

## President Jeffrey R. Holland

Acting president, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

God hears every prayer and responds to each according to the path He has outlined for His children. There are no limits to when, where or about what to pray, if one “ask[s] not amiss” (2 Nephi 4:35).

Prayers ought to be vocal. If privacy is not practical, prayers should be silent utterances in one’s heart. “If there be any time we feel not to pray, we can be sure that hesitancy does not come from God, who yearns to communicate with His children at any and all times.” When unsure how or what to pray about, begin and continue until the Spirit guides one into the prayer that should be offered.

The Savior, though perfect, prayed to the Father often. He prayed alone, in the company of others, sometimes standing and sometimes kneeling. In fulfilling His atoning sacrifice, He prayed ever more pleadingly.

With prayer, pleading and personal righteousness, “we really can ascend to Mount Zion. ... As we repent of our sins and come boldly to that ‘throne of grace,’ leaving before Him there our alms and heartfelt supplications, we will find mercy, compassion and forgiveness at the benevolent hands of our Eternal Father and His obedient, perfectly pure Son.”



## Sister J. Anette Dennis

Of the Relief Society general presidency

Choosing to be part of a covenant enhances and deepens “our relationship with [God].”

Baptism by immersion is symbolic of the Savior’s death and Resurrection. “With our baptism we symbolically put on Christ.”

The ordinance of the sacrament is symbolic of Christ’s flesh and blood. “We again put on Christ as we make a new covenant each week.”

Everything in the house of the Lord points to the Savior and His atoning sacrifice.

“Our temple garment reminds us that the Savior and the blessings of His Atonement cover us throughout our lives. As we put on the garment of the holy priesthood each day, that beautiful symbol becomes a part of us.”

Romans 13:14 says, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“By keeping my covenants and obligations with God, including wearing the garment of the holy priesthood, my very life can become a personal symbol of my love and deep gratitude for my Savior, Jesus Christ, and my desire to have Him with me always.”

Someone does not have to wait for a mission or marriage to make temple covenants. Choose a deeper relationship with God by making covenants with Him in the house of the Lord.



## Elder Alexander Dushku

General Authority Seventy

After a “thick darkness” enveloped Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove, he exerted all his power to call upon God before a “pillar of light” gradually descended upon him. The reestablishment of the Lord’s Church began with Joseph’s desperate prayer and a pillar of light.

“Rather than sending us a pillar of light, the Lord sends us a ray of light, and then another, and another.”

These rays are continuously poured down upon God’s children. “If we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost and are striving to exercise faith, repent and honor our covenants, then we are worthy to receive these divine rays constantly.”

Everyone experiences God’s light and truth in different ways. A burst of testimony may come as a spiritual impression, a joyful assurance of God’s love, the gift to recognize “tender mercies of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:20) or more. No single ray is strong enough to constitute a full testimony, but together, they become a pillar of light the darkness of doubt cannot overcome.

“In the midst of that pillar, we too will find a loving Heavenly Father, calling us by name, pointing us to our Savior, Jesus Christ, and inviting us to ‘Hear Him!’”



## Elder Ulisses Soares

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

To have “covenant confidence through Jesus Christ” means trusting in the quiet, yet certain, assurance of receiving the blessings that God promises for those who keep their covenants — a blessing needed amid the challenging circumstances of the day. This “holier and higher” confidence comes as disciples of Christ make covenants with the Lord in the temple. It fortifies, strengthens and empowers those who keep their covenants to overcome doubt, despair, hopelessness and trials.

“Such confidence is the pinnacle of our divine connection with God and can help us increase our devotion to, and gratitude for, Jesus Christ and His infinite sacrifice.”

Confidence through Jesus Christ is gained with humility, living a righteous life and honoring covenants made in the temple. The Savior asks each attendee to come to the temple spiritually prepared.

The ongoing building of temples will continue to excite, inspire and bless the Church. Yet more importantly, as Latter-day Saints change their preparation to enter the house of the Lord, they will change their experiences in the temple, which will also transform their lives outside of the temple. “May this transformation fill us with confidence in our holy covenants made with God through Jesus Christ.”



**Elder Jack N. Gerard**

General Authority Seventy

In performing the Atonement, the Savior Jesus Christ manifested the attribute of integrity.

Living a life of integrity means being true to God, to each other and to one's divine identity. Integrity means not lowering standards or behavior to impress or be accepted by others. It means doing what is right and letting the consequences follow.

A life of integrity requires one to first and foremost be true to God. How Latter-day Saints respond to the oppositional pull of the world shows a person's true character and the measure of their integrity. "Exercising integrity in our choices is an outward expression of an inner commitment to follow the Savior Jesus Christ."

Being true to others flows from the second great commandment to love one's neighbor as one's self. Church members must rise above worldly expectations and "become the face of the true and living God at all times and in all places."

Joseph and Hyrum Smith demonstrated integrity by remaining true to the end of their lives, as well as to the light and knowledge they received.

"May we reconcile ourselves 'to the will of God' and develop the Christlike attribute of integrity."

**President Henry B. Eyring**

Of the First Presidency

As Saints attend the temple, they can be reminded of their eternal nature, relationship with the Father and His Son, and desire to return to their heavenly home. The acceleration of temple building under President Russell M. Nelson's leadership will allow all God's children the opportunity to receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation and to make and keep covenants.

Frequent participation in temple ordinances can create a pattern of devotion to the Lord and invite the Holy Ghost to strengthen and purify. Trials, challenges and heartaches will come to all. One can prepare to receive personal direction from the Lord by attending the temple and remembering covenants.

"I bear witness that there is nothing more important than honoring the covenants you make, or may make, in the temple. No matter where you are on the covenant path, I urge you to qualify and become eligible to attend the temple. Visit as frequently as circumstances will allow."

After the Teton Dam collapsed in 1976, when the Eyrings were away from their children at the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple, President Eyring assured his wife all would be well with their family because of covenants. "I can assure you of the same truth."



**Elder David A. Bednar**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Lord's admonition to "be still" (Psalm 46:10) reminds individuals to focus on the Savior as the ultimate source of spiritual stillness of the soul.

The foundation of a building is what connects it to the ground, and a strong and reliable connection between the ground and a foundation is essential if a structure is to remain sturdy.

Similarly, "the foundation of our lives must be connected to the rock of Christ if we are to remain firm and steadfast." Sacred covenants and ordinances can be compared to the anchor pins and steel rods used to connect a building to bedrock.

"Every time we faithfully receive, review, remember and renew sacred covenants, our spiritual anchors are secured ever more firmly and steadfastly to the 'rock' of Jesus Christ."

As individuals build their foundations upon the Savior, they are blessed to "be still." The Lord provides both sacred times and holy places to help individuals experience and learn about this inner stillness of their souls.

"Our homes should be the ultimate combination of both sacred time and holy places wherein individuals and families can 'be still' and know that God is our Heavenly Father, we are His children and Jesus Christ is the Savior."

**Elder Massimo De Feo**

General Authority Seventy

The story of a blind man named Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52 teaches about spiritual vision. He cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," recognizing that Jesus was the Messiah, to be born as a descendant of David. When people told Bartimaeus to be quiet, he cried out more. At the Lord's command to rise, he threw away his beggar's coat and went to Jesus. He received his sight and followed Jesus.

Three principles can be learned from this story. "We keep a clear spiritual vision when we:

- "Focus on Jesus Christ and stay true to what we know to be true.
- "Leave the natural man behind, repent and begin a new life in Christ.
- "Hear the voice of the Lord and allow Him to guide us."

"May we cry our testimony of Him, louder than the voices around us, in a world that needs to hear more of Jesus Christ and not less. May we remove the beggar's coat that we might still wear, and rise above the world, to a better life in and through Christ. May we get rid of all excuses not to follow Jesus Christ and find all good reasons to follow Him, as we hear His voice."

**Elder Brent H. Nielson**

Presidency of the Seventy

During his career as a trial lawyer, Elder Nielson quickly learned the importance of witnesses testifying in court. Similarly, "witness' and 'testimony' are terms that we use as we share our knowledge and feelings about the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

He bore witness of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, living prophets and apostles, and the restored gospel. "I testify that ... there has never been a better time to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than today. I know this of my own knowledge, independent of any other source, because of what I have both seen and heard."

The most inspiring miracle of the Restoration is the number of faithful Church members in every land, armed with righteousness and power. All over the world, Church members keep their covenants, unite in their witnesses of the gospel and move forward in faith.

"You are the covenant children of the Father. You are disciples of Jesus Christ. You also know what I know because you have received your personal witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. ... You and I are witnesses who testify."

**Elder José L. Alonso**

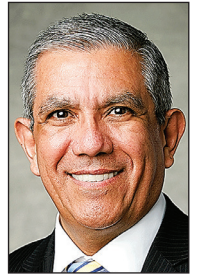
General Authority Seventy

Throughout difficult trials, people sometimes wonder where they can find peace and healing. The unwavering love of Jesus Christ offers hope, healing and the assurance of His constant, enduring presence. This gift is available to all who reach out to Him in faith.

"When confronted with challenges, it's easy to become engrossed in our difficulties. However, Jesus Christ exemplified the power of focusing on His Father, offering gratitude and acknowledging that solutions to our trials do not always lie within ourselves, but with God."

As individuals place Jesus Christ at the core of their thoughts and deeds, they align themselves with His outlook and strength. This adjustment doesn't discount trials, but instead helps people navigate their challenges under divine guidance. "Adopting this Christ-centric perspective empowers us with the fortitude and insight to turn our trials into victories, reminding us that with the Savior, what seems like a major problem can become a pathway to greater spiritual progress."

As Church members strive to put Christ at the center of their lives, they will discover the strength to overcome, the courage to persevere and peace that surpasses all understanding. "Jesus Christ is our hope and the answer to life's greatest pains."



**Elder Gerrit W. Gong**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In a world of tempests and tribulations, those who love and follow God are promised that all things will work together for their good. The nature of God is “to bring all things together for our good.”



Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement, He not only redeems one from sin, but understands each pain and affliction. “In time and eternity, His triumph over death and hell can make all things right.”

Faithful families and individuals around the world are confronting challenges while knowing that things will work together for good, even if they don’t know how. With faith, “trials and sacrifices we would never choose can bless us and others in ways never imagined.”

Faith in this promise increases as one gains eternal perspective, understands trials may be for a small moment and are part of mortality, recognizes that affliction can be consecrated for one’s gain and trusts that God doesn’t give trials to punish or judge.

Temple blessings work together for one’s good. More temples are being built closer to Church members. “Now, as circumstances permit, come even more often to the Lord in His holy house.” Regular temple worship and service will bless, protect and inspire individuals and families.

**Brother Michael T. Nelson**

Of the Young Men general presidency

Like Helaman leading the stripling sons of the Ammonites, leaders and parents “can be powerful examples to the youth of how disciples of Christ live today.”

Helaman was trustworthy, loved and saw the potential in the Ammonite sons, built strong relationships and counseled with them, followed his leaders and kept his covenants, and was supported by parents and leaders. “Helaman helped the young Ammonites to see how a valiant disciple of Jesus Christ lived.”

The restored Church of Jesus Christ “is organized to help the youth fulfill their great purpose in these latter days.” All members can participate in strengthening the youth.

Resources include scriptures, teachings of prophets and the General Handbook. “The entire ward will be blessed and strengthened as members focus on the rising generation.”

“We express our confidence in the youth by offering support and direction, without taking over.” For youth to experience joy and growth, step back and allow them to learn through counseling together, choosing an inspired course and putting a plan into action.

“Our youth amaze us with their courage, their faith and their abilities. As they choose to be fully engaged disciples of Jesus Christ, His gospel will be etched upon their hearts.”

**Elder Quentin L. Cook**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Prior to His betrayal and Crucifixion, Jesus Christ prayed for oneness (see John 17:20-23). “Oneness with Christ and our Heavenly Father can be obtained through the Savior’s Atonement.”



Doctrine and Covenants 20 contains doctrine about the Savior’s Atonement, the plan of salvation and the ordinances of baptism and the sacrament. There are no economic, race, gender or ethnicity requirements for baptism – all qualifications are spiritual, and all people are invited to partake of the Lord’s goodness.

That does not mean there are no conduct requirements. “The Lord makes it clear that all have moral agency. ... To receive the blessings of the Savior’s Atonement, we must affirmatively exercise our moral agency to choose Christ and obey His commandments.”

One cannot control many events in life, such as health challenges and accidents. However, “on matters of principle, conduct, religious observance and righteous living, we are in control. Our faith in and worship of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, is a choice that we make.”

To follow President Russell M. Nelson’s admonition to gather Israel, “we need to include others in our circle of oneness. ... The essence of truly belonging is to be one with Christ.”



**Elder Shayne M. Bowen**

General Authority Seventy

Although many say miracles no longer exist today, “I testify that miracles have not ceased, angels are among us and the heavens are truly open.”

In His earthly life, Jesus Christ gave priesthood keys to Peter, His chief apostle. Peter and other apostles led the Savior’s Church until the apostles died and the keys of the priesthood were taken from the earth.

Those keys have been restored in these latter days and were passed from prophet to prophet until President Russell M. Nelson.

“Through the Savior’s Church, we receive the blessings of the priesthood — including the power of God to help us in our lives. Under authorized priesthood keys, we make sacred promises to God and receive sacred ordinances that prepare us to live in His presence.”

Miracles often occur as a direct result of priesthood power. Some blessings are immediate, some unfold gradually, and some are not fully realized until the next life. However, “God keeps all of His promises,” always.

“If you desire the blessings of the priesthood, including miracles and the ministry of angels, I invite you to walk the path of covenants God has made available to each of us.”

**Elder Steven R. Bangerter**

General Authority Seventy

When God created His spirit children, He embedded within each of them a divine nature and eternal destiny. He blessed them with agency and foreordained each to fulfill specific missions in mortality.

“If you remain worthy, the blessings of that premortal decree will enable you to have all kinds of opportunities in this life, including opportunities to serve in the Church and to participate in the most important work happening on the earth today: the gathering of Israel.”

Heavenly Father desires to reveal to His children their foreordained gifts and talents. He will share this knowledge to those who sincerely ask, genuinely desire to know and seek to follow His will.

One way is to “protect the private times of your life.” Scriptures, prayer, uplifting music and reading one’s patriarchal blessing can bring revelation and provide a safe haven amid the storms of life.

“As you protect the private times of your life, your participation in the ordinances and covenants of the gospel will be more meaningful. And you will more fully bind yourself to God in the covenants you make with Him, and you will be lifted to have greater hope, faith and assurance in the promises He has made to you.”

**Sister Andrea Muñoz Spannaus**

Of the Young Women general presidency

David was prepared with five stones when he battled Goliath. “What if each of David’s stones represented a strength we need to be triumphant in our lives?”

Those five stones can represent love for God, faith in the Savior Jesus Christ, knowledge of true identity, daily repentance and access to God’s power.

“Our love for God and our close relationship with Him give us the strength we need to transform our hearts and more easily overcome our challenges.”

Faith in Jesus Christ “means to fully trust His wisdom, His timing, His love and His power to atone for our sins.”

President Russell M. Nelson has taught that one’s most important identities are as children of God, children of the covenant and disciples of Jesus Christ.

On repentance, “forgiveness is possible for everyone.”

Covenants with God give people access to the power of godliness. “God’s power is a real power that helps us face challenges, make good decisions and increase our capacity to endure difficult situations.”

A sixth stone would be a stone of testimony. “Our testimony is built by personal spiritual experiences in which we recognize the divine influence in our lives. No one can take that knowledge from us.”



**Elder Matthew L. Carpenter**

General Authority Seventy

Those who make and keep covenants with God will see those blessings extend beyond this life and be sealed upon them forever.

To be exalted to the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, one must enter into marriage by the proper authority and then be true to the covenants made in that marriage. This eternal marriage covenant includes a lateral bond between husband and wife, and a vertical bond with God.

Each partner must desire to be in the marriage to keep the lateral bond. To keep the vertical bond with God, stay true to temple covenants.

For those who remain faithful to covenants, they will receive the promised blessings even if their spouse has broken those covenants.

To receive the blessings of exaltation, one must demonstrate, either in this life or the next, willingness to enter into and faithfully keep the new and everlasting covenant.

No blessings will be withheld from faithful members of the Church who are single.

“The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of hope.” Hope comes with repentance and obedience. Those who enter into and keep the covenant of marriage can receive the fullness of the glory of the Father.

**Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Life has both highs and lows because there is opposition in all things. Feeling sadness is not a sign of failure. Following the Savior can help provide a peaceful confidence.

“The peace He gives us is not like what the world gives. It is better. It is higher and holier.”

Joy is the very purpose of God’s plan for His children.

Worldly happiness cannot last, but godly joy is eternal. “It is the joy that endures heartbreak, penetrates sorrow and diminishes loneliness.”

A few beginning steps on the journey of discovering pure joy include:

- Draw near unto God. “I have learned that if we draw near to God and reach out to touch Him, we can indeed find healing, peace and joy.”
- Look for it. “We rarely find something we are not looking for. Are we looking for eternal joy? Seek and ye shall find.”
- Bear one another’s burdens. “True joy multiplies when it is shared.”

As people follow these invitations and strive to walk in God’s way, they will experience “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” even in the midst of sorrows. “You will feel your spirit lifting away from the gravity of this world.”



**Elder Ronald A. Rasband**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Words matter. They are the bedrock of how humans connect; they represent beliefs, morals and perspectives. Words set a tone and can open minds to truth.

First and foremost, let the Lord's words matter.

The Lord's words come through scriptures, from personal revelation, promptings of the Holy Ghost and answers to prayer. "Believing and heeding the word of God will draw us closer to Him."

Second, the words of prophets matter.

"Prophets testify of the divinity of Jesus Christ. They teach His gospel and show His love for all."

President Nelson has a way with words – from "keep on the covenant path" and "gather Israel" to "let God prevail" and "think celestial."

Third, consider one's own words. "Believe me, in our emoji-filled world, our words matter."

Three simple phrases can take the sting out of difficulties, lift and reassure others: "Thank you," "I am sorry" and "I love you."

"I promise that if we 'feast upon the words of Christ' that lead to salvation, our Prophet's words that guide and encourage us, and our own words that speak of who we are and what we hold dear, the powers of heaven will pour down upon us."

**President Susan H. Porter**

Of the Primary general presidency

The gift of prayer is a blessing – one can talk to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere.

First, pray to know.

"When you know that Heavenly Father is real and that He loves you, you can live with courage and hope. 'Pray, He is there; speak, He is listening.'"

Wanting to know why something hard is happening in one's life or why a prayed-for blessing wasn't received? "Often the best question to ask Heavenly Father is not 'why?' but 'what?'"

Second, pray to grow.

Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to show the way to live and grow to become more like Him.

Third, pray to show.

You can pray for help to show Heavenly Father's love to others.

"Share with Heavenly Father what is in your heart. As you sincerely ask for His help, you will receive His Spirit to guide you. Praying every day will fill you with love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. This will help you want to follow Them your whole life. ...

"I invite you to pray to know Heavenly Father is there, pray to grow to become like Him and pray to show His love to others."

**Elder Dale G. Renlund**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Comparing living the gospel of Jesus Christ to kayaking in the ocean, Elder Renlund said building spiritual momentum helps individuals avoid falling when adversarial waves hit. The same-size wave that a moving kayak can absorb without tipping can cause a stopped kayak to roll over in the water. Likewise, making efforts to grow spiritually can help an individual avoid spiritually falling when temptations or challenges come into their life.

Faith in Jesus Christ must be nourished daily through prayer, scripture study, repentance and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Honoring covenants helps individuals create a conduit to receive God's power in their lives.

Help others without judging them for their actions. Everyone is struggling, and no one earns salvation. Everyone needs all of the Savior's infinite Atonement. It is the Savior's responsibility to heal. The rest of God's children have the responsibility to love and minister in ways that help others draw closer to Jesus Christ.

Exercising faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement propels individuals along the covenant path and motivates them to help others to also become faithful disciples of the Savior. Having a place in Heavenly Father's kingdom requires faithfully living the doctrine of Christ.

**Elder Paul B. Pieper**

General Authority Seventy

Trust is foundational to the success of every relationship and can be created only when two individuals trust each other. A relationship cannot exist if one person trusts another completely but the other does not trust the first.

Heavenly Father wants to have a relationship with each of His children, and that relationship is so close and personal that God is willing and able to share all He has. And He created a plan to make that possible. That plan included giving all of His children agency while they were tested by coming to earth.

Heavenly Father knew that His children would not always make the right choices, so He provided a Savior – His Son, Jesus Christ – to atone for the sins of all His children. This allows them to repent – a gift He hopes is used regularly.

God is focused on the growth and progress of His children. As the master teacher and complete coach, He stretches His children to help them realize their divine potential. That means that once someone shows trust in Him once, He will always give another invitation to trust Him. He will not stop providing opportunities for growth.

Individuals can choose to trust God every day.



**Elder Patrick Kearon**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Father's beautiful plan is designed to bring His children home, not to keep them out. "God is in relentless pursuit of you."

The purpose of this earth is to give an opportunity to learn, grow, make mistakes, repent and return home.

Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice removes every roadblock that would separate people from their eternal home.

"Everything about the Father's plan for His beloved children is designed to bring everyone home."

The intent of the Father's plan of happiness, redemption, mercy and salvation is to provide all of those things to His children.

One of Jesus' most consistent invitations was to change and repent and come unto Him.

"God wants for us a radical reorientation of our selfish and prideful impulses, the eviction of the natural man, for us to 'go, and sin no more.'"

The Savior goes in search of the lost sheep until He finds them. He does not put up roadblocks — He removes them.

"Are there things we need to do, commandments to keep, aspects of our natures to change? Yes. But with His grace, those are within our reach, not beyond our grasp."

**Elder Brian K. Taylor**

General Authority Seventy

Why do some receive their yearned-for miracles quickly while others patiently endure and wait upon the Lord?

Every disciple of Christ must face life's different trials as part of mortality. In the process, they learn to trust in God's divine purposes, which provide hope and kindle determination to carry on.

"Life's trials 'prove us.' Even the Savior 'learned obedience by' and was made 'perfect through sufferings.'"

"Coming to trust in God's divine purposes breathes hope into weary souls and kindles determination in seasons of anguish and heartache."

To avoid discontent and find peace, hope and joy in the midst of life's challenges, consider three principles.

1. Stronger faith comes by putting Jesus Christ first.
2. Brighter hope comes by envisioning one's eternal destiny.
3. Greater power comes by focusing on joy.

When Latter-day Saints feel overwhelmed by life's tribulations, they can remember these principles and the Lord's promise in the scriptures that they "should suffer no matter of afflictions, save it be swallowed up (consumed, devoured and engulfed) in the joy of Christ."

In the scriptures, the Lord promises to ease burdens, "that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions."

**President Dallin H. Oaks**

Of the First Presidency

A covenant is a commitment to fulfill certain responsibilities. Personal commitments are essential to the regulation of individual lives and to the functioning of society.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always emphasized a commitment to making and keeping covenants with God.

Covenants were foundational in the Restoration of the gospel. A fundamental history of God's covenant promises are found in the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon. The central role of covenants was reaffirmed in the preface the Lord gave for the first publication of His revelations. The early pioneers received spiritual strength and power by making covenants in the Nauvoo Temple before beginning their historic trek to the Rocky Mountains.

Today, Latter-day Saints have a better understanding of the role of covenants in the restored Church. The Church's growth and its purpose in building temples worldwide is to bless the children of God through temple worship and unique blessings associated with being bound to the Savior through covenants.

Those who have been endowed in a holy temple are responsible to wear a temple garment beneath outer clothing, which reminds them of sacred covenants and promised blessings.





**Elder D. Todd Christofferson**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

According to revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 76, the distinguishing characteristic for the inhabitants of each kingdom of glory – celestial, terrestrial and telestial – is how they relate to “the testimony of Jesus,” ranging from wholehearted devotion to not being valiant to outright rejection.

The testimony of Jesus is “the witness of the Holy Spirit that He is the divine Son of God, the Messiah and Redeemer.” For the inheritors of the celestial kingdom, this testimony is manifest in what they are and what they are becoming, as their priorities and choices are governed by the principles and truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Being valiant in the testimony of Jesus includes nurturing and strengthening that testimony; being open and public about one’s witness; heeding His messengers; pursuing personal holiness; and encouraging others to be valiant, especially one’s family members.

“My invitation is to act now to secure your place as one who is valiant in the testimony of Jesus. As repentance may be needed, ‘do not procrastinate the day of your repentance’ (Alma 34:33). ...

“Our Father wants all His children who will to enjoy eternal life with Him in His celestial kingdom. Jesus suffered, died and was resurrected to make that possible.”



**Elder Taylor G. Godoy**

General Authority Seventy

In times of uncertainty, pain, disappointment and heartbreak, people may rely more on their own abilities. This can cause them to dismiss the need for Heavenly Father’s support.

In a hospital room hangs the phrase “Call, don’t fall,” meaning a patient should prevent injury that might increase existing pain. In a spiritual sense, “calling” is adopting an attitude of prayer, knowing that a loving and merciful Heavenly Father will hear.

“Imagine the feelings of Heavenly Father when in each prayer we make a supplication in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. What power and tenderness, I believe, are displayed when we do so.”

Everyone will have experiences where “calling” is the answer to “not fall.” Praying shows hope, but one must also take action.

“‘Calling’ is a matter of faith and action – faith to recognize that we have a Heavenly Father who answers our prayers according to His infinite wisdom, and then action consistent with what we asked for.”

Prayers are always heard.

“As we pray, we can feel the embrace of our Heavenly Father, who sent his Only Begotten Son to relieve our burdens, because if we call out to God, I testify we will not fall.”



**Elder Gary E. Stevenson**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Jesus’ two great commandments, to “love the Lord” and “love your neighbor,” are like the two towers – or “engineering genius” – of a bridge.

Loving the Lord centers on a person’s heart, soul and mind, and is measured in acts of obedience. Loving one’s neighbor means loving all of God’s children regardless of gender, race or other differences.

Just as bridge towers depend on each other, so do God’s two great laws. A person’s ability to follow Jesus Christ depends upon their power to live both laws with equal devotion.

However, some are so focused on keeping commandments that they show little tolerance for those whom they see as less righteous. Conversely, some emphasize the importance of loving others without acknowledging that all are accountable to God. Either imbalance can make a spiritual bridge tip over.

“So ... how do we build our own bridge of faith and devotion – erecting tall bridge towers of both loving God and loving our neighbors? Well, we just start. ... It might consist of a few realistic goals to understand the Lord’s gospel more or to vow to judge others less. No one is too young or too old to begin.”



**Elder Mathias Held**

General Authority Seventy

Heavenly Father gave each person agency so they could learn from making choices. Sometimes people struggle due to their own choices, and sometimes they struggle because of circumstances beyond their control. Either way, the scriptures teach that there is opposition in all things. And although individuals can’t always choose their circumstances, they can choose how they react.

“We can seek to learn from the experience and ask for our Lord’s help and support, or we can think that we are on our own in this trial and that we must suffer it alone. We can ‘adjust our sails’ to the new reality, or we can decide not to change anything. In the darkness of night, we can turn on our lights; in the cold of winter, we should wear warm clothes; in seasons of sickness, we can seek medical and spiritual help.”

Individuals can trust that their difficulties, sorrows, afflictions and pains don’t define them. Rather, how they respond to those trials will help them grow and draw closer to God. “It is our attitudes and choices that define us much better than our challenges.”



**Elder Neil L. Andersen**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Around the world — where houses of the Lord are “coming closer” to Latter-day Saints — “there is a growing feeling drawing us to the house of the Lord.”

“Amid the turmoil and temptations of the world, the Lord has promised to strengthen and bless His covenant Saints.”

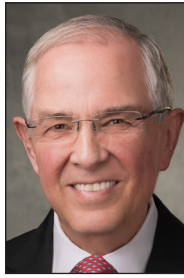
Those who come worthily and prayerfully to the Lord’s house “will be armed with His power, His name will be upon you, His angels will have charge over you, and you will grow up in the blessing of the Holy Ghost.”

In the house of the Lord “we are literally endowed with heavenly power.” Faith in Jesus Christ is confirmed and fortified, and Latter-day Saints are blessed with protection from temptations and distractions. “We are armed with the power of God.”

In the temple, “we take His name more completely upon us. ... In the temple, we sacredly promise, through our covenants, to follow Him forever.”

Coming to the temple with a willing heart, “we grow up in the Lord and can ‘receive a fullness of the Holy Ghost.’”

It’s “through the power of the Holy Ghost, we are filled with peace and joy and unspeakable hope.”

**President Mark L. Pace**

Of the Sunday School general presidency

The Book of Mormon is the “keystone” that makes the dispensation of the fullness of times different from all previous dispensations. “While God has promised there will never be another general apostasy, we need to be mindful and careful to avoid a personal apostasy — remembering, as President Russell M. Nelson has taught, ‘We are each responsible for our individual spiritual growth.’”

Individuals study the scriptures so the Holy Ghost can deepen their conversion to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Two questions that could improve learning at home and teaching at church are: “What has the Holy Ghost taught us this week during our study of the Book of Mormon?” and “How does this bring us closer to the Savior?”

The great worth and spiritual power of the scriptures Lehi and his family experienced continue today. “There has never been a people in history with the access to the Book of Mormon and other scriptures that we enjoy today. ... The most important copy of the Book of Mormon is our personal copy. It is the copy that we read. ...

“As we study the Book of Mormon and follow the living prophet, there will be no personal apostasy in our lives.”

**President Russell M. Nelson**

President of the Church

Priesthood keys govern “how the priesthood of God may be used to bring about the Lord’s purposes and bless all who accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The keys conferred to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple authorized him — and all succeeding Presidents of the Church — to gather Israel on both sides of the veil, to bless all covenant children with the blessings of Abraham, to place a ratifying seal on priesthood ordinances and covenants, and to seal families eternally.

Priesthood keys are what distinguish the Church from any other organization on earth and enable every covenant-keeping man and woman to enjoy “incredible personal spiritual privileges.”

The temple is spiritually empowering. “Understanding the spiritual privileges made possible in the temple is vital to each of us today.”

The temple is the gateway to the greatest blessings God has for each of His children. The temple is the only place on earth where individuals may receive all of the blessings promised to Abraham.

“Let us rejoice in the restoration of priesthood keys which make it possible for you and me to enjoy every spiritual blessing we are willing and worthy to receive.”

President Nelson announced locations for 15 new temples, in Utoroa, French Polynesia; Chihuahua, Mexico; Florianópolis, Brazil; Rosario, Argentina; Edinburgh, Scotland; Brisbane, Australia, South Area; Victoria, British Columbia; Yuma, Arizona; Houston, Texas, South Area; Des Moines, Iowa; Cincinnati, Ohio; Honolulu, Hawaii; West Jordan, Utah; Lehi, Utah; and Maracaibo, Venezuela.

