we too must open our ears, turn the eye of faith to the source of the voice, and look steadfastly towards heaven.”⁵

This voice of the Spirit comes to both our intellect and our feelings. “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart” (Doctrine and Covenants 8:2). Listen to your conscience—revelation often begins there.

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we naturally learn to better **hear His voice.***



PRAY WITH A BELIEVING HEART

Answers and impressions cannot be forced. We pray and we wait with a believing heart. Some answers will not come in this life, but to the righteous, the Lord will always send His peace (see John 14:27). Answers often come when we are praying to help those around us. At times, they come “line upon line, precept upon precept” (Doctrine and Covenants 98:12).

The voice of heaven can come to us at unexpected times and in unexpected places, but we find our most notable opportunities in quiet spaces and sacred places. In the stillness of my early morning prayers and ponderings, I find unusual blessings. A daily, personal, uninterrupted reading of the scriptures, while routine at times, brings the voice of the Spirit into our hearts like fire at other times.

At times, the impressions are specifically from what we are reading, and at other times, what we are pondering brings an answer to a very different concern. Remember the words of Elder Robert D. Hales: “When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures.”⁶

As the noise and distractions of the world swirl around us, the Lord has directed His prophet to build more and more temples. In these sacred houses of the Lord, as we leave our challenges outside but enter with our prayers and concerns, we are taught the truths of eternity.

A year ago, President Nelson gave us this remarkable promise: “My dear brothers and sisters, here is my promise. Nothing will help you *more* to hold fast to the iron rod than worshipping in the temple as regularly as your circumstances permit. Nothing will protect you *more* as you encounter the world’s mists of darkness. Nothing will

bolster your testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement or help you understand God’s magnificent plan *more*. Nothing will soothe your spirit *more* during times of pain. Nothing will open the heavens *more*. Nothing!”⁷

Each general conference brings additional abundant blessings. In the coming month of April, once again, we will meet in general conference to hear the voice of the Lord. We come to general conference having prayed and prepared. For each of us, there are pressing worries and earnest questions. We come to renew our faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ, and strengthen our ability to resist temptation. We come to be taught from on high. I promise you that as you prepare and come prayerfully to the sessions of general conference, you will feel answers to your concerns, and you will know that “heaven’s hand” is upon you.⁸

Have faith that your Heavenly Father is speaking to you. He is! Let your faith in Him and His Beloved Son help you part the veil and receive your Father’s voice. I testify He is there and loves you more than words can say. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy Cometh in the Morning,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 68.
2. James E. Faust, “The Voice of the Spirit” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 5, 1993), 2, 3, speeches.byu.edu.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “Prayers and Answers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 19.
4. Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), Gospel Library.
5. James E. Faust, “The Voice of the Spirit,” 4.
6. Robert D. Hales, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” *Liahona*, May 2024, 122.
8. See Neil L. Andersen, “The Voice of the Lord,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 126.



During a visit to the Girls' Home Boys' Town Complex in Markina City, Philippines, in February 2024, Elder Andersen taught the young people that they are children of God: "He loves you. And you can appeal to Him. He will hear your prayers."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf speaks during a special conference of the Jerusalem District at the BYU Jerusalem Center on April 22, 2023.



MINISTRY OF APOSTLES

A WORK THAT
NO OTHER CAN DO

*How the worldwide ministry
of the Lord's modern-day Apostles
touches individuals for good.*

By Shaun Stahle

Church Magazines

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, Melanie, had just settled into their seats to hear their grandson's school Christmas concert when the principal approached and asked if Elder Rasband would welcome the audience.

As he stood and looked over the crowd and the band—all eager for the program to begin—he thought to merely welcome the guests and wish them a wonderful evening. But then he remembered his apostolic call to always stand as a special witness in all places. “Ladies and gentlemen,” he said, “I cannot miss the opportunity [at this] season of the birth of Christ to bear witness of His name and of His ministry.”¹

Wherever they go, whomever they meet, the Apostles' message is an affirmation of Jesus Christ as the redeeming Son of God. “First and foremost, all the time, we are witnesses of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ,” said Elder David A. Bednar.²

“Jesus Christ is the reason we are here,” Elder Dale G. Renlund told Relief Society sisters at a devotional in London last year. “I absolutely know that He lives! . . . The real miracle happens in your life when you know it yourself.”³

“How can I help build their faith in Jesus Christ?” said Elder Quentin L. Cook to members in Sydney, Australia, recounting how that question has framed his messages for many years.⁴



**Each Apostle brings
unique talents and
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Each is different in
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Elder David A. Bednar and his wife, Susan, greet people after speaking at a meeting in Toluca, Mexico, on November 5, 2023.

Their teachings reveal a sense of urgency and yearning they feel for others to rise in holiness to see and feel the Savior and experience His atoning grace (see 3 Nephi 11:15). Their teachings are drenched in love and understanding. Their plea to repent is gentle yet firm. Their longing for members to grow in the things of God is as obvious as it is undeniable. When people hear a testimony borne by an Apostle, hearts can be touched and lives changed.

WITNESSES OF JESUS CHRIST

Each Apostle brings unique talents and experiences to bear on his assignment. Each was distinguished in his career. Each is different in personality and style, yet they share common qualities. They are happy, positive, and reassuring to be around. So often, those who meet an Apostle of Jesus Christ are impressed with their courtesy and genuine nature.⁵

There is an urgency about the Apostles to get things done—a drive to bless, bring comfort, and bear witness.⁶

“For three decades, it has been my honor and privilege to associate with the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” said President Jeffrey R. Holland, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve. “Without exception, every one of these men has helped me become a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

“As we gathered recently to take a quorum photo, I felt a sense of immense gratitude to be part of an ongoing order of ancient and modern-day disciples of Jesus Christ.

“The names and faces . . . in this quorum change over time, but that which is essential remains: each apostle has accepted the charge ‘to be a special witness of the name of Christ in all the world’ [see Doctrine and Covenants 107:23]. No sweeter work could ever be given to anyone, nor any finer group of men with which to do it.”⁷

“Feelings of gratitude for the Savior overwhelmed me today as we considered His sacrifice in two special locations,” said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, while touring sacred sites in Israel in 2023. “We visited the Garden Tomb,” where the body of Christ could have been laid.

“We also visited the area considered by some to be the Garden of Gethsemane. As we walked among centuries-old olive trees, we listened to scripture verses describing the Savior’s solemn sacrifice on our behalf in the garden and on the cross.

“Jesus Christ’s agonizing experience in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross deserve our complete respect and total reverence. Similarly, the wonderful events that occurred on the third day following His crucifixion deserve to occupy a place of awe and eternal gratitude within our hearts and minds.

“As a disciple of Christ, I am blessed to proclaim my testimony that He lives!”⁸

In a social media post about reverence for the Lord, Elder Gerrit W. Gong encouraged, “Let us always speak with warm and reverent gratitude for God’s work and glory and the merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice.”⁹

PREPARING AN APOSTLE

“It takes the Lord a long time to school an Apostle,” President Russell M. Nelson said. “When that man is called to the Twelve, the Lord has something

unique He expects that man to contribute.”¹⁰

Along the path of each Apostle come tests—“examinations in courage and patience”¹¹—always soul searching, sometimes life-threatening.

“There is always a test,” President Nelson said, describing the work in the Lord’s service. “Are you willing to do really hard things? Once you’ve shown you’re willing to do your part, He will help you.”¹²

While addressing members in Australia, Elder Cook gave a glimpse of his experience by telling how members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have felt unprepared and inadequate just as ward leaders sometimes feel.¹³ “To be an Apostle, in the service of the Lord, is very humbling,” he said.¹⁴

As a newly called Apostle, Elder Neil L. Andersen explained that although he felt inadequate and humbled, he took comfort in that the Lord had blessed him with at least one qualification: “I do know with perfect and certain clarity through the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, the Beloved Son of God.”¹⁵

“I’ve been asked what it feels like to be the newest Apostle,” said Elder Patrick Kearon the day after his call to the Quorum of the Twelve.

“I’ve had every conceivable emotion, and I know this is far beyond me. But I will plead for help. I do absolutely believe in a loving Father in Heaven and His Son, our Savior. And I know that They will help. And I’m counting on it. And I will do my best to become, over time, something along the lines of an Apostle that you might have in your imagination.

“And so on this day when I’m struggling, 24 hours after the call, to come to terms with this, if you’re having a day that you feel stretched . . . beyond your wildest imagination, well, I’m right there with you.”¹⁶

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AMBASSADORS TO THE WORLD

Referring to Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, in which the Lord calls the Twelve Apostles to be “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world,” President Nelson observed: “Each member of the Twelve is an Apostle for the whole world. He needs to learn about every part of the world, along with the people and languages and history.”¹⁷

Their work spans the globe. They meet with heads of state, local dignitaries, the media, and members of the Church in large and in private settings. The hours can be long and the demand great. As ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, their lives are no longer their own.

During a tightly booked, 12-day global ministry tour last year through six European countries—where sleep often came during a night flight between countries—Elder D. Todd Christofferson met with government leaders, full-time missionaries, and local Church members.

Of note was a meeting with the Minister of Culture and Media in Croatia, where he offered Church assistance to help the many refugees flooding into her country from war-torn Ukraine. “We . . . found that there were a lot of different ways . . . we could collaborate, especially [in helping] those who are in great need,” Elder Christofferson said.¹⁸

Elder Dale G. Renlund shakes hands with Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in Phnom Penh on January 22, 2024. The historic meeting represents the first time a Church leader has met with the head of government of the Kingdom of Cambodia.



During a nine-day journey to several African countries last year, Elder Gary E. Stevenson visited the Makuburi Health Center in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where the Church is helping to expand the center. “When we see the service that is being provided to mothers and children here,” said Elder Stevenson, “our hearts are touched.”¹⁹

To mark the 30-year anniversary of the Church in Cambodia, Elder Renlund met with Cambodia’s prime minister, whom he described as “a remarkable individual.”

The Apostle, a former cardiologist, told the prime minister that the Church of Jesus Christ was donating nearly US \$2.2 million so that a cardiac center can be added to a hospital in Siem Reap, located about 200 miles (320 km) north of Phnom Penh, to bring better health care to those like the prime minister’s uncle, who died from an acute coronary syndrome.²⁰

“I had the privilege to be with members, leaders, and missionaries in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and in Kyoto, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Sapporo, and Tokyo, Japan,” said Elder Ulisses Soares after visiting the Asia North Area in 2024. “In every meeting or personal interaction, I felt the incredible love and faith these people have for the Lord. Their marvelous conversion stories touched me deeply and strengthened my testimony of Jesus Christ and of His restored gospel on earth.

“. . . What a blessing it was for me to feel the Spirit of the Lord and His love among these great disciples of Christ in these countries.”²¹

WORK OF THE APOSTLES

Opening doors to the gospel in various countries is a key apostolic responsibility: “The Twelve being sent out, holding the keys, to open the door by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:35).

In President Nelson’s experience as a member of the Twelve, doors to the gospel have been opened differently. Sometimes the Spirit worked on a government leader until “he began to change his mind about us,” President Nelson said. Another time a man who was unwilling to talk with Church leaders was removed from office, and the Lord gave “us a man we could talk to.” In each case, President Nelson said, “the message [from heaven] to me was the same: ‘Work your heart out. . . . Take the risks. Then when you can’t go any further, I’ll help you.’”²²

The joy of an Apostle’s work, they say, comes when balancing the challenging needs of speaking to large groups as well as ministering to the individual. They visit members in their homes to give a blessing, express gratitude, or provide needed counsel.

Elder Bednar said: “The Lord sends a member of the Quorum of the Twelve to specific places at particular times where we encounter faithful Latter-day Saints and others who often are struggling or are in need of comfort and reassurance. God orchestrates those interactions.”²³

At times their service is very public, like when Elder Stevenson took part in a high-profile news conference in Nairobi, Kenya, that was broadcast on live national television. “A question that might be on . . . your minds is, ‘What is an Apostle?’” Elder Stevenson said during the broadcast. “We . . . are called to go into the nations of the world and bear witness of the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.”²⁴

“It’s all about Him,” said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf. “We are representing Him. It is all about God and His greatness and His importance for the happiness of His children.”²⁵

Their work is sometimes closer to home—literally. Elder Bednar was repairing the roof on his home one day and went to a local store to purchase some

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it is undeniable.**

supplies. He was wearing work clothes: casual pants and shoes, a T-shirt, and a baseball hat.

“A man approached me as I was selecting my supplies and said, ‘Elder Bednar, the disguise is not working.’ We laughed, and then he inquired, ‘Do you mind if I ask you a question?’

“I responded, ‘Well, that is why I am here.’

“He replied quizzically, ‘What do you mean?’

“I said, ‘. . . I am here because God knew we were going to meet each other in this store and that you had something about which you wanted to ask. Please go ahead and share with me your question.’

“We talked in the aisle for about 15 minutes, and I tried to help

Elder Neil L. Andersen poses for a photograph on February 22, 2024, in Jaime Cardinal Sin Village, Manila, Philippines, where the Church repaired three water tanks.



him find the answer to his question. Was it merely a coincidence that I encountered this good man at the local store? Or was this episode divinely orchestrated by a loving Savior who . . . responded to the concerns of a faithful man—a one?

“I believe that in the work of the Lord there is no such thing as a coincidence. The worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”²⁶

FACING CHALLENGES WITH FAITH IN THE LORD

Vast and complex problems face today’s Apostles. They seek inspiration as they teach and minister to a worldwide congregation of more than 17 million Church members being tested by challenges such as political unrest, pornography, relentless

social media pressures, or economic uncertainties. Conflict between nations disrupts the work. The erosion of traditional values challenges social stability.

Members of the Twelve are sobered by their responsibilities and eager to build faith in an increasingly faithless world.

“Clearly the power of the Lord is moving on the leaders of the Church, nudging them with . . . urgency,” said President M. Russell Ballard (1928–2023), Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The question we must all ask ourselves is, ‘Are we keeping pace with [our leaders]?’ Each one of us must be prepared to answer that question. I can assure you that it is a subject of considerable discussion among the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. . . . This is not the time to relax or to coast in our callings. . . .”

“ . . . We must be prepared to keep pace with our leaders, stride for their every lengthened stride.”²⁷

“As followers of Jesus Christ, we seek to become like our Savior and follow His example in all we do,” said Elder Uchtdorf. “From the very moment we set foot upon the pathway of discipleship, seen and unseen blessings from God begin to attend us.

“No matter where we are, you and I can walk in the path of discipleship today. Let us be humble; let us pray to our Father in Heaven with all our heart and express our desire to draw close to Him and learn of Him.”²⁸ ■

To see the Apostles’ latest teachings in general conference, visit [gc.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.gc.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). To see firsthand reports on their ministries, visit their social media pages on Instagram or Facebook.

Additional information, photos, and source citations can be found in the Gospel Library version of this article.





**By President
Camille N.
Johnson**

Relief Society
General
President

*As covenant
women,
God's power
transforms us,
strengthens us,
and gives us
confidence.*



***Amy Johnson (with her
daughters, Dottie and Goldie)
finds that keeping her covenants
blesses her with peace.***

OUR COVENANTS HELP US DRAW UPON GOD'S POWER?

Each of us has the opportunity to make sacred covenants with the very God of heaven. We make these covenants as we participate in priesthood ordinances. As we keep these covenants, He blesses us with His power.

Recall with me President Russell M. Nelson's prophetic direction concerning how to access power from God: "Every man and every woman who participates in priesthood ordinances and who makes and keeps covenants with God has direct access to the power of God."¹ This direct access to the power of God is a gift He generously shares with His children.

What does this power, which flows from keeping the covenants we make through priesthood ordinances, look like in your day-to-day life? How does a covenant woman draw upon this divine power?

I hope a personal example will help you as you do the spiritually invigorating work to learn for yourself what it means to be endowed with God's power.

One day I received a text message from my daughter-in-law Amy: "Say a prayer for Dottie."

My granddaughter Dottie hadn't slept the night before. Amy had been up all night with her and said that Dottie was feverish. Amy gave her some medicine, but Dottie was still hot and restless. And my son Connor was traveling for work and not scheduled to be home for another two days.

When morning finally arrived, Amy found Dottie's lips blue. Her hands were likewise blue and cold to the touch. Amy immediately had the impression, "Get Dottie to the pediatrician." She heeded that prompting, called the pediatrician's office, and was assured they would get Dottie right in.

Fortunately, the pediatrician's office is across the street from my mom's house. Amy felt impressed to drive by my mom's house. My mother was working in her yard and happy to take Dottie's four-year-old sister, Goldie,

while Amy took Dottie to the pediatrician. It was an answer to Amy's concern about needing to keep track of Goldie and attend to Dottie at the same time.

The pediatrician found that Dottie had pneumonia, likely from aspirating some bath water a few days earlier. Dottie was treated with antibiotics and spent the rest of the day in her mother's arms, elevated to open her airways and ease her breathing.

I offered to pick up some dinner on my way home. And Amy let me, for which I was grateful. I wondered how Amy had managed after a sleepless night, the stress of having a sick toddler, and the need to attend to Goldie.

I walked in their home with the sack of take-out food and found Amy and the girls peaceful. There was a spring in Amy's step and light in her countenance. She was calm, even facing another night alone with sick Dottie. She wasn't afraid. She was confident. It was a peace that defied understanding. I just wanted to sit in the moment and soak it in.

Amy strives to keep her covenants with God and is blessed by His strengthening power. The Spirit had prompted her to take the actions she did to care for Dottie. And the Lord's power enhanced her capacity to address her family's needs in patience and love and with a calm reassurance that all would be well.

This is the blessing of God's power, available to us through sacred covenants and because of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. This power transforms us, strengthens us, calms us, gives us confidence, brings us peace, and increases our capacity to fulfill our divinely appointed responsibilities as women. ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Everlasting Covenant," *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 10.

BELONGING



→ IN GOD'S PLAN AND IN THE TEMPLE

Three principles remind us that we all can receive the blessings God offers His children.

By Danielle Christensen

Priesthood and Family Department

I sat in a group of members of the Church. We had never met each other before, but we all had one thing in common: we were single.

Now, I want to back up for a second. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are not defined by labels. Our true identity, President Russell M. Nelson taught, is that we are “literally spirit children of God.”¹ I understand that out of necessity we call some members of the Church single. There are practical reasons for that. But sometimes, as seemed to be the case in this situation, it can contribute to making members feel like outsiders. It may even make it difficult for them to feel fully included in God’s blessings of salvation and exaltation.

You see, we were talking about the temple—and some people in the group felt that being single excluded them from receiving a fulness of temple blessings. I understand; when you aren’t married in a family-centered Church, it can be hard to see how you fit in. But I also know that the Lord does not judge whether a person is worthy to receive promised blessings based on outward appearances or labels. He “looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7) and makes His blessings available to all who choose to follow Him. I believe this with my whole heart. So, with that in mind, here are three principles to help Latter-day Saints who are single know that they belong in God’s plan and in the temple.



1

GOD DESIGNED HIS PLAN FOR EACH OF HIS CHILDREN.

Because the new and everlasting covenant of marriage is needed for exaltation, it may seem that God’s plan wasn’t made for those who are single (see Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–3). But Elder Patrick Kearon taught: “Our Father’s beautiful plan, even His ‘fabulous’ plan, is designed to bring you home, *not* to keep you out. No one has built a roadblock and stationed someone there to turn you around and send you away. In fact, it is the exact opposite. God is in relentless pursuit of you. He ‘wants all of His children to choose to return to Him,’ and He employs every possible measure to bring you back.”²

God does not intend to send away those who are single from enjoying the blessings He offers. President M. Russell Ballard (1928–2023), Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, “Scriptures and latter-day prophets confirm that everyone who is faithful in keeping gospel covenants will have the opportunity for exaltation.”³ Each soul has great worth in Heavenly Father’s eyes—so much so that He sent His Only Begotten Son to die and redeem us all from sin so we may have the gift of eternal life (see John 3:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–12).

If life unfolds differently than expected, we may find ourselves questioning our purpose in God’s plan. Yet His plan never guaranteed our lives would all look the same. We don’t know what joys, frustrations, successes, or heartache may come our way. President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “There is so much we do not know that our only sure reliance is to trust in the Lord and His love for His children.”⁴

We may not know why our path looks the way it does right now. But trusting in God and in His love may bring clarity about how He designed His plan for all His children—including you.

2

THE TEMPLE HOLDS PERSONAL BLESSINGS FOR EVERYONE.

We might think of sealings as applying only to a husband and wife. But in addition to uniting couples with the Lord, sealings unite families forever. Through sealings, all of God’s children can enjoy eternal blessings if they keep their covenants.

The sealing power validates all priesthood ordinances in heaven and on earth. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “[The sealing power] makes individual salvation and family exaltation universally available to the children of God wherever and whenever they may have lived on the earth. No other theology or philosophy or authority can match such an all-inclusive opportunity. This sealing power is a perfect manifestation of the justice, mercy, and love of God.”⁵ The blessings the Lord offers are so all-inclusive that they are available to everyone who will make and keep covenants with Him.

We may better understand how God’s plan is all-inclusive as we worship in the house of the Lord. Spending time in the temple, President Nelson taught, “will help you to *think celestial* and to catch a vision of who you really are, who you can become, and the kind of life you can have forever.”⁶ He also explained that worshipping in the temple will give us protection, a stronger testimony, comfort, personal revelation, increased knowledge and power, and a greater understanding of God’s plan.⁷

Whether we are married or single, the temple holds personal spiritual privileges for all of us—it is a place that strengthens and empowers all who desire closeness to God.⁸ For more, see the sidebar “Empowered by Temple Worship.”

3

IN THE TEMPLE, WE CAN DEEPEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

In the temple, the main focus is Jesus Christ. He is the center of God’s plan and is the reason we all can receive salvation and exaltation. President Nelson taught: “The house of the Lord is a house of learning. There the Lord teaches in His own way. There each ordinance teaches about the Savior. There we learn how to part the veil and communicate more clearly with heaven. There we learn how to rebuke the adversary and draw upon the Lord’s priesthood power to strengthen us and those we love. How eager each of us should be to seek refuge there.”⁹

We can find refuge and belonging in the temple by looking for the Savior in the ordinances and covenants. In doing so, we will find evidence that He loves us and that “all are alike unto God” (see 2 Nephi 26:33). Because of His love for us, He wants us to form “everlasting ties” with Him and receive access to a “special kind of love and mercy” through our covenants.¹⁰ If we make and keep temple covenants, we can strengthen our relationship with Him, bringing us “hope, joy, and optimism throughout our lives”¹¹—whatever our circumstances. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), Gospel Library.
2. Patrick Kearon, “God’s Intent Is to Bring You Home,” *Liahona*, May 2024, 87.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Hope in Christ,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 55.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Trust in the Lord,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 28–29.
5. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Sealing Power,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 20.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” *Liahona*, May 2024, 121.
7. See Russell M. Nelson, “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” 121–22.
8. See Russell M. Nelson, “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” 121.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Liahona*, May 2020, 90.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 5.
11. See Henry B. Eyring, “I Love to See the Temple,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 30.



EMPOWERED BY TEMPLE WORSHIP

President Russell M. Nelson taught that “priesthood keys . . . make it possible for every covenant-keeping man and woman to enjoy incredible *personal* spiritual privileges.” He encouraged us to read Doctrine and Covenants 109 to learn how the temple empowers us to face challenges. Here are some ways the temple strengthens us:

- When we are in the temple, we are in a sanctified and holy place and the glory of God may rest upon us (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:12).
- We can feel God’s power in the temple (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:13).
- We are taught words of wisdom and can seek knowledge through study and faith (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:14).
- Worship in the temple prepares us to obtain all we need (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:15).
- The Lord pours out blessings on those who repent and reverence Him in His house (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:21).

To learn about more blessings that come from temple worship, read President Nelson’s talk “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” *Liahona*, May 2024, 119–22.



ENDOWED WITH **POWER FROM ON HIGH**



By Jonathan A. Stapley
Church History Department

Like the disciples in the New Testament, Latter-day Saints were promised an endowment of power from the Lord.

In the spring of 1836, Charles Rich was a missionary preaching the restored gospel in southern Ohio. He had to have been disappointed that he arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, on April 12—about two weeks *after* the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

He had traveled by steamship along the Ohio River and then walked nearly 100 miles (160 km). He saw the house of Lord on top of a natural rise in the landscape with its blue walls and red roof. But he was late. He had missed the dedication, the solemn assembly, and, he thought, the promised endowment of power from on high.

In September 1830, just a few months after the restored Church was organized, Joseph Smith received a revelation from Jesus Christ calling members of the Church to gather (see Doctrine and Covenants 29:7–8). A few months later the Lord revealed why. The Saints were to “go to the Ohio,” where, Jesus declared, “I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be *endowed with power from on high*; and from thence, whosoever I will shall go forth among all nations” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:32–33; emphasis added). Church members who heard this revelation would have recognized this language as coming from the New Testament.

NEW TESTAMENT DISCIPLES ENDOWED WITH POWER

Luke 24 begins in a moment of despair. Jesus had been crucified, and a group of His female disciples had returned to His tomb. They found that the stone door had been rolled away, and they “found not the body of the Lord Jesus” (verse 3). Soon angelic messengers gave them hope: “He is not here, but is risen” (verse 6).

Later, the resurrected Lord appeared to His disciples and ministered to them. He gave them what Christians

throughout the world recognize as “the Great Commission” to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus explained that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (verse 47).

However, He instructed His disciples not to leave immediately: “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (verse 49). *Endued* (or “endowed” in modern English) is a translation of the Greek word meaning “to clothe.” The ancient disciples of Christ were to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. Then they were to build the kingdom of God throughout the world.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS ENDOWED WITH POWER

Latter-day Saints gathered in Ohio in the 1830s with a similar intention. They looked forward to being “endowed with power from on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:32) and taking the message of Jesus throughout the whole world. Eventually, the Lord declared that the Saints “should receive their endowment from on high *in my house*” (Doctrine and Covenants 105:33, emphasis added; see also verses 11–12). Still, many of the early Saints didn’t know exactly what to expect.

Not long after calling and ordaining the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835, Joseph Smith met with them about the house of the Lord. Joseph recognized that the Twelve were “anxious” and could not comprehend what was coming. He explained they needed an endowment so they could “be prepared and able to overcome all things” and teach the gospel with power. “When you are endowed,” he explained, the Apostles would “preach the gospel to all nations, kindred, and tongues.”¹

Soon after, Joseph Smith revealed ceremonies patterned after the consecration of ancient Israelite temple



Before He ascended into heaven, the Lord told His disciples, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

priests. In preparation for the endowment, every priesthood officer was washed and anointed “with the same kind of oil and in the manner that were Moses and Aaron, and those who stood before the Lord in ancient days.”²

At this time, the endowment of power constituted a dramatic outpouring of spiritual power during a special solemn assembly meeting. Like Elijah Able—the first Black Seventy in the Church—priesthood officers fasted, prayed, and ate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as a shared meal.³ They testified and prophesied, and God blessed them with power. Those who were endowed then set off to build up the kingdom of God by preaching the restored gospel. Despite opposition, they were protected in their travels, magnified in their preaching, and blessed in their families.⁴

In Kirtland, only men participated in the solemn assembly meeting where they were endowed with power from on high. However, in a few years, the Saints built the Nauvoo Temple. There Joseph Smith revealed expanded temple ceremonies that are the foundation for our temple experience today. In Nauvoo, women as well as men were endowed with power.

Speaking to the Relief Society sisters, Joseph Smith promised that in the temple endowment “the keys of the kingdom” would

be “given to them,” the same “as to the Elders.”⁵ Though it would be several decades before women were called as proselyting missionaries, women and their labor have been integral to building up the kingdom of God on earth.

Although Charles Rich had missed the Kirtland Temple dedication, he learned that he and several other missionaries who had arrived late to Kirtland were going to experience the endowment. After the pattern of the ancient Israelite priests (see Exodus 29; 40), he was washed and anointed. He gathered with the others, fasting, praying, and feasting on the Lord’s Supper.

“We prophesied all night,” Charles wrote. “It was prophesied that salvation was written on every limb and joint” of his body. “I was filled with the spirit of prophecy, and I was endowed with power from on high.”⁶

He spent the rest of his life—47 years—laboring as a disciple of Jesus Christ, building up the kingdom of God.

Since that time, Latter-day Saints around the world have traveled to the house of the Lord to be endowed with power from on high. And like these early Saints, the endowment prepares us to build the kingdom of God as disciples of Jesus Christ and to one day receive exaltation through His mercy and grace. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, “Discourse, 12 November 1835,” 32, 33, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling and punctuation standardized.
2. Oliver Cowdery, diary, Jan. 21, 1836, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling standardized.
3. See Joseph F. Smith, Notes on Elijah Able, undated [likely ca. 1879], Elijah Able biography, note 5, josephsmithpapers.org.
4. See, for example, *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (2018), 1:303–9.
5. Joseph Smith, “Discourse, 28 April 1842,” 37, josephsmithpapers.org. Three days later, Joseph Smith preached a sermon describing the temple, where the elders were to receive the “keys of the kingdom” and be “endued with power” (“Discourse, 1 May 1842, as Reported by Willard Richards,” 94, josephsmithpapers.org).
6. See Charles C. Rich, diary, Apr. 12–16, 1836, in Charles C. Rich Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling and punctuation standardized.



Am I Good Enough?

By William Randall (Randy) Cone, Maryland, USA

I thought I would find faith, love, and spiritual truth by living an alternative lifestyle. I didn't. I found them in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in the temple.

Scan the code
to read more



Who Filled the Font?

By Juan Gideon, Gauteng, South Africa

With no water available from the city, how were we supposed to baptize Megan?

After missing a bus in Nairobi, Kenya, my companion and I decided to share the gospel with everyone we saw while waiting for another bus to our area. We talked to over 400 people.

One of them was Benard, who worked construction nearby. We gave him a Book of Mormon and challenged him to read it daily and ask God if it was true.

Four months later, I was transferred to Nairobi. At my first sacrament meeting there, I saw Benard. He had since been baptized and ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Benard excitedly invited us to visit his home and teach his wife, Megan. As we met with Megan, we were struck by her great faith. When she prayed to know if our message was true, God answered her prayer.

We invited Megan to be baptized the next Sunday. That week, however, the city of Nairobi announced that water would be cut for 10 days! After Megan's baptismal interview on Saturday, my companion and I prayed that her baptism could go forward the next day.

We fasted, counseled with our leaders, and tried different ways to get water—all to no avail. That evening we prepared for the baptism anyway. Then we knelt and prayed again. We felt prompted to hook one end of a hose to the dry meetinghouse kitchen tap and put the other end in the baptismal font. We said another prayer, locked up, and left for home.

The next morning when we went to the meetinghouse, to our amazement the font was full of water! We checked the kitchen tap, but still no water came out. No one from

the branch had a clue as to how the font was filled.

Megan was baptized that day. The whole ward came to witness her baptism and welcome her to the Church. The tap remained dry, but everyone's eyes were wet with gratitude.

President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "The Lord will bless *you* with miracles *if* you believe in Him, 'doubting nothing' [Mormon 9:21]. Do the spiritual work to seek miracles."¹ I know that because my companion and I did the physical and spiritual work—praying, trying different options, and following spiritual promptings—we saw a miracle from the Lord. ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Power of Spiritual Momentum," *Liahona*, May 2022, 100.





Check the Gate

By Brandon Burton, Utah, USA

While serving on a ranch, I learned a valuable lesson about always following promptings from the Holy Ghost.

Near the end of my time as a young service missionary, I followed a prompting to serve two days a week at a dude ranch in Utah for military and survivor families. I had absolutely zero experience with anything even related to ranching, but I was excited.

Early in my time there, I was asked to clean the horse stalls. My good friend and companion with whom I went teaching in the evenings, Elder Saltern, was assigned to show me the ropes.

Reaching the last stall to clean one day, I followed Elder Saltern in. In my mind I received a gentle impression to ask about closing the gate behind us. I brushed off the thought and got to work cleaning.

The horse in the stall, Shrek, was one of the biggest horses at the ranch. He started shifting nervously as we cleaned. Suddenly, Shrek darted out of the stall through the open gate and raced past the other horses outside in the corrals.

Thankfully, one of the experienced folks at the ranch grabbed a bucket of oats and quickly lured the horse back. As she put Shrek back in his stall, she looked at me and asked amusedly, “What did we learn?”

The obvious lesson was to always close the gate. I was reminded of a scripture I had read that very morning that taught me to yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit” (Mosiah 3:19).

When Elder Saltern and I entered Shrek’s stall, I had ignored a prompting from the Holy Ghost to close the gate. I had pigeonholed the Spirit into advising me only on what I thought were “spiritual” things related to the scriptures or the commandments. This experience humbled me. I realized that the Spirit’s knowledge was greater than I had realized—even when it comes to ranching!

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, “Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. . . . When we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help.”¹

I might not have been teaching the gospel on the ranch, as I would do that evening with Elder Saltern, but I was entitled to divine help and direction—even while cleaning horse stalls. ■

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 62.

My Path to Patient Endurance

By Sundae Mae Indino, Misamis Oriental, Philippines

I wondered why I should serve with all my heart and soul if doing so just brought trials.

When I returned home to the southern Philippines in 2016 after serving an honorable mission in the northern Philippines, I was looking forward to attending Brigham Young University–Hawaii and experiencing all the other adventures awaiting young adults.

Suddenly, however, I started losing weight. My doctor diagnosed hyperthyroidism. She scared me with the implications if the disease went untreated.

Despite treatment, my body began to change. My eyes started to bulge, and I became very skinny. I avoided having my picture taken and even looking in the mirror because of my appearance.



Medication slowly began to help. But three years later, I was diagnosed with a second malady—a depressive disorder. These two sicknesses robbed me of self-confidence. I struggled to get out of bed to attend school, and I felt incapable of serving in the Church.

I was angry that God had allowed this to happen. I wondered why I should serve with all my heart and soul if doing so just brought trials? I took comfort, however, from these words by President Jeffrey R. Holland, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Broken minds can be healed just the way broken bones and broken hearts are healed.”¹ I cried when I heard those words. I had a broken mind that needed healing.

I was raised in a faithful home, and my faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ remained intact despite the pain and uncertainty. Gradually, I accepted and adapted to my new circumstances.

Now, eight years later, I am no longer slowed by my maladies. I accept them as a part of life. I feel whole. I can serve and live life fully, though health challenges may continue my whole life. I’ve learned that patiently enduring is part of mortality (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8). I’m learning to drink my bitter cup and remain strong.

I now work in the personnel department of an artificial intelligence company and take online classes at night from Brigham Young University–Pathway Worldwide. I’ve stopped asking “Why me?” and have started asking “What I can learn? How can I benefit from this experience?”

Looking back, I see that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ were with me all the way. Going forward, I know in whom I can trust (see Proverbs 3:5–6; 2 Nephi 4:34). ■

NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 42.

Stay Connected to the Savior

By Josephine Mae Tanner, Beijing, China

As we began to descend from the summit, suddenly my dad and sister were thrown off their vehicle!

One summer my family went on a vacation to southern China, where we rode all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) through a rainforest. When we arrived at the ATV camp, we were surprised when guides gave us full-body protective suits with massive helmets and goggles. It seemed a bit much for amateur riders on such a hot, humid day, but we wore the gear anyway.

After receiving riding instructions, we took off and eventually reached the summit of our journey. There we stopped to drink water and wipe the sweat from our faces.

Our guide then explained that going down would be trickier. We would need to stay close together and form an ATV train, with each ATV touching the vehicle in front and behind to stabilize the group.

As we began to descend, we called to one another to coordinate our descent. We slowly separated, however, leaving a gap between my vehicle and the ATV ridden by my dad and little sister, Vivi. Suddenly Vivi and my dad were thrown off their vehicle! My dad jumped on top of Vivi just in time

to protect her from the ATV rolling over her.

We were incredibly relieved when we saw my dad and Vivi stand up and brush the dirt off their pants. Thanks to the protective gear they wore, my dad sustained only minor injuries. Vivi was terrified but uninjured. When we regrouped, the guide reminded us in a firm voice that we had to keep our ATVs connected if we didn't want to tumble down the hill again.

In life we are sometimes tempted to think we can do things on our own. We think we don't need to put on the protective armor of the gospel, which can feel uncomfortable. Likewise, we may find it difficult at times to stay connected to our Heavenly Father. When we fail to do so, we risk navigating the scary and treacherous paths of the world on our own, prone to severe spiritual accidents and injuries.

If we use the protection the gospel offers and stay connected to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, we can face the challenges that lie ahead in our lives. No matter how scary or daunting the path, with Them we can succeed. ■



God Spoke to the Early Saints— Does He Speak **TO ME?**

By Savannah Lunt • Church Magazines

He spoke to them. He will speak to us.
We just have to hear Him.

A pillar of light. A voice from heaven. A revelation from God. There are many accounts of young adults like Joseph Smith and others in the Doctrine and Covenants who asked God for help and guidance. While receiving revelation from God is an individual experience, the process is recorded time and time again in scripture.

Even though we may not interact daily with the prophet or receive revelations for the Church, God can speak to us in the same ways as He did 200 years ago. These Saints received personalized messages from God—and we can too.



Joseph's Humble Prayer

It started with a question. And it became what Elder Alexander Dushku of the Seventy described as an “overwhelming burst of light and truth.”¹ Joseph Smith’s humble prayer led to a beautiful visitation from Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see Joseph Smith—History 1:14–17). As incredible as it would be to speak with God face-to-face, these experiences are rare and sacred.

While not all of us will have the same opportunity Joseph did, “we too can have our own pillar of light—one ray at a time.”² When we ask a question and kneel in humble prayer, we will receive an answer from God through the Holy Ghost.

The Power of the Temple

The Saints in Kirtland, Ohio, sacrificed time, money, and labor to build the Lord’s house. At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed that God would bless these faithful Saints with power as they entered and worshipped (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:13). The temple was to be “a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 109:16).

In the latter days, we are blessed with temples all around the world. We are promised that we will receive revelation as we attend the temple. President Russell M. Nelson recently said that “in the temple we may ‘receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost’ [Doctrine and Covenants 109:15]. Imagine what *that* promise means in terms of having the heavens open for each earnest seeker of eternal truth.”³



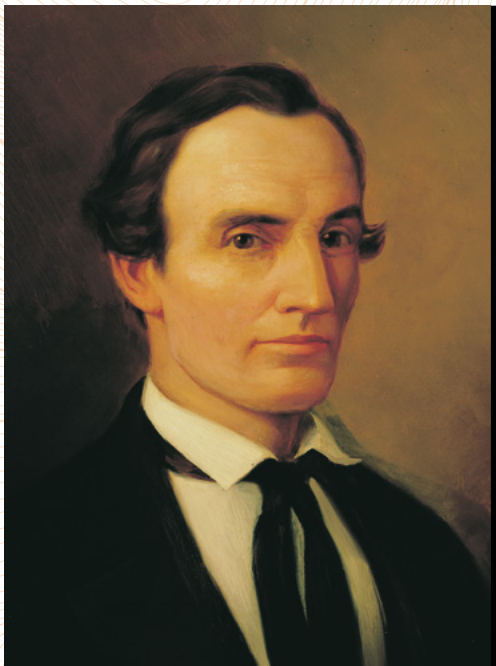
PHOTOGRAPH OF BAPTISMAL FONT IN OGDEN, UTAH TEMPLE



Hyrum's Question to the Prophet

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to ask the prophet to speak to God for you? Hyrum, brother to the Prophet Joseph, did just that. He received this counsel from the Lord through Joseph: “Behold thou art Hyrum, my son; seek the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added according to that which is just” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:23).

Sometimes, guidance does come through other people. President Russell M. Nelson counseled us to “seek guidance from voices you can trust—from prophets, seers, and revelators and from the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.”⁴ While we can’t all ask the prophet our questions directly, we can still receive answers to our personal questions.



Oliver’s Study of Faith

Oliver Cowdery was an invaluable help to Joseph during the translation of the Book of Mormon. But in 1829, he felt frustrated. Why couldn’t *he* translate? The Lord gave Oliver some specific counsel about how to get an answer to his question—counsel that still applies to us today.

When we have a question, we are encouraged to study it out, have faith, and rely on impressions (see Doctrine and Covenants 9:6–9). Our impressions may come in the form of emotions, warm feelings, or peace of mind. As Elder Mathias Held of the Seventy said, “When [logical reasoning and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost] are then combined in our souls, one complete picture shows the reality of things as they truly are.”⁵

The Smith Family’s Patriarchal Blessings

Patriarchal blessings have been part of the Church since Old Testament times (see Genesis 48). When the Church was organized in the latter days, God told Joseph to call his father, Joseph Smith Sr., as patriarch in 1834. Three days later, the Smith family gathered so Joseph Smith Sr. could give a patriarchal blessing to each of his children and their spouses.⁶ These blessings offered counsel and comfort for their lives.

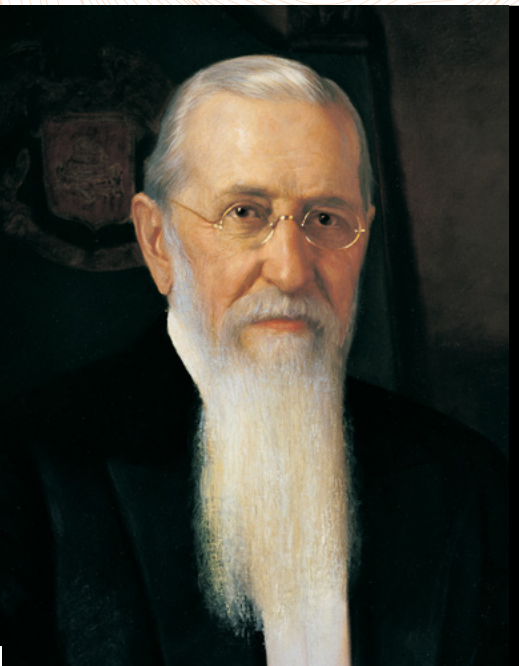
In addition to the declaration of lineage, a patriarchal blessing “is personal scripture to you.”⁷ As we regularly study our own patriarchal blessings, we “should treasure its words, ponder them, and live to be worthy to receive the promised blessings in this life and in eternity.”⁸



Emma’s Personal Direction from God

As wife to the prophet, Emma Smith often struggled with the trials and conflicts her family was asked to bear. In Doctrine and Covenants 25, we can read Heavenly Father’s words of comfort and strength to Emma.

When we’re seeking our own messages of comfort from Heavenly Father, we can ask for priesthood blessings. As President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “Priesthood blessings can help us in the small and great decisions of our lives. If, through our priesthood blessings, we could perceive only a small part of the person God intends us to be, we would lose our fear and never doubt again.”⁹



Joseph F. Smith's Scripture Study

When disease, war, and death ravaged the world in 1918, the prophet Joseph F. Smith turned to the scriptures for answers. After studying Peter's words in the New Testament, he began to reflect and ponder. He was swept away in a vision for the Church where he saw the Savior organizing missionary work in the spirit world. (See Doctrine and Covenants 138.)

As Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures."¹⁰ The scriptures are God's words preserved in writing, and in our digital age, they have never been more accessible to us. As we read and ponder the scriptures, we will find the help from heaven that we need.

Intentional Efforts to Hear Him

President Nelson taught: "As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to *hear Him* need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths."¹¹ Just like the early Saints, we can receive messages from God that are personal and real.

God spoke to them. He will speak to us. We just have to hear Him. ■



NOTES

1. Alexander Dushku, "Pillars and Rays," *Liahona*, May 2024, 14.
2. Alexander Dushku, "Pillars and Rays," 16.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys," *Liahona*, May 2024, 121.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Think Celestial!," *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 119.
5. Mathias Held, "Seeking Knowledge by the Spirit," *Liahona*, May 2019, 33.
6. See "Blessing from Joseph Smith Sr., 9 December 1834," 3, josephsmithpapers.org.
7. Russell M. Nelson, "Thanks for the Covenant" (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 22, 1988), 5, speeches.byu.edu.
8. *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 18.17.1, Gospel Library.
9. James E. Faust, "Priesthood Blessings," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 62.
10. Robert D. Hales, "Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation," *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.
11. Russell M. Nelson, "Hear Him," *Liahona*, May 2020, 89.

Can I Really Trust the Prophet's Guidance?



By Savanna Cummings

I had always chosen to follow the prophet, but could I trust him in this instance?

When I got the call that I would be evacuated from my mission, I was upset and confused. Several months before I was supposed to be released, the First Presidency decided to send me and several other missionaries home based on what I thought were only rumors of a possible international conflict. There wasn't any evidence that anything was going to happen.

I didn't think there was anything to worry about.

Questioning Inspiration

I had always wanted to serve a mission and had worked so hard to accomplish that goal. Money was tight, but I found a job that helped me earn enough to pay for my mission. When I opened my call, it felt so right, and I knew it came from God.

Then, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was reassigned to a mission in Utah for nine months before I made it overseas to my original assignment. I was relieved and overjoyed to finally be where God had originally called me to be.

Then, after just a few months of being there, I was suddenly whisked away from the people and country that I loved. I felt like everything was being taken away from me.

I felt betrayed. I sincerely questioned whether this was an inspired choice.

Begrudgingly, I flew home to Texas. My evacuation was so unexpected that my dad and siblings weren't even at the airport to welcome me home.



A Blessing of Safety

Just a few days after I left my mission, I was shocked when a dangerous conflict broke out close to where I had been serving. In that moment, I realized that following the prophet had kept me safe in a very real way. I was overcome with gratitude for the prophet and his inspiration.

I made a promise to myself that I would always heed what the prophet said, even if it didn't make sense in the moment.

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently said: "Having prophets is a sign of God's love for His children. They make known the promises and the true nature of God and of Jesus Christ to Their people."¹

I really do believe that President Russell M. Nelson is the mouthpiece of the Lord. He works directly with Heavenly Father and the Savior to lead us to safety and give us hope and direction during challenging times.

The Blessings of Following the Prophet

If you're still wondering whether the prophet is called of God, my advice is to act on his invitations. Try rereading President Nelson's recent conference talks and studying the scriptures he recommends. Act on his invitations and study the blessings he promises alongside those invitations.

Elder Soares also taught, "By following [the prophets], our lives are happier and less complicated, our difficulties and problems are easier to bear, and we create a spiritual armor around us."²

I have seen these blessings in my life as I've followed the prophet's counsel. I know that these blessings are available to everyone who puts their trust in God and His prophet. ■

The author is from Texas, USA.

NOTES

1. Ulisses Soares, "Prophets Speak by the Power of the Holy Spirit," *Liahona*, May 2018, 99.
2. Ulisses Soares, "Prophets Speak by the Power of the Holy Spirit," 99.

Cleaving unto Our Covenants



Articles in this month's Church magazines can help you as you seek to "cleave unto the covenants" that you have made (Doctrine and Covenants 25:13).

LEARNING FROM THIS ISSUE

Hear Heaven's Voice

On page 2, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminds us that the noise of the world can distract us from the voice of the Spirit. Are there distractions in your life that make it difficult to connect with God? You could make a goal this month to reduce these distractions, such as spending more time worshipping in the temple or doing a fast from social media.

Help Others Receive God's Blessings

The article on page 18 discusses how Church members can find joy and belonging in the Lord's temple, regardless of marital status. What can you do to help your fellow Saints understand and receive the blessings Heavenly Father has offered to all His children who keep covenants with Him?

Receive and Recognize Revelation

Read the article on page 44 by Elder Christophe G. Giraud-Carrier of the Seventy to find five ideas for receiving and recognizing revelation. In what areas of your life do you need divine guidance? Consider applying the principles taught by Elder Giraud-Carrier as you seek inspiration from God this month.

COME, FOLLOW ME FAMILY FUN

Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79

When the restored Church of Jesus Christ was organized in 1830, the Lord instructed His people to “meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:75). You could try this activity with your family to learn more about the sacrament:

Read the sacrament prayers in Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79. You could help your children understand any unfamiliar terms, such as “sanctify.”

- What three things do we promise that we will do? What blessing does the Lord promise to give us in return?
- What are some ways we can “always remember” the Savior during the week, both individually and as a family?
- Your family may want to try to memorize the sacrament prayers. You could use visual aids to help. Later, ask family members what they learned from thinking about the words of the sacrament prayers.

Find more “Family Fun” home evening ideas each Monday in the Gospel Living app.

FROM FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH MAGAZINE

Overcoming Prayer Hurdles

Find simple ideas for overcoming common obstacles to prayer.

On the Move with the Spirit

Read these tips to help youth discover how Heavenly Father speaks to them through the Holy Ghost.

The Secret to Never Failing Again

Help youth shift their perspective on failure and disappointment.

Youth Fireknife Dancers

Enjoy a visual story of youth fireknife dancers in Hawaii, USA, and what they learn about the gospel through their unique talents.

FROM THE FRIEND MAGAZINE

Get to Know the Gold Plates

Use the timeline in this month’s *Come, Follow Me* section to help your children learn about how the Book of Mormon began.

Hearing the Holy Ghost

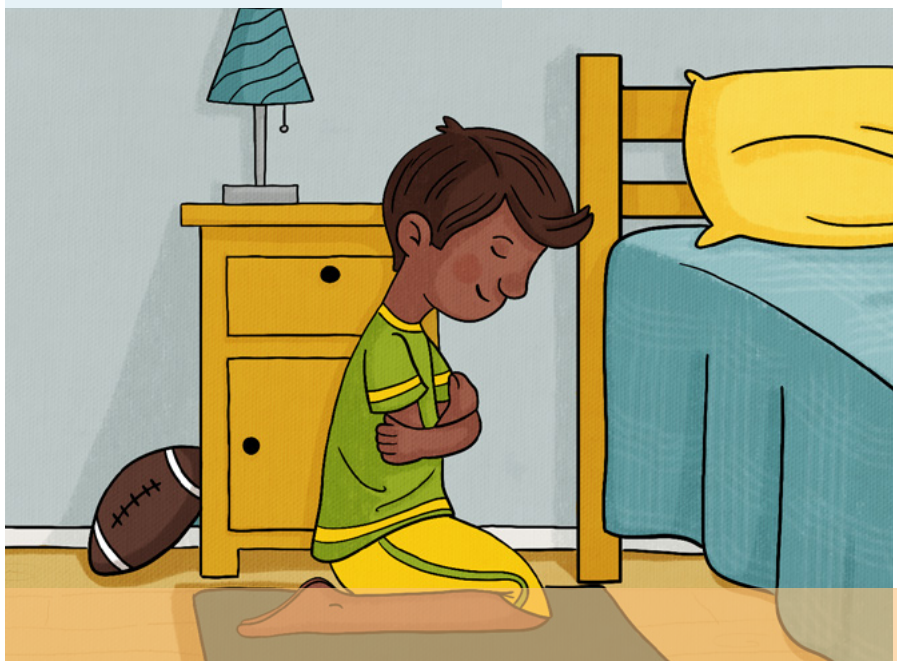
Read stories and sing a new song from this month’s issue to help your children learn how Heavenly Father speaks to us through the Holy Ghost.

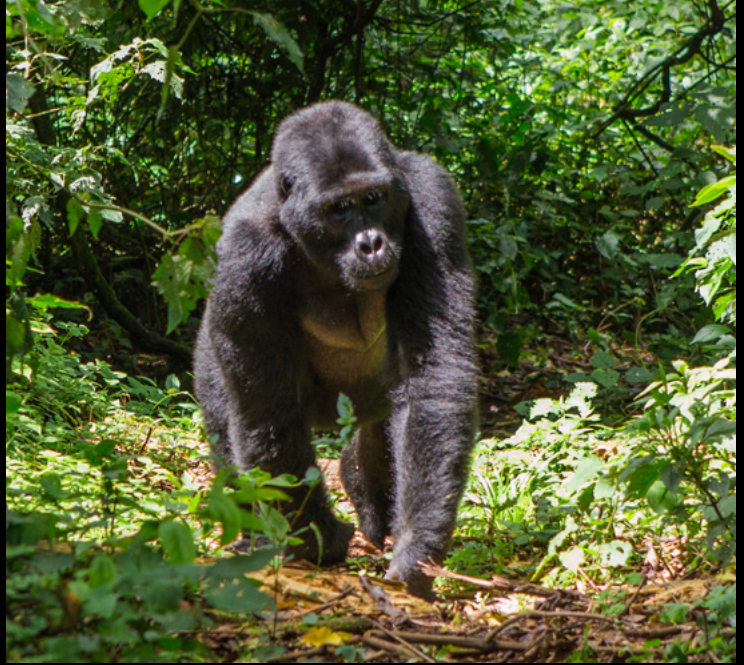
Healthy, Happy Kids

In the For Older Kids section, find resources about emotional wellness and mental health.

Hello from Madagascar!

Meet our friend Lauren and learn how she follows Jesus. Then read more about Madagascar and what the Church is like there.







THE CHURCH IS HERE

Democratic Republic of the Congo



The first converts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were baptized outside the country before returning to their homeland and sharing their faith with others. When missionaries arrived in the DRC in 1986, there were already groups of converts meeting each week. The first stake was formed in 1996, and the first temple in the country was dedicated in 2019. Today, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has:



115,000 members (approximately)



27 stakes, 289 wards and branches, 5 missions



1 temple (Kinshasa) and 3 announced (Lubumbashi, Kananga, and Mbuji-Mayi)

Grateful for the Plan of Salvation

When John Lwamba from Lubumbashi was serving a mission, his older brother passed away. He says, "It was a bit difficult for me to accept because he was the first person in my family to pass away. With the help of my mission president and the scriptures, I was able to accept it, and since that day, this experience has brought me close to the Savior. I know that as He rose up, all my family members who have passed away are going to rise up again."



CENTER: PHOTOGRAPH OF KINSHASA DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TEMPLE





The Restoration of the Sacrament

When The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in 1830, the Lord restored the sacred ordinance of the sacrament. He commanded His people to “meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:75).

This timeline shows how the sacrament has been instituted in different eras. Although the people and places change, in every era the sacrament helps disciples of Jesus Christ always remember Him and have His Spirit with them.



New Testament



Book of Mormon

	New Testament	Book of Mormon
Who	Jesus Christ and His disciples in Jerusalem ¹	Jesus Christ and the Nephites
What	Bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus’s body and blood (see Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:17–20)	Bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus’s body and blood (see 3 Nephi 18)
When	Began around AD 33, the night before the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ	Began around AD 33, after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
Where	In “a large upper room” of a house in Jerusalem (Mark 14:15)	In “the land Bountiful” (3 Nephi 11:1)
Why	To give people the opportunity to remember Jesus Christ and to “renew	

“When ye partake of the sacrament, . . . do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins.”
—**Doctrine and Covenants 27:2**

Ponder

How does knowing the purpose of the sacrament strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ?



Doctrine and Covenants

Joseph Smith and the first members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ

Bread and wine, blessed with specific prayers found in Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79

Began when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830

In the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, USA



Our day

Latter-day Saints around the world

Usually bread and water, blessed with specific prayers found in Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79

Every week in sacrament meetings

In meetinghouses around the world



When Jesus Christ comes again

Jesus Christ and “all those whom [His] Father hath given [Him] out of the world” (Doctrine and Covenants 27:14)

A gathering led by Jesus Christ, where He “will drink of the fruit of the vine with [us] on the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 27:5)

When Jesus Christ comes to the earth again

“On the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 27:5)

their covenant to take upon themselves the Savior’s name, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments.”²

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME, BY WALTER RANE; THE SECOND COMING, BY HARRY ANDERSON

NOTES

1. Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament among His disciples in Jerusalem during the annual Passover celebration, which includes a symbolic meal with bread to remember that God delivered the Israelites from Egypt (see Mark 14:12; see also Exodus 12:17). President Jeffrey R. Holland, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, asked, “Do we see [our weekly sacrament service] as *our* passover, remembrance of *our* safety and deliverance and redemption? . . . It should be a powerful, reverent, reflective moment” (“This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 68).
2. *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 29.2.1, Gospel Library.



7 Ways to Enjoy Inspiring Music

*“Make a selection of sacred hymns. . . . For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart”
(Doctrine and Covenants 25:11–12).*

Throughout time, music has been an important part of worship for disciples of Jesus Christ.

Many of the psalms in the Old Testament are songs of praise to the Lord. The New Testament records that Jesus and His Apostles, before heading to Gethsemane, sang a hymn together (see Matthew 26:30). And hymns enhance our worship during sacrament meetings today.

The ongoing creation of the new hymnbook is exciting, and we can look forward to more new hymns as the process goes forward. But hymns aren’t the only type of music that

can inspire us. The Church’s Gospel Library and Sacred Music apps have many different kinds of music to experience, from traditional choral music to upbeat, contemporary music (you don’t have to be a teen to enjoy the Strive to Be albums!). Within these apps you can find positive, inspiring recordings, many of which include sheet music you can play or sing yourself.

Here are some ideas to help you incorporate inspiring music into your worship at home—even if you have no musical training:



Listen to the recordings of the hymns and other inspiring songs throughout the week. These can be found in the Gospel Library or Sacred Music apps or in the Music Library on the Church website.



Research the stories of the hymns and learn what inspired them.



Sing the hymns and learn the different parts using the Interactive Sheet Music option on the Sacred Music app or on the Church website.



Listen to the Tabernacle Choir or Strive to Be on your favorite listening platform (such as YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora).



Discussion

- When has your faith in Jesus Christ been strengthened through music?
- When have you been comforted by the lyrics of a song?
- How have you used inspiring music to enhance your gospel study?
- What music has helped you to connect with heaven?

The podcast series “History of Hymns” features the stories behind dozens of favorite Latter-day Saint hymns (ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media/collection/history-of-hymns-podcasts-archived).



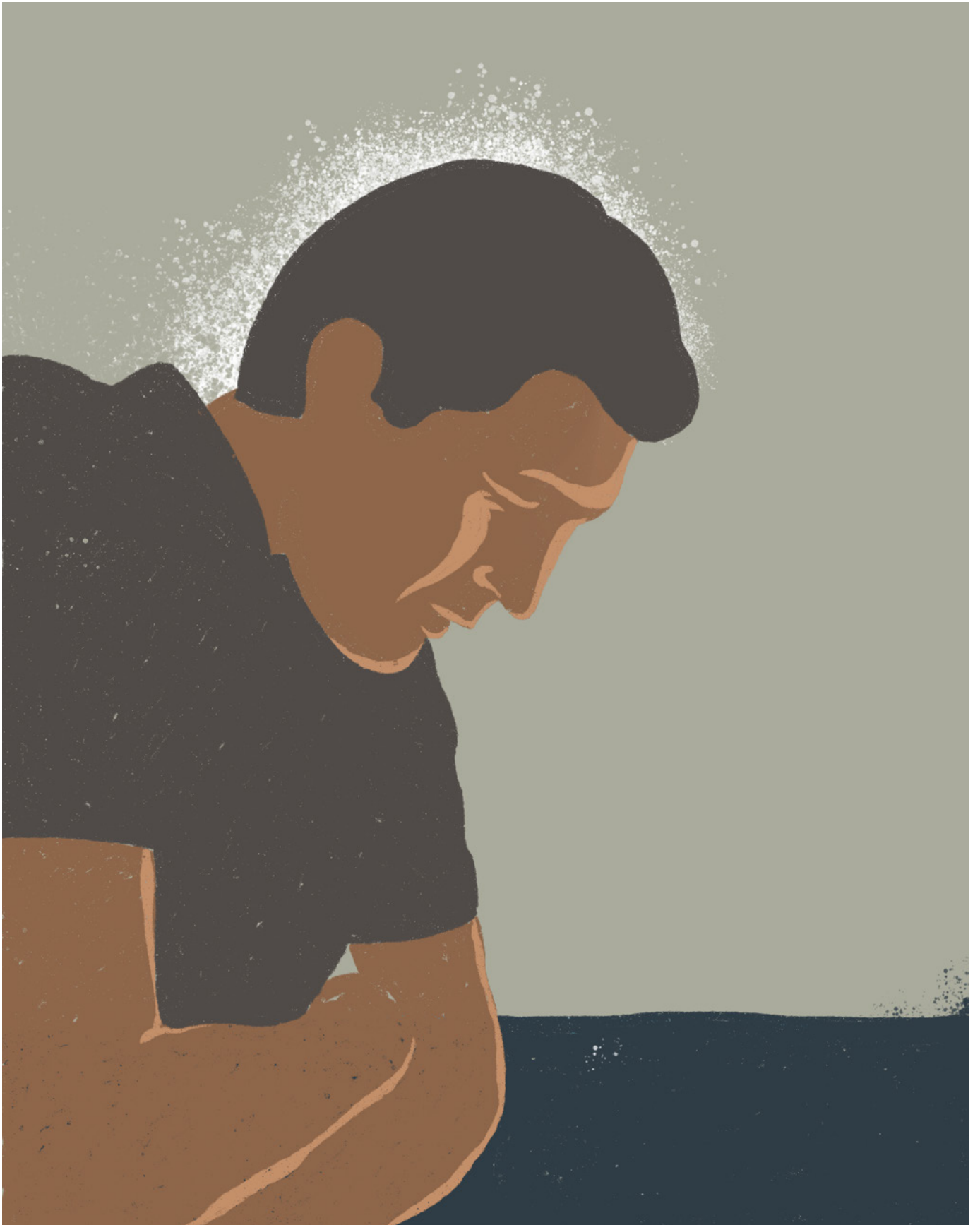
Learn to play the hymns and other inspiring songs on the piano or guitar using sheet music or chords included on the Gospel Library app or on the Church website.



Study and ponder the lyrics of uplifting songs and hymns.



Follow along with the lyrics while listening to performances by the Tabernacle Choir on Temple Square. Performances can be found on the choir’s YouTube channel.



WAYS OF DIVINE COMMUNICATION



By Elder
Christophe G.
Giraud-CARRIER
Of the Seventy

God speaks to us in different ways. And there are things we can do to make sure this communication keeps flowing.

As I began preparing my first general conference talk, I realized what a daunting task that can be! Speakers in general conference are not assigned topics, so I needed to discover for myself what the Lord would have me say.

I prayed and waited for direction. After some time, my wife, Isabelle, who is wise and knows me well, saw me struggling to begin.

“Look, you have got to do something,” she said. “Get started and write something!”

That is what I did. In the process, I started six or seven possible talks. As I pondered the various possibilities, I became comfortable with one of them and felt it was the talk I should give. The Spirit settled my mind, and the rest of the talk flowed.

In the October 2023 general conference, I shared that we are all God’s children.¹ He loves us, knows us intimately, and is in the details of our lives. He hears us when we pray and desires to speak to us.

Learning how God speaks to each of us is an individual experience. But here are some ways to facilitate the communication Heavenly Father wants to give us to bless our lives.

ACT WITH FAITH AND TRUST

Recognizing when God speaks requires faith and trust. Faith is always anchored in Jesus Christ. We also need to trust Him. He has said:

“Behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart,

by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

“Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3).

But revelation and divine direction do not come from simply waiting for a spiritual manifestation. We must *act*. Just as my wife told me to do with my conference talk, we sometimes need to simply “get started.”

When Isabelle and I served as mission leaders in the France Lyon Mission, I needed to determine where each missionary should go within the mission and when to make the assignment. I found that the Spirit would guide me if I prayed for help and then used my best judgment. Confirmation would then come once everything was in place.

In my current calling, I’m sent to stakes throughout the Church to reorganize stake presidencies. As my companion and I interview individuals, we have thoughts, feelings, and impressions come to us. We then counsel and pray together. Eventually, revelation comes, and the Lord confirms to us whom He has called to serve.

It is a process to recognize when God speaks and to discover His will. We need to show that we are willing to act with faith and trust.



FOLLOW THE PROPHET

One important way God speaks to His children is through prophets. Having a prophet on the earth today is great news! He receives revelation from God to lead and guide the Church (see Amos 3:7). We can also receive guidance and protection by following his teachings. This is not always easy, but the Lord has directed us to follow the prophet “in all patience and faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 21:5).

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” for example, has proven prophetic since it was introduced 30 years ago. It addresses many concerns we didn’t know we would have and gives guidance we didn’t necessarily know we

would need—but we do now.² The prophet’s guidance may not always be what we want to hear. It may not align with society’s current values. Regardless, we will be guided and protected when we follow the prophet.

ASK QUESTIONS AND SEEK ANSWERS

In the early days of the Restoration, God often spoke in answer to sincere questions the Prophet Joseph Smith and others had. While Joseph and Oliver Cowdery worked on translating the Book of Mormon, they came to the Savior’s teachings on the doctrine of baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:23–33).

They desired to learn more and went into the woods to pray. Soon, John the Baptist appeared and restored the authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins.³

Another time, Joseph's wife, Emma, expressed concerns about the mess left by men who smoked pipes and chewed tobacco during meetings. Joseph took the matter to the Lord and received a revelation—"a Word of Wisdom" (Doctrine and Covenants 89:1)—on healthy practices for the physical and spiritual benefit of God's children.

These instances—and many others—remind us that it is OK to have questions so long as we seek answers in the right direction. If we take our questions to the Lord, we will find answers. Sometimes the answers will come at once. More often, however, answers come "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little" (2 Nephi 28:30). We may have to wait for answers to help us learn and grow, but God *will* answer us according to His own will, way, and timing.

REMEMBER PAST EXPERIENCES

When we must wait for God to speak to us, it is important that we hang on to what we know and the experiences we've had. We may lose them otherwise. We do not want to doubt past experiences with the Spirit just because we may be struggling now. In those moments, we should go back in our minds and remember how we felt when we felt close to God.

Alma once asked these introspective questions to the people in Zarahemla:

"Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? . . .

"And now behold, I say unto you, . . . if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" (Alma 5:14, 26).

We should make sure we remember spiritual experiences and not push them aside. We should regularly ask ourselves, "Can *I* feel so now?" This strengthens us in times when God seems silent. We are also better able to recognize the times when He does speak to us.

STAY CONNECTED

Communication with our Heavenly Father is a living thing. We do our part to keep it alive by actively looking for and creating opportunities for divine communication. We can regularly and fervently pray to God for peace, comfort, and guidance. We can study His word in the scriptures and feel the influence of the Spirit. We can also follow prophetic guidance.

As we stay connected with our loving Father in Heaven, we can be instruments in His hands to assist Him in His marvelous work. By heeding the insights and promptings we receive, we can help others feel that God knows and loves them and desires to speak to them.

The assurance that God hears and speaks to His children is a tremendous blessing. Regular divine communication with Him provides the direction we need to navigate the journey of life. ■

NOTES

1. See Christophe G. Giraud-CARRIER, "We Are His Children," *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 114.
2. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Gospel Library.
3. See "The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: A Bicentennial Proclamation to the World," Gospel Library.

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ARTIST'S DEPICTION OF THE E. B. GRANDIN PRINTSHOP IN PALMYRA, NEW YORK, USA.

After translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith arranged for Palmyra publisher Egbert B. Grandin to print 5,000 copies of the book. The first copies were printed in 1830 and then shared by missionaries, which led many to join the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, mortgaged his family farm to pay for the printing. When financial concerns arose, he asked for guidance from the Lord.

“I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God. . . .

“And thou shalt declare glad tidings, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:26, 29).

DO I BELONG?

Whether we are married or single, the temple has blessings for us.



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What Church leaders teach about it

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