

OCTOBER 2024

Liahona

Pointing Us All to Jesus Christ



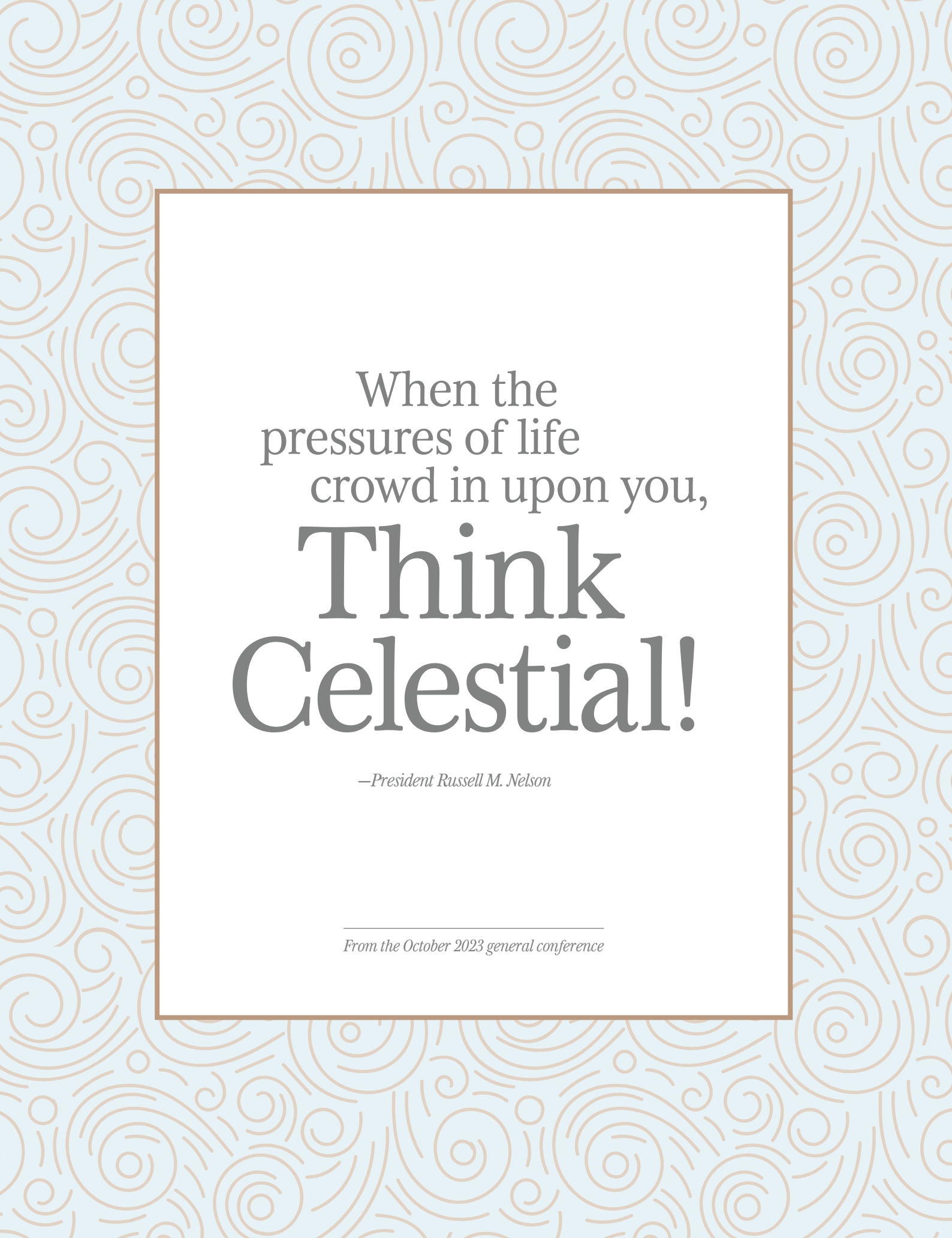
**MINISTERING:
SERVING LIKE
THE SAVIOR**

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When the
pressures of life
crowd in upon you,
**Think
Celestial!**

—President Russell M. Nelson

From the October 2023 general conference



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COVER

Photograph by
Christina Smith

A **PATTERN FOR UNITY** IN JESUS CHRIST



As we unite in Jesus Christ like the people in 4 Nephi, our desire to be one supersedes our differences and leads to happiness.





**By President
Russell M.
Nelson**

President of The
Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-
day Saints

We live in an age when a surging tide of discord and disputation is spreading across the globe. Aided by technology and abetted by people whose hearts have waxed cold, these divisive forces threaten to fill our hearts with contempt and corrupt our communication with contention. Communal ties are breaking. Wars are raging.

Against this backdrop, true followers of Jesus Christ yearn for peace and actively seek to build a different kind of society—one that is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ. To this end, the Lord has charged us to “be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27). Indeed, unity is a hallmark of the true Church of Jesus Christ.

How do we work against the forces of division and contention? How do we achieve unity?

Fortunately, 4 Nephi in the Book of Mormon gives us an example. This chapter briefly records the way the people lived after the Savior had visited them, taught them, and established His Church among them. This account shows how these people achieved a blissful and peaceful unity, and it gives us a pattern we can follow to attain this same unity ourselves.

CONVERSION

In 4 Nephi 1:1, we read: “The disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And [people] did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins.”

We unite around the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As each person learns about Jesus Christ, His gospel, and His Church, the Holy Ghost witnesses of the truth to each person’s heart. Each of us can then accept the Savior’s invitation to have faith in Him and follow Him by repenting.

Thus begins an individual’s journey of conversion—away from selfish and sinful desires and toward the Savior. He is the foundation of our faith. And as each of us looks unto Him in every thought (see Doctrine and Covenants 6:36), He becomes a unifying force in our lives.

COVENANTS

The record in 4 Nephi goes on to state that those who came to the Church and repented of their sins “were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost” (4 Nephi 1:1). They had entered into a covenant—a special, binding relationship—with God.

When we make and keep covenants, we take the Lord’s name upon us as individuals. In addition, we take His name upon us as a people. All who make covenants and strive to keep them become the Lord’s people, His special treasure (see Exodus 19:5). Thus, we travel the covenant path both individually and collectively. Our covenant relationship with God gives us a common

cause and a common identity. As we bind ourselves to the Lord, He helps us to have our “hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21).¹

FAIRNESS, EQUALITY, AND HELPING THE POOR

The account in 4 Nephi continues:

“There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

“And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift” (4 Nephi 1:2–3).

In our temporal dealings, the Lord wants us to be fair and just to one another and not to defraud or take advantage of one another (see 1 Thessalonians 4:6). As we grow closer to the Lord, we “will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due” (Mosiah 4:13).

The Lord has also commanded us to care for the poor and needy. We should “impart of [our] substance” to help them, according to our ability to do so, without judging them (see Mosiah 4:21–27).

Each of us is to “esteem his brother as himself” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:24). If we are to be the Lord’s people and be unified, not only must we treat one another as equals, but we must also truly view one another as equals and feel in our hearts that we are equal—equal before God, of equal worth and equal potential.

OBEDIENCE

The next lesson from 4 Nephi comes in this simple expression: “They did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God” (4 Nephi 1:12).

The Lord had taught these people His doctrine, given them commandments, and called servants to administer to them. One of His purposes in doing this was to ensure that there would be no disputations among them (see 3 Nephi 11:28–29; 18:34).

Our obedience to the teachings of the Lord and His servants is essential to our becoming unified. This includes our commitment to obey the commandment to repent whenever we fall short and to help one another as we strive to do better and be better every day.

MEETING TOGETHER

Next, we learn that the people in 4 Nephi “[continued] in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord” (4 Nephi 1:12).

We need to meet together. Our weekly worship meetings are an important opportunity for us to find strength, both individually and collectively. We partake of the sacrament, learn, pray, sing together, and support one another. Other gatherings also help foster a sense of belonging, friendship, and shared purpose.

LOVE

The record in 4 Nephi then gives us what is perhaps the grand key to all of this—the thing without which real unity is not attainable: “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people” (4 Nephi 1:15).

Personal peace is reached when we, in humble submissiveness, truly love God. This is the first and great commandment. Loving God more than anyone or anything else is the condition that brings true peace, comfort, confidence, and joy. As we develop love of God and Jesus Christ, love of family and neighbor will naturally follow.

The greatest joy we will ever experience occurs when we are consumed with love for God and for all His children.

Charity, the pure love of Christ, is the antidote to contention. It is the principal characteristic of a true follower of Jesus Christ. When we humble ourselves before God and pray with all the energy of our hearts, He will grant us charity (see Moroni 7:48).

As we all seek to have the love of God dwelling in our hearts, the miracle of unity will seem completely natural to us.

DIVINE IDENTITY

Finally, the people in 4 Nephi exhibited a sign of unity that deserves our attention: “There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God” (4 Nephi 1:17).

The labels that had divided the people for hundreds of years receded before a more enduring and ennobling identity. They viewed themselves—and everyone else—according to their relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Diversity and differences can be good and significant to us. But our most important identities are those related to our divine origin and purpose.

First and foremost, each of us is a child of God. Second, as a member of the Church, each of us is a child of the covenant. And third, each of us is a disciple of Jesus Christ. I urge all of us not to allow any other identifier to “displace, replace, or take priority over these three enduring designations.”²

BE ONE

God has invited all to come unto Him. There is room for everyone. We may differ in our cultures, politics, ethnicities, tastes, and many other ways. But as we unite in Jesus Christ, such differences fade in their significance and are superseded by our overriding desire to be one—so that we may be His.

Take to heart the lessons taught in 4 Nephi. As each of us strives to incorporate these essential elements of unity into our lives, it may be said of us, as it was of them, “Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God” (4 Nephi 1:16). ■

NOTES

1. For more about the meaning and blessings of making covenants with God, see Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 4–11.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), Gospel Library.

Our covenant relationship with God gives us a common cause and a common identity.



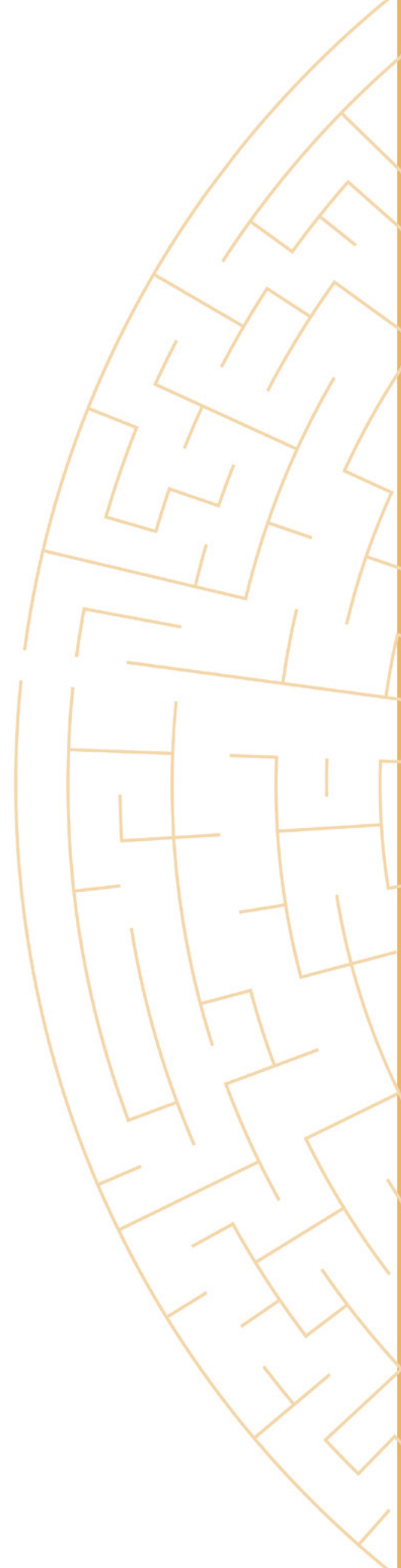
By Elder Juan Pablo Villar
Of the Seventy

We Follow the MASTER MINISTER

*Jesus Christ is our perfect example of
compassionate ministering to all.*

As I attend stake conferences throughout the Church, I have the wonderful opportunity to go with stake presidents to visit and minister to individual members and families. On these ministering visits, I sometimes wonder what to say and do, especially when those I visit are going through difficult challenges. But instead of focusing on what I might say or do, I have found that focusing on the Master minister—our Savior, Jesus Christ—helps me most when ministering to others.

As in all good things, He is our perfect example. When we leave our homes—and get out of our comfort zones—to minister to those around us as He would, the Savior will guide us in our efforts. Our ministering will then become more meaningful than anything we could possibly say or do on our own.



IDEAL CHRIST, BY HIRSH POWERS, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM, PURCHASE IN MEMORY OF RALPH CROSS JOHNSON



Do Not Pass By

When asked, “Who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29), Jesus took the opportunity to share a parable. He told of a man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho who “fell among thieves” and was robbed, beaten, and left “half dead” on the road (Luke 10:30).

Soon a priest came by. The priest must have seen that the man was in critical condition, but he did not stop to help. He “passed by on the other side” of the road (Luke 10:31). Next, a Levite “looked on” how badly the man was injured. He too “passed by” (Luke 10:32). Then a Samaritan came. Jesus described the Samaritan as having something the priest and Levite did not have: the Samaritan “had compassion on [the man]” (Luke 10:33) and “went to him, . . . bound up his wounds, . . . and took care of him” (Luke 10:34).

The parable of the good Samaritan is not just about priests, Levites, or Samaritans. It’s really about us. We have brothers and sisters left wounded on the side of the road of life. They can be anyone—friends, family, neighbors, community members, and even those sitting in the chapel with us on Sunday. Do we see them and pass by? Or do we minister to them with compassion as the good Samaritan did? Most we see will not have visible wounds. Many suffer silently and do not ask for help. The only way to be sure in our approach is to meet others with the love and compassion that the Samaritan showed. Christlike ministering means giving compassion to *all*.



Pray to See the Needs of Others

While Jesus walked through a crowd, a woman suffering for 12 years from an issue of blood reached out to Him in faith. When she touched the hem of Jesus’s garment, He felt that power or “virtue [had] gone out of [Him].” Jesus turned to the woman and said, “Be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace” (see Luke 8:43–48).

When “one sick of the palsy” was brought to Jesus through a roof by his friends, Jesus first healed the paralytic spiritually. “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,” He said. In response, the scribes accused Jesus of blasphemy. To help those present understand that He has “power on earth to forgive sins,” Jesus told the man, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” Immediately, the man “arose . . . before them all” (see Mark 2:3–12). Christ’s power to heal the sick physically was the same power He used to heal the spiritually sick.

These two instances—and many others—show that the Savior perfectly understands both the temporal and spiritual needs of others and ministers to them according to those needs. We can do the same. While we cannot perfectly see the needs of others, as the Savior does, we can pray for the ability to see those needs, for guidance in how to address them, and to be the answer to someone else’s prayer.

Once we see, we must also act with compassion. What is the point of seeing if we don’t do anything? If we see and do nothing, we can lose our spiritual vision. As we act, even in small ways, we will receive more of the Savior’s light to better see and minister to those around us.

Be with Them

At times, we may be hesitant to minister to others. We may worry how others will react or how receptive they will be. This has happened to me. In those moments, the most important thing we can do is be with them and love them. Again, the Savior is our perfect example.

Just before the resurrected Savior appeared to the Nephites, they had experienced many catastrophes and profound darkness. They were desperate for relief. The Savior could have just spoken to them from heaven and told them what they needed to hear (see 3 Nephi 9–10), but He appeared to them and went among them. He taught them and prayed with and for them. (See 3 Nephi 11–19.)

The Savior also asked them: “Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have *compassion* upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. . . .

“And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth . . . with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them *every one* as they were brought forth unto him” (3 Nephi 17:7, 9; emphasis added).

If you are unsure or anxious about ministering to others, do not worry so much about what to say or do. Start by just being there. President Russell M. Nelson has taught that “good inspiration is based upon good information.”¹ As you are with them, you will learn about them and know when to visit when they are sick, when to offer and give priesthood blessings, when to listen and “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light,” “mourn with those that mourn; . . . comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:8–9), and rejoice with those who rejoice! Do not hesitate. You will be inspired in what the Savior needs you to say and do as you minister.

MAKE THE MOST OF MINISTERING

Opportunities are all around us to minister as the Savior would have us minister. The following are some ways you can make ministering a regular part of your life:

1. **Make contact.** Do you know to whom you have been assigned to minister? Reach out to them with your ministering companion. This is how many ministering opportunities are opened. (You can find your ministering assignments in the Tools app by selecting your name in the directory and then selecting “Ministering.”)
2. **Get to know others.** Let those around you know that you care by learning about their lives and show that you are there for them.
3. **Pray for them.** Pray for opportunities to minister and for Heavenly Father’s help and inspiration to minister as He needs you to. He will guide you by inspiration.
4. **Stay in touch.** Regularly reach out to those around you. By being in regular contact, you’ll be aware and prepared to serve.

The Savior showed the perfect example of ministering. We look to Him and minister with charity and love in our hearts as He does for us.

Follow His Pattern

The first action the Savior took when He appeared to the Nephites was to tell them to “arise and come forth unto [Him]” and to “thrust [their] hands into [His] side, and . . . feel the prints of the nails in [His] hands and . . . feet” (3 Nephi 11:14).

The Savior did not want them to just see Him. They had already witnessed Him “[descend] out of heaven . . . and [stand] in the midst of them” (3 Nephi 11:8). He wanted each of them to come unto Him and to feel and know Him and what He had done for all the world. “And this they did do, going forth *one by one* until they had all gone forth” (3 Nephi 11:15; emphasis added).

He also called twelve disciples and “gave unto them power to baptize” (3 Nephi 11:22) and taught the doctrine of baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:23–27). He then commanded the Nephites to stop all contention. “Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another,” He said, “but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away” (3 Nephi 11:30).

In many ways, the Savior’s ministry in the Book of Mormon serves as a pattern for our own ministering. We can help our brothers and sisters come to Jesus Christ, encourage them to be baptized and obtain the other ordinances of salvation, and love them and be peacemakers, as the prophet has taught us.²

At times it won’t be easy to reach out to others. We may even find ourselves in our own trials that make it more difficult to feel motivated to minister in the Savior’s way. Trials and difficulties happened to the Redeemer in His ministry. As we take upon ourselves His name and stand as witnesses of Him (see Mosiah 18:9), we will be asked to walk as He did and reach out and love those with whom we come into contact.

If we will follow Jesus Christ—the Master minister—and minister to others as He would, He will strengthen and empower us. Through our ministering, we can bless others’ lives and find peace and joy for our own. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Liahona*, May 2018, 94.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 98–101.

CAN WE HEAL OUR RELATIONSHIP?

ADDRESSING VERBAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

By Gail Newbold

Church Magazines

*The following article has been
reviewed by professional counselors.*

At age 71, Janet (names have been changed) remarried. She and her new husband were on their honeymoon when he got upset at her. Janet recalls, "I had never had anyone talk to me like that." She was distraught and horrified.

Over time her husband's anger escalated. Yelling turned into swearing, name calling, and personal attacks on Janet's character. He claimed that she was making her friends and family more important than him.

"It wasn't true," she says. "But to keep peace, I distanced myself from them. I started to cancel on friends. I'd say I didn't feel good."

"Whatever I did, it wasn't enough for him," she says. "I started to blame myself for his anger and think, 'If only I hadn't done this or that.' I began wondering if I was a bad person like he said I was."

If you're experiencing verbal or emotional abuse, seek help. Friends, family, Church leaders, and others can connect you to resources that will help you feel safe so that you can heal and remember your worth.

PAIN CAN BE REPLACED BY PEACE

“You can survive. You have in fact already been rescued; you have already been saved—by the One who has suffered the very torment you are suffering and endured the very agony you are enduring. Jesus has overcome the abuses of this world to give you power to not only survive but one day, through Him, to overcome and even conquer—to completely rise above the pain, the misery, the anguish, and see them replaced by peace. . . .

“The abuse was not, is not, and never will be your fault, no matter what the abuser or anyone else may have said to the contrary. . . .

“God does not now see, nor has He ever seen, you as someone to be despised. Whatever has happened to you, He is not ashamed of you or disappointed in you. He loves you in a way you have yet to discover.”

Elder Patrick Kearon of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “He Is Risen with Healing in His Wings: We Can Be More Than Conquerors,” *Liahona*, May 2022, 37, 38–39.

She asked herself questions like, “If I’m worthwhile, then why did I pick this person? And why do I let him talk to me like that? Should I have seen the signs?” He had been so kind, attentive, and loving when they were dating.

“I got so depressed,” she remembers.

She began thinking it would be better if she got sick and died so she didn’t have to divorce him. She had been married once before and couldn’t face another failed marriage.

“It would have been good if I had talked to someone,” she says, “but I was too embarrassed. And I knew they would tell me to leave him.

I didn’t want the marriage to end and didn’t want to be alone again. So I kept hoping things would change, and I kept justifying his behavior.”

Abuse Is a Serious Sin

Sometimes victims tolerate the misbehavior because they don’t recognize it as abuse. Emotional abuse occurs when a person tries to verbally hurt, control, or manipulate another. It can take the form of severe criticizing, blaming, isolating, manipulating, making threats, name calling, or withholding affection. It can happen in any kind of relationship: in friendships, in dating relationships, between spouses or parents and children, and even among coworkers.

“Abuse constitutes the influence of the adversary,” taught President Russell M. Nelson. “It is a grievous sin. As President of the Church, I affirm the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ on this issue. Let me be perfectly clear: *any* kind of abuse of women, children, or anyone is an abomination to the Lord. He grieves and *I grieve* whenever *anyone* is harmed. He mourns and *we all mourn* for each person who has fallen victim to abuse of any kind. Those who perpetrate these hideous acts are not only accountable to the laws of man but will also face the wrath of Almighty God. . . .

“. . . The Savior will not tolerate abuse, and as His disciples, neither can we.”¹

We are all sons and daughters of God and have a divine nature and destiny. The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us to love one another (see John 13:34) and to treat others as we would want to be treated (see Matthew 7:12).

Victims Often Feel Guilty

Victims can feel fear, shame, despair, hopelessness, and plummeting self-worth.

Diego's two-year marriage to an abusive woman left him shattered and semi-suicidal. In retrospect, he wishes he had paid attention to the warning signs. His wife had been in several failed marriages and relationships. However, their six-month courtship had gone smoothly, and he fell in love.

After they married, her behavior surprised and confused him. She would make critical comments about his appearance, and when he asked why she said those things, she would tell him she was joking and that he didn't have a sense of humor. "There was a lot of verbal abuse and gaslighting," he says.

There were also episodes of physical abuse when she spit in his face and kicked and scratched him. As with many victims, Diego tried to excuse his wife's behavior. He told himself she was just having a bad day. He tried desperately to do things he hoped would make her happy.

"I would clean the bathrooms and cook dinner," he remembers, "but I could never please her. The physical abuse was probably the worst thing for me as a man. I felt weak and powerless. Sometimes I would find a place to hide at work and break down and cry. I was the victim, but she made me feel like everything bad that happened was my fault. I felt guilty. Was she right? The sadness was incredible."

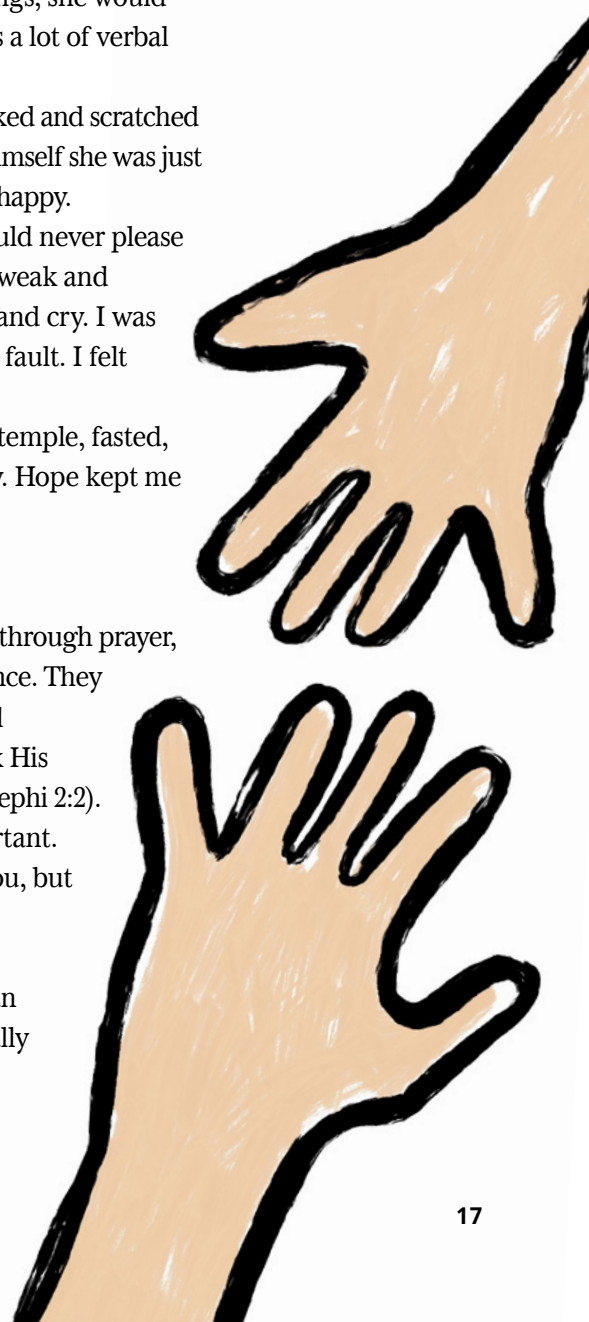
He recalls: "I wanted our marriage to work. I prayed so hard, went to the temple, fasted, read the scriptures, and tried to grow closer to Heavenly Father in every way. Hope kept me afloat. I kept believing that if I was obedient, things would work out."

Seeking Help

Seek spiritual strength: Victims can seek inspiration and spiritual strength through prayer, fasting, scripture study, priesthood blessings, and church and temple attendance. They can get help and support from trusted friends, Church leaders, or professional counselors. Most importantly, they can have faith in the Lord, prayerfully seek His guidance, and trust that He will "consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:2).

Set boundaries: Experts say that setting and keeping boundaries is important. A victim can say, "I feel disrespected by you right now. I want to talk with you, but I will not unless you treat me more respectfully and kindly."²

Some people won't respect those boundaries, however. Diego tried to set boundaries, but his wife continued to argue. "You can't always reason with an abuser," he explains. "And it's very hard to stay calm when someone is verbally attacking you. Christ would have walked away or been soft spoken. I wasn't



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BEING ABUSED

- Don't justify or minimize the hurtful behavior, and don't blame yourself.
- See the emotional discomfort as a sign that something is wrong and that help is needed. Confide in a trusted friend, Church leader, or professional therapist.
- Take care of yourself and your own needs.
- Call law enforcement immediately if violence is occurring. The police can help protect you and your children from immediate danger.
- Remove yourself from the relationship. For couples, this might not always mean divorce, but it can mean time apart until the other will observe firm boundaries for a healthy relationship.
- Visit "Abuse" in the Life Help section of the Gospel Library for guidance on questions such as "Can I heal from this?" and "Can I build safe, healthy relationships?"

LEADERS

For guidance, see "Abuse" in *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 38.6.2, Gospel Library. For other resources for helping victims and offenders, see Counseling Resources in the Gospel Library under Handbooks and Callings, Ward or Branch Callings, Bishopric.

perfect that way. I could have done better. I think you need a mediator—a Church leader or a therapist—to have a rational discussion.”

It can be helpful to seek professional help in situations like this. Counselors who are knowledgeable about emotional abuse can suggest ways to address volatile emotions.

Address the concerns: Sometimes those who say hurtful things don't realize how much they are harming the relationship. They can learn to change if they are willing to seek help. When it's not an emotional time, the person who has been on the receiving end of the harmful comments can say something like, "I feel hurt [or unloved or disrespected] when you say things like that. I would appreciate it if you . . ." Bringing those behaviors to light can help the offending person know what he or she is doing, giving an opportunity for improvement.

If the person is willing to listen, both individuals can get help. They can seek counseling together and discuss which behaviors harm the relationship and which behaviors heal the relationship. They can work together to build the relationship they desire.

However, if the person is unwilling to listen and continues the harmful behavior, the victim doesn't need to stay in an abusive relationship. For married couples, this might not always mean divorce, but it can mean time apart until the spouse will observe firm boundaries for a healthy relationship.

Try to not perpetuate unhealthy patterns: Sister Kristin M. Yee, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught:

“On the path of forgiveness and healing lies a choice not to perpetuate unhealthy patterns or relationships in our families or elsewhere. To all within our influence, we can offer kindness for cruelty, love for hate, gentleness for abrasiveness, safety for distress, and peace for contention.

“To give what you have been denied is a powerful part of divine healing possible through faith in Jesus Christ.”³

Healing with God's Help

Diego talked to a marriage counselor and met with his bishop regularly. "I'm not sure I would have gotten through this experience without the help of my bishop, the most loving man ever. And the temple was my solace."

Diego struggled to heal after his divorce but says, "I learned so much from the relationship and have grown in all aspects, which has made me a better man, father, person, priesthood holder, son, friend, and partner. I did everything in my power to make the marriage work, but it wasn't to be. She had her agency and made her choice."

After three years of trying to make her marriage work, Janet filed for divorce and moved in temporarily with one of her children. "Those first days and weeks were the hardest," she remembers. She poured her heart out in prayer and was dedicated to reading the Book of Mormon daily, along with comforting conference talks.

She continued regular church attendance, saw a professional therapist, and received helpful spiritual counsel from her bishop. "The therapist was very helpful, and I felt so much better after talking to my bishop," she says.

A friend suggested that she recite her favorite scriptures out loud and declare all the good things that she wanted to have in her life. Janet did that faithfully, memorizing the scriptures that inspired her. Two of her favorites were:

"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

She found strength in knowing that it is the Savior's mission "to *heal the brokenhearted*, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to *set at liberty them that are bruised*" (Luke 4:18; emphasis added).

Testifying of that healing mission of the Savior, Elder Patrick Kearon of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles assured victims of abuse:

"From the depths of His atoning suffering, the Savior imparts hope you thought was lost forever, strength you believed you could never possess, and healing you couldn't imagine was possible. . . .

". . . With arms outstretched, the Savior offers the gift of healing to you. With courage, patience, and faithful focus on Him, before too long you can come to fully accept this gift."⁴ ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "What Is True?," *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 29.
2. See Nanon Talley, "Recognizing Emotional Abuse" (digital-only article), *Liahona*, Oct. 2020, Gospel Library.
3. Kristin M. Yee, "Beauty for Ashes: The Healing Path of Forgiveness," *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 38.
4. Patrick Kearon, "He Is Risen with Healing in His Wings: We Can Be More Than Conquerors," *Liahona*, May 2022, 39.

HOW TO FORGIVE

The Lord commands us to forgive all people (see, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 64:10), but that doesn't always mean staying with those who hurt us or condoning what they did. It does mean that with the Lord's help we can be free of anger or hurtful feelings toward them.

President Russell M. Nelson testified of the power we can receive from the Savior to help us forgive:

"Through [the Savior's] infinite Atonement, you can forgive those who have hurt you and who may never accept responsibility for their cruelty to you.

"It is usually easy to forgive one who sincerely and humbly seeks your forgiveness. But the Savior will grant you the ability to forgive anyone who has mistreated you in any way. Then their hurtful acts can no longer canker your soul" ("Four Gifts That Jesus Christ Offers to You" [First Presidency Christmas devotional, Dec. 2, 2018], broadcasts. ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



“BECAUSE OF THY FAITH THOU HAST SEEN”

By Don L. Searle

One of the most thrilling and humbling stories in the Book of Mormon for me is the account of the brother of Jared (see Ether 2–3). Because of his great faith, he could not be kept from the presence of the Lord. He performed great miracles and was shown marvelous visions.

The story is thrilling because it teaches that through faith and obedience, great knowledge and glorious truths are available to each of us.

The story is humbling because it shows me that I am no brother of Jared. At times in this life, I might have received much greater knowledge and spiritual strength from my Heavenly Father if I had not fallen short in faith.

For me, two truths emerge from this story: (1) believing is the key to seeing the Lord do marvelous works in our lives, and (2) it is never too late to believe and then see.

When we doubt, we close our spiritual eyes. In Ether 12:27 the Lord not only pointed out that we mortals have weakness but also said, “If they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.” This suggests that when we humble ourselves in



When we humble ourselves in faith, our Father can help us see the possibilities that He sees for us.

faith, our Father can help us see the possibilities that He sees for us—what we might become and what we might achieve.

We may think, “Why would He make great things known to *me*?” This is essentially the question that Nephi’s older brothers Laman and Lemuel asked. When they struggled to understand their father’s visionary teachings, Nephi asked, “Have ye inquired of the Lord?” They answered: “We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us.” In reply, Nephi repeated the Lord’s invitation: “If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you” (1 Nephi 15:7–9, 11). This promise is for all of us.

Words of the premortal Jesus Christ to the brother of Jared offer hope to those who exercise mighty faith and obedience in seeking divine direction: “Because of thy faith thou hast seen” (Ether 3:9). Our faith can lead us to see His marvelous works in our own lives.

It is not only our privilege and opportunity to seek knowledge from the Lord but also our duty and responsibility. He commanded: “Seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118).

We have this inspired instruction from President Russell M. Nelson:

“Does God really *want* to speak to you? Yes! . . .

“I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation, for the Lord has promised that ‘if thou shalt [seek], thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation’ [Doctrine and Covenants 42:61].”¹

I know at least three ways He will help us see His works in our lives when we believe.



1. He will help us see our life's mission that He has given us to fulfill.

When I was 16, a patriarch who had never seen me before and knew nothing of my background gave me my patriarchal blessing. In it the Lord answered specific questions I held in my heart related to some personal challenges. My thoughts about them seemed too intimate to share. One challenge concerned whether I would find a loving woman courageous enough to marry me in spite of my prominent birth defect—one our children might inherit. The answer was yes. I did marry Marie, and we had five beloved children.

The Lord's answers in that blessing respected my concerns and my privacy. They were phrased so that only I would fully understand their meaning. From that day, I have had a firm personal witness that my Heavenly Father knows me intimately.

My career brought joy, growth, and satisfaction through trying to serve Him and His children. After I retired, the world and my career field moved on without me. Some days, in “down” times, I have wondered if I

really did any good during those years—if my offering was worthy of the great promises I was given.

During one of those times, I felt this answer: reread your patriarchal blessing. As I read it, pointed questions came to my mind: “Did I not give you this blessing as I promised? Did this not come true in your life? And this?” I saw clearly how the Lord has fulfilled blessings He promised me. I felt assurance that things I had offered humbly and willingly were acceptable and also an admonition that I am not done yet—there are still more opportunities to serve.

I was impressed too that I am not alone in these concerns. Many others may wonder, when they look back on their lives and see no great mortal landmarks, if they have done any good. But we do not see as the Lord sees. Perhaps if we choose to focus on what He has given us, rather than on the things we desired but did not get, we would see more clearly how His hand touched our lives.


2. As I read and study the scriptures prayerfully, the Lord helps me see more than general direction to all His children. I see personal direction for my individual challenges.

The margins in my scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon, are full of notes on what the Lord has helped me see about applying their teachings. A few years ago, I started making a separate journal of notes, sometimes verse by verse, recording what the Lord teaches me. I have read through the Book of Mormon several times now in this manner, then the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and recently the New Testament. When I approach my study prayerfully, asking the Lord to open the scriptures to me, I am amazed at how much He helps me see.

Stories and parables that seemed to offer simple, good examples of individual behavior suddenly have practical applications in my life. Scriptures that I have seen as historical background suddenly have far-reaching meanings for the continuing Restoration of the gospel. I see how the experiences of Joseph and Daniel, Peter and Paul, Nephi, the two Almas, and Captain Moroni apply to the challenges we face every day. The war chapters in the Book of Mormon offer not only an account of Captain Moroni's far-sighted battle plans but also a personal strategy for meeting the unrelenting attacks of the devil: we can fortify personal spiritual strongholds in advance.

The things I see through personal study might not be new to others. But recording what I am taught has become important in my personal spiritual progress.

We have been encouraged many times by prophets and Church leaders to record what the Lord teaches us if we want



Him to give us more. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains: “I have also learned that properly recording spiritual impressions demonstrates to the Savior how much I treasure His direction. The simple practice of writing down spiritual thoughts and feelings greatly enhances the likelihood of receiving and recognizing additional promptings from the Holy Ghost.”²

3. When we ask in faith and humble willingness to obey, the Lord will help us see opportunities and solutions we would not have seen on our own. He will tailor His answers to our needs.

He has shown me how to handle problems ranging from painful spiritual challenges to more mundane home repair. He has shown me challenges ahead and how to prepare. He has shown His power in my life when I have been fearful and doubting—when I said, like the father pleading for his son to be healed, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

Perhaps we do not take Him seriously enough when we read, “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Matthew 7:7) or “If you will ask of me you shall receive” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:5). The promise that “he who hath faith to see shall see” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:49) seems to refer to physical healing, but I don’t believe its meaning was limited. When we have sufficient faith, He can open our spiritual eyes to see His miracles in our own lives.

I can’t go back to change the past. But for however much time may still be ahead of me, I hope I can exercise greater faith in His loving desire to show me more of His works. I hope to hear, like the brother of Jared, His confirming words: “Because of thy faith thou hast seen.” ■

The author, a former managing editor of Church magazines, wrote this faith-filled article before passing away from pancreatic cancer in September 2023.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Liahona*, May 2018, 95.
2. David A. Bednar, *The Spirit of Revelation* (2021), 37.





Words That Touch the Heart

By Tahira Carroll, Utah, USA

From my introduction to the Church to the work I do to help Saints hear and sing hymns in their own language, music has come full circle in my life and been a great blessing in my family.

Scan the code
to read more



After my diagnosis, we kept our eye on the Lord so we could see our blessings.

The Peace Was the Miracle

By Karen Baxter, Virginia, USA

When my husband, David, and I found out we couldn't have children, I wept. Then, in 2016, my doctor called me back to her office after a routine medical checkup and mammogram. After more testing, what she at first thought was a small problem had become a big one: *cancer*.

That was a shock, and we had some bad days. Before we knew how things would turn out, I told Heavenly Father, "If this is the end for me, please take care of David."

I was able to hold on emotionally during the day, but when nighttime came and all was quiet, the tears would come. But that was also when I would sense through the Holy Ghost that everything was going to be all right—not necessarily because I was going to live but because Heavenly Father was there. So, during my treatment, we went forward one step at a time.

Certain hymns and scriptures became more meaningful. Doctrine and Covenants 122:8 really struck me: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?"

No, I realized, I am not greater than He. If going through infertility and cancer enabled me to better appreciate the Savior and His atoning sacrifice, then I was willing.

We kept our eye on the Lord so we could see our blessings, including an amazing support system. My Relief Society president was wonderful. People from the school where I taught did a cancer walk for me. A colleague who wanted me to know she cared gave me a pink pen. During moments like that, you say, "You were my angel today. You were my evidence that God knows I needed a hug or a pink pen."

People watch us as members of the Church. They want to know why we can go through tough things and still smile.

"How are you not a mess?" people often asked us. We explained that the peace we felt came from our faith and beliefs, our love for Heavenly Father, and our trust in His will for us. Sharing our faith strengthened our faith.

Peace didn't come the second I was diagnosed, but it came. The peace was the miracle. ■

Travel with God

By Pete Czerny, Utah, USA (from an account by his father)

After World War II, my parents wanted to join the Saints in America. But first they had to escape with their five children from East Germany to West Germany.

My father, Walter, went by himself to determine where it was safest to cross the border. He traveled light but felt prompted to take his violin with him. An accomplished violinist, he had a spiritual impression that his violin would somehow aid him in his journey.

In February 1949, Dad took a train to a town still many miles from the border. After arriving, he ducked out of town, taking a path that led him into a wintry forest. Anyone caught heading toward the West German border was under suspicion of escaping and would be arrested.

Along the way, Dad saw another man trying to escape to West Germany. They decided to travel as a pair. Four watchful eyes would be better than two.

They proceeded cautiously as they passed a lookout tower. Suddenly, from behind a bush, a young Russian soldier jumped out and shouted, "Halt!"

My father and his new friend froze in horror as the soldier pointed a large rifle at them. The soldier said they were under arrest.

Slowly, my dad's new friend opened his suitcase, revealing several fine food items. He motioned to the soldier that he could have them if he would let them go, but the soldier would not budge.

In broken Russian, my father told the soldier he loved Russian folk music. He pointed to his violin case and said he would like to play for him.


Dad took out his violin and started to play a sentimental Russian melody. After a short time, he saw tears forming in the young man's eyes. When Dad finished the tune, the soldier asked him if he knew other Russian melodies.

Dad then played another melody. When he finished, the soldier was weeping. Hoisting his gun back onto his shoulder, the soldier said in Russian, "Travel with God." Then he let both men continue their escape to the West.

My father soon returned safely to East Germany, thankful for inspiration that had led to his protection. Three years later, he escaped with his family by traveling to East Berlin and crossing the border there into West Berlin. ■

"Halt!" the soldier shouted, pointing a large rifle straight at my father.





Until I recognized the fruits of the Spirit, I was convinced the Lord's Church was not on the earth.

The Sweet Whisperings of the Holy Spirit

By Barry Wells, Arkansas, USA

My wife, Ruby, and I did not grow up in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But in her youth, Ruby was exposed to many different churches and teachings. Through consistent and diligent prayer, she identified teachings she felt to be true, forming a set of beliefs from the teachings of various Christian churches. I was raised in a single church and knew little of any others.

After our marriage, we attended church together, but I began to question the faith I had been raised in and asked my wife questions regarding doctrine. She wisely and simply responded, “Have you ever read the Bible?”

I had not, so we read the entire Bible together. As we read, I wrote down questions that remained unanswered. We began searching for a church that taught everything we had discovered. During the next two years, we visited many churches, requested literature, read about philosophy and religion, and prayed. I became convinced that the Lord’s Church was not on the earth.

We lacked wisdom and needed heavenly help (see Joseph Smith History 1:11–13). So, we sincerely prayed together, asking God to show us the way. Shortly after we prayed, missionaries from the

Church appeared on our doorstep. Ruby immediately felt the truth of what they taught. Their teachings resonated with her and matched the answers she had received many years earlier when she had prayed as a youth. The missionaries answered all of my questions too, but I wanted to be sure. I read the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and other Church books.

We also attended church every week and lived gospel teachings. At length, I recognized the fruits of the Spirit of God in my life (see Galatians 5:22) and received a strong testimony. We were baptized, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and were later sealed in the temple.

We have never regretted joining the Church. It has kept our marriage strong during hard times, and the legacy of being close to the Spirit of God is living on in our six children.

For those striving to gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon or the restored Church of Jesus Christ, I would say, “Keep praying, keep reading, and keep listening for the sweet whisperings of the Holy Ghost.” ■

My Need for Healing

By Adele Wi-Repa, Waikato, New Zealand

I sat in church one Sunday, angry and frustrated. My husband, Aaron, and I had had a disagreement the night before, and I came to church still feeling unsettled and upset. I stayed mad at Aaron through the beginning of the meeting to the sacrament hymn, thinking, “He needs to say he’s sorry.”

As we prepared to take the sacrament, our congregation sang the hymn “As Now We Take the Sacrament.”¹ I stayed mad through the first verse. Then the second verse began: “As now our minds review the past, we know we must repent.”

I stopped singing. I listened to my husband, children, and ward members continue to sing: “The way to thee is righteousness—the way thy life was spent.”

My heart softened. Maybe my unsettled feeling was not about my husband after all. Maybe it was about me.

The hymn continued:

*Forgiveness is a gift from thee
We seek with pure intent.
With hands now pledged to do thy
work,
We take the sacrament.*

There I was being upset, when I actually needed to be humble and seek forgiveness from Heavenly

Father—a gift made possible by His Son, Jesus Christ.

I teared up as I looked down the row at our little children. All the anger and tension I had felt, all the blame and resentment that had been making the knot in my chest, dissipated. This moment was about what I needed to do to change so I could seek and receive forgiveness from my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Through a hymn, the Spirit taught me clearly about forgiveness and my need to both receive it and give it.

President Russell M. Nelson has said: “I plead with you to come unto Him so that He can heal *you!* He will heal you from sin as you repent. He will heal you from sadness and fear. He will heal you from the wounds of this world.”²

Sitting there, listening to the words of the hymn and partaking of the sacrament, I felt my need for healing, and I knew where I needed to turn. The truths I learned about forgiveness during that meeting brought me closer to the Lord and to my husband. ■

NOTES

1. “As Now We Take the Sacrament,” *Hymns*, no. 169.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “The Answer Is Always Jesus Christ,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 127.

*Through a sacrament hymn,
the Spirit taught me about giving
and accepting forgiveness.*





How My Covenants Keep Me Connected to What Matters *Most*

I didn't realize what a
privilege my covenants are.

By Eva Thomas

I love to feel the Spirit. It's a feeling I can confidently say I recognize now.

But that took work. Where I grew up in the north of England, it was often hard to place myself in an environment that allowed me to feel the Holy Ghost. There are so many great young adults there who grew up in the Church, yet it was sometimes difficult to align our behaviors with the doctrine and truths we knew in our hearts.

For a long time, I attended church on Sundays but felt frustrated and sad knowing that the things the Spirit was communicating to me were not getting through to others whom I love and care for.

After all, President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."¹

However, I'm learning the importance of making room for the Spirit in all areas of my life and helping others do the same.

“Covenants are the shape of God’s embrace.”

ELDER ROBERT M. DAINES

STRUGGLING WITH TEMPTATIONS

After graduating from secondary school, I faced a lot of difficulties. For example, there are lots of activities and conferences for young adult members of the Church where I live. But after these activities, some young adults would go to clubs or places that weren’t aligned with our values.

That shocked me!

Drinking alcohol and clubbing are common here, but I didn’t expect friends I sat by in church to do those things too.

I was confused.

Seeing friends make these decisions made it really hard to know who would help me stay spiritually strong. Eventually, because I saw others living the gospel casually, I was led away from the gospel too. I wasn’t going to church or praying, and I was doing things I shouldn’t have been doing.

But one day, when I was feeling particularly miserable, I prayed to Heavenly Father and told Him my feelings. I told Him I wanted the Church to be true and I wanted to understand His commandments, but it was so hard to even consider standing alone. But I told Him that if I could find

reassurance of the truths of the gospel, I would listen and put my heart into living it again.

A few days later, I felt a distinct spiritual impression that I needed to serve a mission.

The thought really came out of nowhere. But I could feel the Spirit nudging me in that direction. I knew that preparing for a mission would enable me to remember my testimony, to rebuild my relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and to rely on my own faith—not anyone else’s.

And that was my desire.

So, I started to change. It took a lot of spiritual work. I had to stop hanging out with certain friends, I broke up with the person I was dating, and I had to replace my bad habits with better ones. I worked with my bishop and relied on Jesus Christ’s enabling power to help me move forward.

A CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

Before my mission, I didn’t understand commandments and covenants. My friends were treating these blessings like burdens, and I had started seeing them that way too. But after serving a mission and rebuilding my faith, I now see covenants and commandments as blessed responsibilities

that help me maintain divine, direct connection with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ—every day.

President Emily Belle Freeman, Young Women General President, recently testified of the power of covenants: “Perhaps you hear those words and think of checkboxes. Maybe all you see is a path of requirements. A closer look reveals something more compelling. A covenant is not only about a contract, although that is important. It’s about a relationship.”²

Elder Robert M. Daines of the Seventy also testified that “covenants are the shape of God’s embrace.”³

No matter where we stand—even if we stand alone—the covenants we have made bind us to the relationships that matter most.

Sometimes it makes me sad that others don’t see the exquisite blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. At times, I just want to shake them by the shoulders and remind them of the miracle their covenants are! I want them to realize what the Savior can enable them to do and become!

But while I can’t control others, I *can* keep my testimony strong. I can know when to step away from some people’s influence and also know how to be a good influence on them.

I think that is what brought me back after I struggled with my faith: remembering the love of my Savior, Jesus Christ.

I know I wouldn’t have gone on a mission if I hadn’t asked Heavenly Father for divine direction in a time of deep confusion. As much as I wish I hadn’t had to go through those painful experiences, I learned so much about repentance, about Heavenly Father’s perfect love, and about the importance of prioritizing good relationships (especially with Him and our Savior) that keep us connected to the Spirit.

Despite the hard parts, rebuilding my faith in Him was worth everything. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.
2. Emily Belle Freeman, “Walking in Covenant Relationship with Christ,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 77–78.
3. Robert M. Daines, “Sir, We Would Like to See Jesus,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 14.



I left the Church
and didn't realize
what I was missing.



Are You Missing the Miracle of the Gospel?

By Enkhchimeg (Enku) Zorigt

Have you ever taken something for granted, unaware of how it benefited you until it was gone?

I did once—with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Growing up in Mongolia, my family and I were members of the Church. But over time, my parents' church attendance became less and less frequent. I slowly started to feel indifferent about the gospel too.

I never took what I learned seriously and eventually stopped going altogether. I didn't think I would miss the gospel, because it had never really seemed to benefit my life anyway.

Seeing the Light

When I was a young adult, my older sister bumped into some missionaries. They stopped her to ask if she could translate something for them in Mongolian. They had a quick conversation, and when she returned home, she realized who they were.

She wanted to go to church that week and invited me to join her.

I was totally against the idea at first. I thought I was doing fine in life without the Church! But she convinced me to join her just once.

When I walked into sacrament meeting for the first time in years, I wasn't very happy to be there. However, as I looked around, I saw some friends I had grown up with. The light they emanated was almost tangible. As I watched them, I recalled small inklings of spiritual experiences I had felt at church growing up.

So many truths I had disregarded came flooding back, and I suddenly felt empty and sad. "I'm not like them," I thought. "Why did I leave this all behind?"

I realized that I had become a different person in the past few years. There was a sense of darkness in my life I had been ignoring. But as I sat there, I heard a peaceful voice in my mind that seemed to say, "You can shine too. It's not too late."

I thought of the parable of the lost sheep. The one sheep who the Savior brought back to the fold (see Luke 15:4-7).

I was that sheep. And the Savior was lovingly coming after me because He loved me as much as His other sheep.

He wanted me back.

This brought me so much gratitude for my Savior. Feeling the Spirit for the first time in years, I made the decision to come back to the Church and, this time, to take it seriously.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently testified, “The moment you decide to return

and walk in the way of our Savior and Redeemer, His power will enter your life and transform it [see Alma 34:31].”¹

I felt that truth and knew that if I put my heart into the gospel, my life was going to change.

Don’t Look beyond Jesus Christ

As I started living the gospel, I found purpose in my life again. I finally believed that Heavenly Father loves each of His children and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the key to returning to our heavenly home.

This means everything to me now.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“We too can be prone to look beyond the mark. We need to guard against this tendency lest we miss Jesus Christ in our lives and fail to recognize the many blessings He offers us. We need Him. . . .

“He is our mark. If we incorrectly imagine that there is a need for something beyond what He offers, we deny or diminish the scope and power He can have in our lives.”²

I had been looking beyond what Jesus Christ offers me, and now I can’t imagine giving up the joy I feel because of Him.

If you feel like you’re unworthy, if you’re struggling with unanswered questions, or if you think being a disciple of Christ asks too much of you, look closer at the miracles our Savior offers us. I know that Heavenly Father is aware of you. He will help you hold on to your faith as you turn to Him.

Don’t give up the Savior’s greatest gift and miracle in favor of something less worthy. You are worth everything to Him.

I have personally witnessed how much the gospel of Jesus Christ truly enriches the lives of those who follow Him.

It continues to enrich mine. ■

The author lives in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Prodigal and the Road That Leads Home,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 88.
2. Dale G. Renlund, “Jesus Christ Is the Treasure,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 96.





We Are Disciples of Jesus Christ

Dear Parents,

The Lord loves your children and wants them to be able to hear Him. The articles in this issue can guide you as you teach your children how to receive and recognize personal revelation. You can use these ideas to help your children build a closer relationship with their Heavenly Father and the Savior.

GOSPEL DISCUSSIONS

How Do We Achieve Unity?

President Nelson's article on page 2 outlines seven principles that will help us fulfill the Lord's commandment to "be one" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27). Which of these principles could you discuss with your children? For example, how does making and keeping covenants create unity with others?

Take His Name upon You through Ministering

The article on page 8 by Elder Villar teaches how the Savior ministered during His time on earth. As a family, you could pray to know who needs help and how they need to be ministered to. Discuss with your children how they feel after the prayer. Help them recognize the answers they received.

The Lord Wants to Speak to You

Use the article "Because of Thy Faith Thou Hast Seen" (page 20) to teach your children about receiving revelation. The author mentions how the Lord can give us guidance for our life's mission through a patriarchal blessing. You could share how your patriarchal blessing has guided you.

COME, FOLLOW ME FAMILY FUN

3 Nephi 12:6; 21:2; 28:11

Jesus Christ taught that we need the direction of the Holy Ghost in our lives. This hand shadow puppet activity helps children visualize this principle.

1. Write down on slips of paper different figures that can be made as hand shadow puppets (for example, a bird, a wolf, a snake).
2. Have each child take a slip of paper. Turn off the lights in the room, and have one person shine a flashlight on the wall, symbolizing the Light of Christ.
3. Ask your children to take turns placing their hands in front of the light so the shadow of their hands forms the figure noted on the paper. Allow them to struggle without any help from you.
4. Symbolizing the Spirit's guiding voice, offer to help teach your children, step by step, how to place their hands to make the shadow puppet.
5. Once each child has taken a turn, read a scripture about the Holy Ghost such as 3 Nephi 12:6. Ask your children if it was easier to form the figure with or without your help. Help them see the parallels between this activity and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Discussion: How can we improve our ability to recognize when the Spirit is speaking to us?

FROM FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH MAGAZINE

How to Achieve Unity and Be Happy

President Nelson teaches seven keys that helped the people in the Book of Mormon become one.

Adventures in Modesty

A young woman tells of her spiritual journey to find a reason to dress modestly and the ways the Lord taught and transformed her along the way.

Getting to Know the Opposite Sex

Get other youths' perspectives and examples of ways in which young men and young women get to know each other.

FROM THE FRIEND MAGAZINE

Five Family History Tips!

Learn five ways your children can participate in family history work.

Come, Follow Me Craft

Make a craft to help your family remember the Savior throughout the week.

Including Others

Find stories and activities to help teach your children how to be inclusive and kind.

Modern-Day Pioneer

Read a story about an adopted boy who was the first person in his birth family to be baptized.







THE CHURCH IS HERE



Preston, United Kingdom

Heber C. Kimball (1801–68) was one of six missionaries called to preach the gospel in England in 1837. This was the first mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints outside of North America. The work began in Preston, and by the time Elder Kimball returned home in 1838, more than 1,500 people had joined the Church. Currently, the Church in the United Kingdom has:



Over 186,000 members



317 wards and branches



2 temples in operation, 1 announced



Blessings of *Come, Follow Me*

Margaret Jest from Reading, England, says, "I am enjoying the *Come, Follow Me* program and find it to be very motivating. It is helping me learn more about the scriptures and understand them better. It brings me closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and helps me have a relaxing start to the day."





How Do We Minister like the Savior?



The Savior invited His disciples to minister to others as He did (see 3 Nephi 18:30; 27:21). When He visited the Nephites, He ministered to them one by one (see 3 Nephi 11; 17). He ministered to them because He loved them and genuinely wanted them—and each one of us—to be happy, to have hope, and to receive His relief.

So when trying to become a better minister and disciple of Jesus Christ, where should we start?

The Lord’s perfect example shows us that ministering, at its heart, is much more than just a Church assignment. Ministering is caring for others as the Savior would. Ministering is part of keeping our baptismal covenant (see 2 Nephi 31:13–14; Mosiah 18:10, 13; Doctrine and Covenants 20:37). President Russell M. Nelson has taught us that “one of the easiest ways to identify a *true follower* of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people” (“Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 98).

As we strive to fill our hearts with more genuine compassion, we will find that we’ve become closer to the Savior—and closer to being like the Savior. How can you build your compassion, pray for others, and minister like the Savior?

Ways the Savior Ministered	Can you emulate the Savior by . . .
“My bowels are filled with compassion towards you” (3 Nephi 17:6).	... having true compassion toward the people you serve?
“Bring them hither and I will heal them” (3 Nephi 17:7).	. . . supporting the sick and afflicted?
“We heard him pray for us unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:17).	. . . praying for others?
“Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full” (3 Nephi 17:20).	. . . being joyful when those you minister to receive and respond to your service?
“He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them” (3 Nephi 17:21).	... caring about people as individuals and serving them one by one?

HOW DID THE SAVIOR MINISTER?

“[The Savior] . . . smiled at, talked with, walked with, listened to, made time for, encouraged, taught, fed, and forgave. He served family and friends, neighbors and strangers alike, and He invited acquaintances and loved ones to enjoy the rich blessings of His gospel. Those ‘simple’ acts of service and love provide a template for our ministering today.”

Jean B. Bingham, former Relief Society General President, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Liahona*, May 2018, 104.



We Are the Children of the Covenant

In 3 Nephi 20–21 we read about the covenants God has made with His children. Jesus Christ taught His disciples in the Americas:

“Ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

“ . . . Ye are the children of the covenant” (3 Nephi 20:25–26).

President Russell M. Nelson has repeatedly emphasized the importance of remembering this great truth.¹



What does it mean to be children of the covenant?

Children of the covenant make the same covenants, or sacred promises, with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ that They made with Abraham (see Abraham 2:8–11).

In 1843 the Lord told Joseph Smith:

“Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are . . . ; and as touching Abraham and his seed, . . . both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars. . . .

“This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:30–31).

The promised blessings apply to us also. President Nelson taught that the promises include “the right to receive the fulness of the gospel, enjoy the blessings of the priesthood, and qualify for God’s greatest blessing—that of eternal life.”²

What if I’m not a descendant of Abraham?

When we are baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we become part of the family of Abraham. We then become “accounted as sons and daughters of Jesus Christ, being His children by obedience to the gospel.”³

What does Heavenly Father covenant with His children?

Heavenly Father covenants that through the redemption and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can return to live with and become like Him. This is the purpose of the plan of salvation.

President Nelson taught: “Heavenly Father’s plan for His children allows us to live where and how He lives and ultimately to become more and more like Him. His plan literally makes the richest blessings of all eternity available to us, including the potential for us to become ‘joint-heirs with Christ’ [Romans 8:17].”⁴

Why do we make covenants with Heavenly Father?

We return to our Heavenly Father by making and keeping covenants. This is what prophets refer to as walking the covenant path. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “We embark upon the path at the gate of baptism. . . . In the course of the covenant path . . . , we receive all the ordinances and covenants pertaining to salvation and exaltation.”⁵

What is the new and everlasting covenant?

Another name for the Abrahamic covenant is the new and everlasting covenant. It is new in the sense that it was restored through Joseph



Smith as the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁶ It is everlasting because it is the same covenant God has made with His children whenever people have been willing to receive it.⁷

Every covenant we make is part of the new and everlasting covenant, including baptism, receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood for men, and the temple endowment and sealing (eternal marriage). ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), Gospel Library; “Covenants,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 86–89; “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 32–35.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” 88.
3. Bible Dictionary, “Adoption.”
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity.”
5. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Covenant Path,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 116.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 66:2; D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Liahona*, May 2009, 20.
7. See Guide to the Scriptures, “New and Everlasting Covenant,” Gospel Library.



I WANTED TO RETURN TO GOD —BUT COULD I?

Name withheld

I sat in my motel room on a snowy January night, deeply discouraged. I had recently finished serving more than 34 years in prison for some serious crimes and injuries, and I was contemplating doing something that would have sent me straight back to where I had just been. My plans since my release had fallen apart—and as I had few resources and my prayers seemed to be going unanswered, my options felt limited.

A sound outside caught my attention. Looking out my window, I spotted the motel owner shoveling snow in the parking lot by himself. “Oh, that’s not right,” I thought, so I joined him. I didn’t think much of my act of service that night. But to my surprise, the next day the owner reduced the cost of my room. And while I stayed there over the following five weeks, he never asked me to pay full price.

His generosity was more than a financial blessing that I deeply needed. His kindness was also an answer to my prayer when I was losing hope. Through him, I understood that God was aware of me—and that I needed to take some steps to return to Him.

***While I believed in Jesus Christ,
I was convinced that I couldn't
possibly be forgiven for what
I had done.***



A Way Back

Decades before that night in January, I wanted nothing to do with God. Entering a state penitentiary as an angry, bitter, and confused 22-year-old, I did everything I could to make my fellow inmates fear and respect me. I also believed that no one could or should love me—not even God—because I was convinced I had crossed a point of no return and that there was no hope for my redemption.

I know now that I was wrong; we can always repent and return to God. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“Satan wants us to think that when we have sinned we have gone past a ‘point of no return’—that it is too late to change our course. . . .

“Christ came to save us. If we have taken a wrong course, the Atonement of Jesus Christ can give us the assurance that sin is *not* a point of no return. A safe return is possible if we will follow God’s plan for our salvation.”¹

My return to God began after I had been in prison for more than a decade. A friend who visited me in the penitentiary for years gave me the Book of Mormon and invited me to read it. Although I promised I would, I continually put it off. One weekend my friend visited and asked if I had even picked up the book. Of course I had! I picked it up every time I cleaned my living quarters. But I had not read it—and it wasn’t until a serious conversation with my friend, who impressed upon me how important it was that I keep my promise, that I finally began reading.

I found many interesting stories in the Book of Mormon, but I told myself they were just that—stories. Then I reached Moroni 10:4. I’ll admit, I didn’t want to “ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ” whether the book was true; I didn’t want to think about the consequences for someone like me if it was. Besides, if this was the word of God, then the Atonement of Jesus Christ was real, and I hated to think how my actions had added to His suffering.

Still, I prayed. I didn’t see a vision or hear a voice saying that the book was true. But as I looked out my window on a clear summer day, an enormous storm cloud rolled across the sky. There was no rain—just a powerful wind—and as quickly as it came, the cloud passed again. And I knew. Just as Moroni had promised, the Spirit testified to my heart that the Book of Mormon was true—and that I needed to change.

I began studying the scriptures more earnestly and was allowed to start a Book of Mormon study group with my fellow inmates. The missionaries also met with me and others in prison. For the next 15 years, I listened to the missionaries’ lessons, and for the remainder of my time in prison, I tried to live differently. This wasn’t easy in that environment. But it was possible because of my Savior, who supported and guided me through that experience and into the next chapter of my life (see Mosiah 24:15).

Finding Forgiveness

I’ll never forget the day I met my bishop after that lonely January night in my motel room. My friend who had given me the Book of Mormon helped me get in touch with him. When I met the bishop in his office before church, I told him about my past, and I was prepared for him to say that they didn’t need someone like me in their ward.

Instead, he invited me to go into sacrament meeting.

So I did. I was convinced that I had the word *convict* tattooed across my forehead and that when I walked in, everyone would shun me. But that didn’t happen. Instead, I found the most welcoming people I had ever encountered. The next Sunday, I came back. Not long after I began attending church, a counselor in the bishopric asked if I would speak about forgiveness in sacrament meeting.

“Me? Talk about forgiveness?” I asked. But when he affirmed that he meant it, I took on the assignment. When I spoke to the congregation, I was sure they would only see me as a former convict. But the longer I



talked, the more confident I became, and afterward I was met with nothing but love from these members, who greeted me with a hug or a handshake. That day I truly felt what it was to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:39).

More importantly, I finally understood that when the Savior suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane and bled from every pore (see Mosiah 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 19:18–19), He was bleeding for me too. This was a turning point—even though I had accepted the truth of the Book of Mormon and had invited Jesus Christ into my life, I was convinced that I was not going to be invited to heaven. I could not be forgiven. His Atonement was for everyone else, but not for me—because of what I had done.

But in this moment, I realized that I could be forgiven. This knowledge helped me move forward with my life. After more meetings with the missionaries, I was baptized in March 2012—my first step on the covenant path. Although I previously wouldn’t have thought it possible, I was able to marry a wonderful woman from my ward. We were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple in June 2013.

My wife and I have learned to put our faith in Jesus Christ. We rely on His Atonement, believing that “because Jesus walked such a long, lonely path utterly alone, *we* do not have to do so.”² As human beings, we are imperfect. At times we will stumble—even fall. But no matter how unworthy or past saving we think we are, Christ does not give up on us; He is always willing and ready to help us return safely home. ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Point of Safe Return,” *Liahona*, May 2007, 99.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “None Were with Him,” *Liahona*, May 2009, 88.

ALWAYS WITHIN REACH OF DIVINE LOVE

“However many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have *not* traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.”

President Jeffrey R. Holland, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Liahona*, May 2012, 33.

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Christ Administers the Sacrament to the Nephites

“And when the disciples had come with bread and wine, [Jesus] took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat.

“And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude. . . .

“And it came to pass that . . . he commanded his disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it.”

3 Nephi 18:3-4, 8



MINERVA TEICHERT (1888–1976), *THE SACRAMENT*, 1949–1951, OIL ON MASONITE, 36 X 48 INCHES, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1969

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
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