



# MY PLAN

FOR RETURNED MISSIONARIES



# FOR FACILITATORS

Under the direction of a stake priesthood leader, the institute coordinator or institute director identifies a facilitator to guide the returned missionary group. The facilitator may ask another group member to help facilitate the group as needed.

The facilitator is not a teacher or expert. The facilitator's role is to help group members follow the materials, participate, and invite the Spirit into the discussion. The facilitator works to create a safe environment and encourages participation from all group members.

The facilitator has several responsibilities before each group meeting:

- Download the appropriate videos for each chapter to a personal device and bring that device to the group meeting to play the videos.

- Arrive 15 minutes early to set up the meeting space and to test that the videos work. The meeting space should include up to 18 chairs set up in a circle or oval so the group can easily communicate as a council. If more than 18 participants might attend, create multiple groups in separate meeting spaces. Multiple groups will require additional facilitators.
- Pick up a supply of *My Plan for Returned Missionaries* manuals and extra pens. The institute coordinator or director usually has copies of the manual. The *My Plan for Returned Missionaries* manual can also be found on the Gospel Library app within the Young Adults folder or as a PDF at [srs.lds.org/mcm](https://srs.lds.org/mcm).
- Welcome group members as they arrive.

FACILITATOR DO'S	FACILITATOR DON'TS
<p><b>Before Each Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the chapter briefly.</li><li>• Download videos at <a href="https://srs.lds.org/mcm">srs.lds.org/mcm</a>.</li><li>• Check that the video and audio play correctly.</li><li>• Set up chairs in a circle for group members.</li></ul> <p><b>During Each Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start on time.</li><li>• Record each group member's name and stake (if applicable).</li><li>• Encourage everyone to participate.</li><li>• Be a group member. Make and keep commitments.</li><li>• Seek the Spirit and follow the manual.</li><li>• Observe the group and keep the discussion moving.</li><li>• Have fun.</li></ul>	<p><b>Before Each Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare a lesson.</li></ul> <p><b>During Each Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach or act as the expert.</li><li>• Speak more than others.</li><li>• Answer every question.</li><li>• Be the center of attention.</li><li>• Sit at the head of the table.</li><li>• Stand up to facilitate.</li><li>• Give your opinion about each comment.</li></ul>

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# 1 TRUST IN THE LORD

**Have an opening prayer.**

*Group members should take turns reading the information below.*

## HOW DOES A RETURNED MISSIONARY GROUP WORK?

- Read:** Returned missionary groups function like a council. There is no teacher or expert. Instead, we follow the materials as they are written. With the guidance of the Spirit, we will help each other as follows:
- Contribute equally to discussions and activities. No one, especially the facilitator, should dominate the conversation.
  - Love and support each other. Show interest, ask questions, and learn about each other. Show respect for feelings, creating a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing.
  - Share positive and relevant comments.
  - Make and keep commitments.

Elder M. Russell Ballard taught, “There is no problem in the family, ward, or stake that cannot be solved if we look for solutions in the Lord’s way by counseling—really counseling—with one another” (*Counseling with Our Councils*, rev. ed. [2012], 4).

In Doctrine and Covenants 88:122, we read, “Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, *that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all*, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (italics added).

**Discuss:** What have you learned from other councils about the importance of discussion and letting everyone speak?

- Read:** The group process is easy. Simply follow the materials. When you see these prompts, follow these directions:
- **Read:** One person reads aloud for the whole group.
  - **Watch:** The whole group watches the video together (the facilitator downloads it in advance).
  - **Discuss:** Group members share thoughts on the question posed.
  - **Activity:** Group members work individually or with others.
  - **Ponder:** Group members quietly consider and individually write for two or three minutes.



- **Commit:** Group members individually promise to act on commitments during the week that will help them progress.
- **Report:** Group members share their experiences in working on commitments.

With the help of others, you can accomplish great things. For example, missionaries have companions for support. In our group, we have “action partners.” Each week we will choose and work with an action partner. Action partners help each other keep commitments by:

- Texting or calling each other during the week.
- Encouraging each other to keep commitments.
- Counseling together about challenges.
- Praying for each other.

The *My Plan for Returned Missionaries* manual can also be found on the Gospel Library app within the Young Adults folder or as a PDF at [srs.lds.org/mcm](https://srs.lds.org/mcm). Some groups may exclusively use the app instead of the printed manual. Other groups might use the app as an additional resource.

Throughout the group meetings and during the week, you will be asked to record your thoughts, ideas, and spiritual impressions. **Please bring a study journal to the group meeting each week.** This could be a notebook or electronic device to record your thoughts and ideas.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR MY LIFE?

**Read:** You have recently served the Lord as a missionary. The impact of your service is immeasurable. During your mission, you were deeply engaged in teaching the doctrine of Christ, inviting souls to come unto Christ, and asking investigators to exercise great faith.

**Discuss:** What examples did you see on your mission of people acting in faith and trusting God? What can these examples teach you about trusting God and acting in faith as it relates to a job, education, and marriage?

**Read:** The Lord is leading “a great and marvelous work” (D&C 6:1), and this work requires your service. Elder Ballard emphasized this with the following clarion call: “What we need now is the greatest generation of young adults in the history of the Church. We need your whole heart and soul” (“The Greatest Generation of Young Adults,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 68). While you might think that your days as a missionary are over, this is not so.

The Lord has provided His plan of happiness for you. He will bless you as you embrace it fully. He has blessed you with special gifts and talents that will allow you to become everything He desires for you. You can fulfill your mission here on earth if you are diligent in seeking to understand and obey His will for you. This booklet will help you discover and accomplish your purpose as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It will also help you become spiritually and temporally self-reliant.

The Savior has promised to help you with every needful thing in your life, if you have faith and obey His word. To His disciples He said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." He then asked, "And why take ye thought for raiment? . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matthew 6:24, 28, 32). He then marked the way forward for us, saying, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

**Discuss:** How is your life's purpose a part of God's plan of happiness?

**Read:** Elder Jeffrey R. Holland shared the following about your call as a returned missionary: "The call is to come back, to stay true, to love God, and to lend a hand. I include in that call to fixed faithfulness every returned missionary. . . . 'Your Father in Heaven expects your loyalty and your love at every stage of your life.'

"To all within the sound of my voice, the voice of Christ comes ringing down through the halls of time, asking each one of us while there is time, 'Do you love me?' And for every one of us, I answer with my honor and my soul, 'Yea, Lord, we do love thee.' And having set our 'hand to the plough,' we will never look back until this work is finished and love of God and neighbor rules the world" ("The First Great Commandment," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 85).

**Discuss:** What does having a "fixed faithfulness" mean to you?



**Read:** The scriptures teach us that we should pray “with all the energy of heart” that we may become like him our Savior (Moroni 7:48). Truly, the Lord expects us to further His work by becoming like Him and by helping others to do the same. As a returned missionary, you should make this your goal. An essential foundation in achieving this goal is being able to stand on your own, both temporally and spiritually—in other words, being self-reliant. God has commanded that we become self-reliant.

To be self-reliant is to be responsible and accountable for developing your skills and providing for yourself while also continually serving others. We achieve this through exercising faith and trust in the Savior and His Atonement, obeying His commandments, and bettering ourselves and others. When we become spiritually and temporally self-reliant, we are better able to serve others and help the Lord fulfill His work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (see Moses 1:39).

**Ponder:** What can you do now to be more spiritually and temporally self-reliant?

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**Discuss:** In what ways can you now demonstrate greater trust in the Lord?

**Commit:**

- If you participated in My Plan on your mission, review your plan again. If you did not start My Plan while on your mission, review the worksheet at the back of this manual. Then read the quote by Elder Richard G. Scott (on the right). What is the Spirit prompting you to do? Take a moment now to write down those impressions, and commit to act on them.
- Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.
- Bring a study journal to the group meeting next week.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



*“Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life. Always, day or night, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, seek to recognize and respond to the direction of the Spirit.”*

Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 32

# 2 BECOMING: FULFILLING MY LIFE'S COVENANTS AND PURPOSE

**Have an opening prayer.**

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experiences in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## WHAT WILL I BECOME?

**Read:** If you started My Plan on your mission, recall that as a returned missionary, your opportunity to create a happy, gospel-centered life is greater now than ever before. Elder Dallin H. Oaks has said: "In contrast to the institutions of the world, which teach us to *know* something, the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to *become* something. . . . It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. . . . What is important in the end is what we have become by our labors" ("The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32, 34).

**Discuss:** How did your mission expand your vision of what you can become?

## CREATE A VISION: WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ME?

**Read:** Elder Richard G. Scott taught, "The Lord has a purpose for you, individually" ("Learning to Succeed in Life" [Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 15, 1998], speeches.byu.edu). As a child of God, you have potential to receive "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). The questions you must answer include "What will I do with my potential? How can I understand and accomplish God's purpose for my life?" First you need a vision, then goals, followed by a plan.

**Ponder:** What do you think you are capable of becoming spiritually and temporally?

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**Discuss:** Why are covenants an essential part of your life's purpose?



*"When we know who we are and what we are supposed to do, it is easier to make important decisions about education, careers, and marriage. It is easier to shine our light in our families, with our friends, and in all other places."*

Julie B. Beck, "You Have a Noble Birthright," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 107



### COVENANTS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR LIFE'S MISSION AND PURPOSE

**Read:** God's people are a covenant-making people. The Father works with us through covenants we make with Him. Lorenzo Snow, prophet and President of the Church, taught, "I believe that when you and I were in [our premortal] life, we made certain covenants with those that had control, that in this life . . . we would do what we had done in that [premortal] life—find out the will of God and conform to it" (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, comp. Clyde J. Williams [1984], 118–19).

Elder LeGrand Richards taught: "I received a patriarchal blessing when I was only eight years old. Among other things it said, 'Thou hast not come here upon earth by chance, but in fulfillment of the decrees of the Almighty to accomplish a great work.' Then it went on in detail about what I could do. All my life as a boy, I prayed that if I did not come here by chance that the Lord would help me to live so that I would not be deprived of the privilege of doing the work that he sent me to do. I cannot imagine anything that would be more disappointing than to return after this life and have the Lord say, 'Well, LeGrand, this is what we sent you to do, but you just wouldn't do it. You got off on a detour, and we had to raise up someone else to do your work for you'" ("A Constructive Life," *New Era*, June 1976, 8).

**Ponder:** Ask yourself, "What is true success in life? What do I know about my life's purpose so far?"

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**Discuss:** How have you begun to learn about your life's purpose?

**Read:** As you ponder and pray about your life's purpose, the Lord will bless you with greater understanding. He has blessed you with several resources, including the scriptures and your patriarchal blessing, to guide you and help you understand your life's purpose.

### USING YOUR PATRIARCHAL BLESSING AS A GUIDE

**Read:** President Thomas S. Monson gave instruction on receiving guidance for your life from your patriarchal blessing: "The same Lord who provided a Liahona for Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage—not to a promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and priceless personal treasure" ("Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 65).



*"Making and cheerfully keeping our covenants gives validity and life to the vital sacred and saving ordinances we need to receive in order to obtain 'all that [the] Father hath.'"*

Linda K. Burton, "The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 113

## 2 Becoming: Fulfilling My Life's Covenants and Purpose

**Discuss:** How did your patriarchal blessing direct you during your mission?

**Activity:** During the week, to gain a better understanding of the Lord's will for you, make a copy of your patriarchal blessing. Then do the following:

**Step 1:** Circle all of the words in your patriarchal blessing that describe you (for example, "humble" or "sincere"). In your study journal, list these words beneath a heading titled "I am."

**Step 2:** Underline all of the phrases that describe actions to take (for example, "study the scriptures diligently" or "seek an advanced education"). In your study journal, list these phrases beneath a heading titled "I will."

**Step 3:** Look at the lists you wrote. Ask yourself, "What does my patriarchal blessing reveal to me about God's purpose for my life?"

**Step 4:** Write a description in your study journal of the person you think Heavenly Father wants you to become.

### PERSONAL REVELATION THROUGH THE BOOK OF MORMON

**Read:** Elder M. Russell Ballard testified that "the Book of Mormon, above all other books that I know of, is the greatest source we have for answers to real-life problems" ("We Add Our Witness," *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 8). Elder David A. Bednar has emphasized the importance of "reading, studying, searching, and pondering the scriptures in general and the Book of Mormon in particular" ("Lehi's Dream: Holding Fast to the Rod," *Ensign*, Oct. 2011, 33). By using the Book of Mormon daily, we will be blessed with greater guidance, purpose, protection, and comfort. The Lord will guide us in things both temporal and spiritual. Elder Scott said, "I bear witness that [the Book of Mormon] can become a personal 'Urim and Thummim' in your life" ("The Power of the Book of Mormon in My Life," *Ensign*, Oct. 1984, 11).

**Discuss:** How has the Book of Mormon provided you personal revelation?

- Commit:**
- On your mission, you invited others to read the Book of Mormon and find answers. This week, study the Book of Mormon daily, seeking to learn about the work Heavenly Father has sent you to accomplish. Write down your impressions in your study journal.
  - Visit the temple, or find a quiet space, and pray for greater understanding about what you have been prepared to accomplish in this life.
  - Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



*"A patriarchal blessing is a revelation to the recipient, even a white line down the middle of the road, to protect, inspire, and motivate activity and righteousness. A patriarchal blessing literally contains chapters from your book of eternal possibilities. I say eternal, for just as life is eternal, so is a patriarchal blessing."*

Thomas S. Monson, "Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66

# 3 WORKING WITH A MENTOR

## Have an opening prayer.

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experiences in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## THE ROLE OF MENTORS IN GOD'S PLAN

**Read:** Good mentors are important for our spiritual and temporal progression. They help us see ourselves as God sees us and help us make and keep commitments to become the person He wants us to become. Mentors can lift our vision, help us overcome unhealthy thoughts and behaviors, and inspire us to become better than we could become on our own.

The scriptures contain several examples of great mentors. Eli mentored Samuel (see 1 Samuel 3). Alma mentored Amulek (see Alma 8–16). Mormon mentored Moroni (see Moroni 9), and Naomi mentored Ruth (see Ruth 1–4). We can find many other examples of people who have become greater with a mentor than they could have become on their own.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate mentor. Despite Peter's shortcomings, Jesus patiently mentored Peter and helped him become the leader that He could trust to lead His Church (see Matthew 16:18–19). Christ mentored Peter by loving him and seeing his potential, by asking him questions that challenged him to see and think differently (see Matthew 17:14–21), and by inviting him to make and keep commitments that would strengthen and shape him (see John 21:15–17).

**Discuss:** How could a mentor help you navigate challenges and grow spiritually?

**Ponder:** What challenges will you face over the next few years that a mentor could help you navigate? How could a mentor help you establish strong spiritual habits?

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### FINDING A MENTOR

**Watch:** “Thy Friends Do Stand by Thee” at [srs.lds.org/mcm](https://srs.lds.org/mcm). (No video? Read the following.)

**ELDER RONALD A. RASBAND:** “Some friends are wise and trusted mentors. They are a special kind of friend; they have gone before us, and they know the way. . . . A more experienced, trusted individual serves as an effective guide and adviser to a less-experienced person, helping to shape that person’s understanding and teaching principles that will make him or her more effective, stronger, wiser, and more valuable as a servant of God.

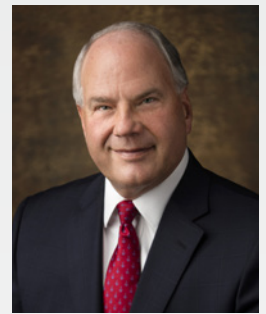
“ . . . Let me give you an example from my own life. . . . I first met Jon Huntsman in 1975, when I was 24 years old. I was an elders quorum president for a University of Utah married-student ward, and Jon Huntsman was my high council adviser. We became friends, and in my senior year, as I was preparing to conclude my education at the university, Brother Huntsman recruited me as a sales representative in his plastics company.

“One of my very first assigned accounts was Avon, the cosmetic giant headquartered in New York City. To get me started with that important client, Brother Huntsman personally accompanied me to New York City for my initial introduction. Excited to be entering into a new career and anxious to make a good impression, I wore my best brown college suit with a brown tie and brown loafers. When we met at the airport, I noticed that Mr. Huntsman gave me a peculiar look. But he didn’t say anything!

“When we arrived in New York City, he told me there was a stop we needed to make before calling upon Avon. We went directly to a famous men’s clothing store known as Brooks Brothers on swanky Madison Avenue. On the way, I recall him saying to me, ‘Now, Ron, if you are going to be a salesman in my company, and if you are going to represent me to Avon, you are going to learn how to dress, how to act, and how to serve in this new role.’ And then he added, ‘You don’t wear brown suits in a business environment in New York City!’ Not representing Jon Huntsman at least!

“Jon knew the people at Brooks Brothers, and he watched as they fitted me with a beautiful, dark gray, pin-striped suit—the nicest I had ever seen and certainly the nicest I had ever owned. After it was taken away to be tailored for a perfect fit, we picked out a shirt, some ties, a belt, and all the accessories. Next we went to the shoe department, where Jon introduced me to my very first pair of black wingtip dress shoes. . . .

“ . . . I remember my gratitude to Jon for sparing me the needless embarrassment of showing up in my college clothes. . . . Then it was off to Avon, where he introduced me as their new account representative from his company. Jon was teaching me much more than the importance of looking the part. He was introducing me into a whole new way of thinking, of doing things, of representing myself to others. He was mentoring me. This was the first of many such valuable lessons I learned from him” (“Thy Friends Do Stand by Thee” [Church Educational System devotional, Mar. 7, 2010], [si.lds.org](https://si.lds.org)).



**Elder Ronald A. Rasband**

**Ponder:** How did a mentor accelerate Elder Rasband's progression? When have you felt that someone really understood you and the situations you face? How have they guided, corrected, or inspired you?

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**Discuss:** What are examples of ways that a trusted leader or friend has guided or inspired you?

**Activity:** Invite someone to be your mentor. Here is one way you could establish a relationship with a mentor.

(10 minutes)

(In class)

1. Take five minutes now to list in your study journal a few people who could help mentor you. Consider people who understand the world you are trying to navigate and who exemplify traits and characteristics that you value.

(At home)

2. Pray about the people on your list and ask Heavenly Father to help you identify someone who would be a positive mentor in your life. Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

(At home)

3. After choosing someone who you feel could help you, ask him or her to be your mentor. Share your goals with him or her and ask for help and guidance in achieving your goals.

(At home)

4. If the person agrees to help you, discuss the expectations that each of you have. You could, for example, discuss how regularly you will connect to discuss your goals.

**Discuss:** How have you found good mentors in the past? What worked in establishing a successful mentoring relationship?





Your stake may have self-reliance groups focused on education, employment, small business, or personal finance. Participating in one of these groups could help you find mentors. Contact your stake self-reliance specialist for more information about these groups.

**Commit:**

- Think about the missionaries and members who most positively affected you on your mission. Record in your study journal what it was about them that helped you.
- Identify and invite someone to be your mentor.
- Pray to know who you could mentor.
- Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**

# 4 REALIZING MY GOALS

## Have an opening prayer.

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experience in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## SETTING GOALS OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY

**Read:** When creating goals, consider your priorities. Many goals can help us improve, but with the Lord's guidance we can select the best goals for our lives.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: "We should [recognize] that just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives" ("Good, Better, Best," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104).

Goals are most effective when they excite, challenge, and motivate us. As you create or improve your goals, be specific in what you want to achieve, create some way of measuring your progress, and give yourself a timeline to achieve it.

**Activity:** Individually take a moment to review the goals you set using My Plan during your mission. If you did not start My Plan while on your mission, review the worksheet at the back of this manual.

(3 minutes)



*"I am so thoroughly convinced that if we don't set goals in our life and learn how to master the technique of living to reach our goals, we can reach a ripe old age and look back on our life only to see that we reached but a small part of our full potential."*

M. Russell Ballard, "Do Things That Make a Difference," *Ensign*, June 1983, 69–70

### Highest-Priority Goal: Dating and Marriage

**Read:** Eternal marriage is a critical part of God's plan for His children. If you participated in My Plan during your mission, you'll recall how one of the most important purposes of your mission was to prepare you to have an eternal family. Of all your goals, a marriage sealed in the temple should be of highest priority. As you turn to worthy personal pursuits, such as education and career goals, it may be easy to let other priorities get in the way. Marriage provides opportunities for personal and spiritual growth that are not available any other way. This is why prophets have counseled returned missionaries to actively pursue marriage.

President Thomas S. Monson said: "I realize there are many reasons why you may be hesitating to take that step of getting married. . . . Perhaps you are afraid of making the wrong choice. To this I say you need to exercise faith" ("Priesthood Power," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 67).

Elder Ballard declared: "You single adults need to date and marry. Please stop delaying! . . . Many problems you encounter will be avoided if you are 'anxiously engaged' in righteous dating, courting, and marriage" ("The Greatest Generation of Young Adults," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 69).

Elder Richard G. Scott taught: "If you are single and haven't identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. . . . His prophets have stated that you will have that blessing as you consistently live to qualify for it. We do not know whether it will be on this or the other side of the veil. But live for it. Pray for it" ("Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 27).

**Ponder:** How can you better exercise your faith in seeking a companion to marry? What does it mean to "expect marriage in the timetable of the Lord"?

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**Discuss:** What impressions have you had from prayer, scripture study, or going to the temple about how you can prepare yourself for temple marriage?

### REALIZING YOUR GOALS

**Read:** Even when we make good goals, we don't always achieve them. There are many reasons why this might happen, but you have probably learned, whether on your mission or through other experiences, some ways you can keep yourself on track. List your ideas in your study journal.

#### Write Your Goals

**Read:** Elder Ballard offered the following advice about staying on track with your plans: "I would suggest that if you want to have success in the goal setting process, you learn to . . . put them in a very prominent place—on your



*"A temple marriage for time and all eternity is worthy of your greatest efforts and highest priority. It was only after Nephi had completed the temple in the wilderness that he stated, 'And . . . we lived after the manner of happiness.' The 'manner of happiness' is found in the temple. It is covenant keeping."*

Elaine S. Dalton, "Love Her Mother," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 77

mirror or on the refrigerator door. Keep your goals in front of you, in writing. Then, with the desire to reach your written goals, you will be more willing to pay the price that successful goal-oriented people must pay" ("Do Things That Make a Difference," *Ensign*, June 1983, 70).

**Activity:** Divide into groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) What do you think is the best way to "keep your goals in front of you," as Elder Ballard counseled?

### Exercise Faith, Repentance, and Self-Discipline

**Read:** To successfully keep goals, you must exercise faith in God and in yourself, and you must exercise self-discipline in working to achieve your goals.

Elder Ballard further taught: "We have to have faith. We have to have faith in God. We have to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And oh, how desperately we have to have faith in ourselves! . . . When you set a goal and when you commit yourself to the necessary self-discipline to reach that goal, you will eliminate most of the problems in your life. Spend your energies doing those things that will make a difference" ("Do Things That Make a Difference," 71, 72).

**Ponder:** What does it mean to have faith in yourself? How can having faith in yourself change how you spend your time?

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**Discuss:** How can the principle of repentance help us achieve our goals?

### Be Diligent and Patient

**Read:** President Dieter F. Uchtdorf gave the following counsel:

"I learned that patience was far more than simply waiting for something to happen—patience required actively working toward worthwhile goals and not getting discouraged when results didn't appear instantly or without effort.

"There is an important concept here: patience is not passive resignation, nor is it failing to act because of our fears. Patience means active waiting and enduring. It means staying with something and doing all that we can—working, hoping, and exercising faith; bearing hardship with fortitude, even when the desires of our hearts are delayed. Patience is not simply enduring; it is enduring well!" ("Continue in Patience," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 57).

**Ponder:** Do you have goals that you know will take a significant amount of time to accomplish? What are some things you can do to stay motivated?

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## 4 Realizing My Goals

**Discuss:** What has helped you most in becoming resilient and diligent in pursuing your goals?

### Make Specific Plans

**Read:** To increase the likelihood of achieving your goals, make specific plans with clearly defined steps.

Read the example goals in the following chart. Notice how each goal has a specific plan, a timeline, and a person to report to.

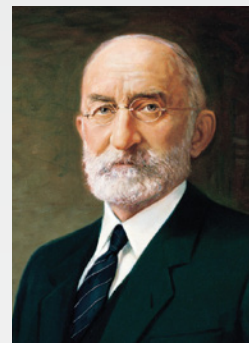
GOAL	SPECIFIC STEPS TO ACHIEVE GOAL	TIMELINE	WHO I WILL REPORT TO
I will study scriptures for 30 minutes each day.	1. Wake up at 6:00 a.m. every day. 2. Read scriptures before breakfast. 3. Track progress in a chart.	I will evaluate my progress in one month.	I will share my progress chart with a mentor.
I will earn enough money to start school in six months.	1. Identify 10 companies I'm interested in working for. 2. Visit each company and ask about job opportunities.	I will visit each company in the next three days.	I will report to my mentor.

**Commit:**

- Take a moment to review the goals you set using My Plan during your mission. If you didn't start My Plan while on your mission, review the worksheet at the back of this manual.
- Create a goal for something you want to accomplish this month. Each day, study your goal and specific plans. Act on your impressions and work diligently to accomplish your goal.
- Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



*"That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do—not that the nature of the thing is changed, but that our power to do is increased."*

Attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 35



# 5 THE DOCTRINE AND PROMISES OF SELF-RELIANCE

**Have an opening prayer.**

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experiences in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-RELIANCE IN GOD'S WORK AND IN YOUR PLAN

**Read:** Self-reliance is the ability to provide for your temporal and spiritual necessities.

Regardless of your circumstances or level of education, you will need to learn and live principles of self-reliance to succeed in fulfilling the Lord's plan for you.

Being self-reliant is a doctrine; it is part of God's plan of salvation. God expects you, by relying on Him, to learn to be self-reliant both spiritually and temporally. This is part of God's work and glory.

**Discuss:** Why is self-reliance part of God's purpose for you?

## PROMISES ABOUT BECOMING SELF-RELIANT

### The Lord Will Assist You in Your Daily Labors

**Read:** In Alma we read the following admonition: "Yea, cry unto [the Lord] for mercy; for he is mighty to save. . . . Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase" (Alma 34:18, 24–25).

**Activity:** Divide into groups of three and discuss the following questions:  
(5 minutes)

- Why does the Lord ask us to "cry," or pray, over our education or labors?
- What promises are available to those who do this with faith?

## 5 The Doctrine and Promises of Self-Reliance

### The Lord Will Provide

**Watch:** “I Will Provide” at [srs.lds.org/mcm](http://srs.lds.org/mcm). (No video? Read the First Presidency letter in the *My Foundation* or *My Path* booklet at [srs.lds.org](http://srs.lds.org).)

**Read:** The Lord declared: “And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. . . . For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves” (D&C 104:15, 17).

**Discuss:** How does the Lord provide for His Saints? What part must I take in providing for myself with the Lord’s help?

**Activity:** Individually write some temporal and spiritual necessities for your life below:  
(3 minutes)

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**Read:** President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught, “Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable” (“Providing in the Lord’s Way,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 53).

**Activity:** Divide into new groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) How can finding a job and earning a living be both a temporal and a spiritual matter?

### His Grace Is Sufficient—You Can Become Anything the Lord Desires You to Be

**Read:** President Thomas S. Monson has instructed: “Should there be anyone who feels he is too weak to change the onward and downward course of his life, or should there be those who fail to resolve to do better because of that greatest of fears, the fear of failure, there is no more comforting assurance to be had than the words of the Lord: ‘My grace,’ said He, ‘is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them’” (“Your Eternal Voyage,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 48).

As children of God, we can all accomplish much in this life. However, we cannot do it on our own, because man is not his own maker; God is. We can become anything and everything we need to become in order to return home to our Heavenly Father, and He will bless us with every gift, experience, resource, and blessing we need.

**Ponder:** Christ has promised, “If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33). How have you felt Christ’s enabling power in your life?

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**Discuss:** In what ways have you seen Christ's grace bless your life or the lives of friends and family members?

**Read:** The Lord pleads with us to embrace the following truth: "Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies" (Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 44). He created us and is able to empower us to become whatever He desires to make of us, which will be everything we need to qualify to return to His presence.

Recall how the Lord called Moses to bring His people "up out of the affliction of Egypt" (Exodus 3:17), but Moses doubted he could become the leader the Lord needed, saying: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent . . . but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." The Lord replied: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:10-12).

**Ponder:** How was Moses able to become the leader of Israel? What does this mean for you personally?

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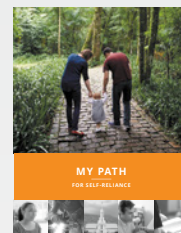
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**Discuss:** What did you learn on your mission about the truth "whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies"?

**Watch:** "He Polished My Toe" at [srs.lds.org/videos](https://srs.lds.org/videos). (No video? Read the following paragraphs.)

**ELDER ENRIQUE R. FALABELLA:** "When I was growing up, we didn't have much. I remember one day when I approached my father and I said to him, 'Papa, I need a new pair of shoes. These ones are already worn out.' He stopped and looked at my shoes and saw they were really worn out. He said, 'I think this is something we can fix.' He took a bit of black polish and polished my shoes, leaving them shiny and nice. He said to me, 'Now they're fixed, son.' I replied, 'No, not yet. You can still see my toe sticking out of my shoe.' He said, 'Well, we can fix that too!' He took a little more polish and he polished my toe!

"That day I learned that there is a solution to every problem. I am convinced that this principle of self-reliance and this initiative is a way to hasten the Lord's work. It's part of the work of salvation. All of us can become better than what we are now. You have to let go of apathy. Many times we become complacent, and this destroys our progress. Every day is a day I can make progress if I decide to do something different to improve what I've done poorly in the past. If you do it with faith, exercising faith and hope in Christ that He will be there helping you, you will find the way to make progress in temporal and spiritual things. This is because God lives and you are His son or daughter."



*My Path for Self-Reliance* helps you understand the skills and habits you need to develop to become more self-reliant. To participate, contact your stake self-reliance specialist.

## 5 The Doctrine and Promises of Self-Reliance

**Ponder:** What does the Lord want you to understand about being self-reliant?

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**Discuss:** What impressions have you had about how you can become more self-reliant?

**Commit:**

- Review the life vision and goals you set with My Plan at the end of your mission. If you didn't start My Plan during your mission, begin filling out the worksheet at the back of this manual.
- On your mission, what did you have to do to qualify for the blessings of the Lord? What should you do now to qualify for His help? Share your answers to these questions and what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**

# 6 PRINCIPLES FOR BECOMING SELF-RELIANT

## Have an opening prayer.

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experiences in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## LIFELONG COMMITMENTS

**Read:** As you take responsibility for your temporal and spiritual well-being through a life of service, you will need to live by certain standards as a devoted disciple of Christ. Some commitments include the following:

- Keeping the Sabbath day holy and worthily partaking of the sacrament every week
- Fasting, praying, and feasting on the word of God
- Paying tithes and offerings
- Being faithful to your temple covenants, including accepting calls to serve and keeping the law of chastity and avoiding pornography
- Becoming temporally self-reliant by working and obtaining all needed education
- Helping your family live the gospel

**Ponder:** Why is each of these commitments necessary in your life? What other commitments would be helpful to you?

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**Discuss:** In Alma 37:6 we read about the power of "small and simple things." In what ways have you experienced the power and promise of small and simple things?



### FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR BECOMING SELF-RELIANT

**Read:** Becoming self-reliant, both temporally and spiritually, requires obedience to key foundational principles. While there are several principles to learn, there are four main principles that underlie God’s promises to help us become self-reliant.

#### 1. Exercise Faith in Jesus Christ

**Read:** When we exercise faith in Jesus Christ, we rely on Him to forgive our shortcomings and to enable us to become what He wants us to become. The path of discipleship is rigorous and requires endurance. President Henry B. Eyring taught that “if the foundation of faith is not embedded in our hearts, the power to endure will crumble” (“Mountains to Climb,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 23).

**Activity:** Divide into groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) Why is a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ essential?

**Read:** The Savior taught that with faith “all things are possible” (Mark 9:23), but we must remember that faith is a choice. Elder L. Whitney Clayton taught that “belief and testimony and faith are not passive principles. . . . Belief is something we choose—we hope for it, we work for it, and we sacrifice for it. We will not accidentally come to believe in the Savior and His gospel any more than we will accidentally pray or pay tithing. We actively choose to believe, just like we choose to keep other commandments” (“Choose to Believe,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 38).

**Ponder:** What are you doing to nourish your faith? What more could you do to “draw near” to the Lord (D&C 88:63)?

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**Read:** Even when we choose to show faith, we do not always receive answers when and how we expect them. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, “Real faith in God therefore includes not only faith in him, but in his timing, one of the things that it is most difficult for us to have faith in” (“If Thou Endure It Well” [Brigham Young University devotional address, Dec. 4, 1984], [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu)).

**Discuss:** What does it mean to have faith in the Lord’s timing?

#### 2. Be Obedient

**Read:** The Lord has declared, “Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength” (D&C 11:20). The scriptures contain several examples of the blessings that come from obeying the Lord’s commandments with all one’s “might, mind and strength.” The sons of Helaman were preserved and made victorious in their battles

*“Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”*

Doctrine and Covenants 88:63

because they were “firm and undaunted” and chose to “obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness” (Alma 57:20–21). Similarly, you can receive protection and guidance through obedience to God’s commandments and to the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

The scriptures teach: “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

Simply stated, no one can receive the needed blessings from God unless he or she obeys the laws associated with the desired blessing.

**Discuss:** What led the sons of Helaman to obey with exactness? What would lead you to do the same?

**Read:** Obedience has great promises associated with it, especially when it comes to accomplishing our mission and goals in life.

Nephi wrote: “And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:3).

**Ponder:** What did Nephi testify that God will do if we obey Him? Are there commandments that you need to be more strictly obedient to that could bring needed spiritual and temporal blessings into your life?

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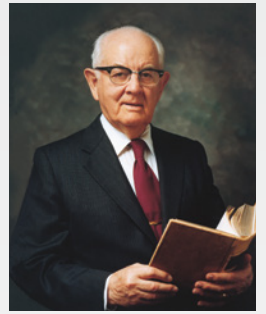
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### 3. Solve Problems, Act for Yourself

**Read:** As children of our Heavenly Father, we have the power to reach above our current circumstances and progress to great heights. As we take advantage of this ability to act, we take responsibility to come unto Christ and rely on Him as we work out our temporal and spiritual salvation (Matthew 11:28–29). President Marion G. Romney taught, “Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation in temporal as well as in spiritual things” (in Welfare Services Meeting Report, Oct. 1976, 13).

**Activity:** Divide into new groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) Why is taking initiative to solve our own problems one of the essential principles of becoming self-reliant?



*“No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family’s well-being to someone else.”*

Spencer W. Kimball,  
“Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77

**Read:** Elder Robert D. Hales taught: “The Lord expects us to help solve our own problems. . . . We are thinking, reasoning human beings. We have the ability to identify our needs, to plan, to set goals, and to solve our problems” (“Every Good Gift,” *New Era*, Aug. 1983, 8–9).

**Ponder:** Why does the Lord want us to work to solve problems? How have you been blessed by solving difficult problems?

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**Discuss:** What examples did you observe on your mission of the importance of taking initiative to solve problems?

### 4. Become One, Serve Others

**Read:** Spiritual and temporal poverty is overcome as we serve one another and become of “one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18).

Doctrine and Covenants 104:15–16 states: “It is my purpose to provide for my saints. . . . But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.” This means that as the rich and poor become one, only then can the Lord provide for our needs. Each of us must be willing to give of our time and talents in the service of others if we are to receive the Lord’s complete temporal and spiritual blessings.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that each of us has a responsibility to serve others: “Rich or poor, we are to ‘do what we can’ when others are in need” (“Are We Not All Beggars?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 41).

Amulek taught the poor and needy Zoramite disciples: “And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith” (Alma 34:28; see also Mosiah 4:16; D&C 44:6; 88:123).

**Ponder:** What did Amulek teach the Zoramite disciples about service? How can serving others strengthen your faith?

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**Activity:** Divide into pairs and complete the following activity together. Read the account in 1 Nephi 16:21–32 of how the Lord helped Nephi obtain food in the wilderness. What does this passage teach about the four principles of self-reliance?  
(10 minutes)

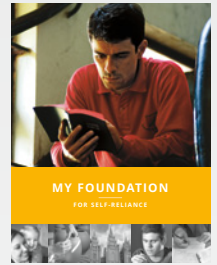
PRINCIPLE	TEACHINGS IN 1 NEPHI 16:21–32
Exercise faith in Jesus Christ	
Be obedient	
Solve problems, act for yourself	
Become one, serve others	

**Discuss:** What stands out to you most about Nephi's example in 1 Nephi 16?

- Commit:**
- Consider a problem you are trying to solve in your life. How did you help others on your mission to solve their own problems? Write in your study journal the questions you have about the problem. List resources God has provided to help you. Use these resources to answer at least one of your questions.
  - Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.
  - If you participated in My Plan on your mission, review what you learned and recorded about becoming spiritually and temporally self-reliant. If you didn't start My Plan during your mission, use the worksheet at the back of this manual.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



*My Foundation* helps members of the Church learn and put into practice principles of faith, education, hard work, and trust in the Lord so they can become spiritually and temporally self-reliant.

Download this manual at [srs.lds.org](http://srs.lds.org).

# 7 OVERCOMING OPPOSITION

## Have an opening prayer.

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experience in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## THE LORD'S BLESSINGS

**Read:** President Thomas S. Monson taught the following:

"None of us makes it through this life without problems and challenges—and sometimes tragedies and misfortunes. . . . Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us. My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith" ("Be of Good Cheer," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 89, 92).

The Lord has taught us that facing opposition is a necessary part of our mortal experience. Trials and opposition present us with opportunities to build faith and forge strong character. Without trials we can never become what our Heavenly Father needs us to become.

**Watch:** "Jarem Frye: Amputee, Innovator, Mormon" at [srs.lds.org/mcm](http://srs.lds.org/mcm). (No video? Read the excerpt below.)

**JAREM FRYE:** "We found out that I had bone cancer [in my knee] and from there it was a whirlwind. We were rushed into the hospital and had lots of tests done. We had no idea what to expect. . . . I was given three options: an artificial knee joint, a donor bone replacement, and amputation. I evaluated the options and I chose amputation.

"I got a really good phone call [when] I had only been home from the hospital for a day. It was my best friend. I answered the phone, and he said, 'Hey man, are you coming to the school dance tonight?' And I said, 'Dude, I just lost my leg!' And his reply was, 'Oh, yeah, I forgot. So are you coming?' From that moment I got out of bed and said, 'I'm living life. I'm not going



*"Mercies and blessings come in different forms—sometimes as hard things. Yet the Lord said, 'Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things' (D&C 59:7). All things means just that: good things, difficult things—not just some things. He has commanded us to be grateful because He knows being grateful will make us happy. This is another evidence of His love."*

Bonnie D. Parkin, "Gratitude: A Path to Happiness," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 35

to stop.’ I was told that I wasn’t going to be able to ride a mountain bike anymore, that I wouldn’t be able to rock climb or do any of the things that mattered most to me then. But since that time I’ve been able to do all those things. I’ve just never given up. I’ve never accepted that I can’t do something.

“As a 14-year-old, being told that I could die at any time and watching friends that I met in the hospital actually not show up anymore because they passed away, and seeing how fragile life really is—that can be rough. . . . But it taught me a lesson that I’ll never forget: when things get hard, when you don’t know where to turn and you don’t have a logical answer, I have an answer that has proven itself through experience—that things will be okay. God loves me and He wants what’s best for me and He’s mindful of all of us, and if we’ll just trust Him, we’ll be all right. We’ll be all right.”

**Discuss:** What is the role of trials and opposition in Heavenly Father’s plan? How can you prepare to face challenges and trials as you push forward to accomplish your goals and plans?

**Read:** At times when we plead for relief from physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual difficulties, the Lord may increase our resolve and resilience to endure (see Mosiah 24:14–15). For a time, He may also allow us to suffer innocently, like Job, so He can turn us into gold (see Job 23:10). Blessings poured out from heaven may provide us a greater capacity to change our circumstances rather than expecting our circumstances to be changed by someone or something else (see Malachi 3:10).

**Ponder:** How has the Lord blessed you in your trials and challenges?

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**Activity:** Divide into groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) What blessings have you received through your trials and challenges?

## OPPOSITION FROM THE ADVERSARY

**Watch:** “Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence” at [srs.lds.org/mcm](https://srs.lds.org/mcm). (No video? Read the text below.)

**ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND:** “You will recall that the book of Moses begins with him being taken up to ‘an exceedingly high mountain’ where, the scripture says, ‘he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses.’ . . .

“This experience is remarkable by every standard. It is one of the great revelations given in human history. It stands with the greatest accounts we have of any prophet’s experience with divinity.

“But Moses’ message to you today is, ‘Don’t let your guard down.’ Don’t assume that a great revelation, some marvelous illuminating moment, or the opening of an inspired path is the end of it. Remember, it isn’t over until it’s over. What happens to Moses next, *after* his revelatory moment, would be ludicrous if it were not so dangerous and so absolutely true to form. . . .

“‘. . . Satan cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me.

“‘. . . Moses began to fear exceedingly; and as he began to fear, he saw the bitterness of hell. Nevertheless, calling upon God [the very phrase used by Joseph Smith], he received strength.’ . . .

“‘. . . We cannot sign on for a moment of such eternal significance and everlasting consequence without knowing it will be a fight—a good fight and a winning fight, but a fight nevertheless.”

“In his letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul was trying to encourage new members who had just joined the Church, who undoubtedly had had spiritual experiences and had received the pure light of testimony, only to discover that not only had their troubles not ended, but that some of them had only begun. . . .

“Then came this tremendous counsel, which is at the heart of my counsel to you . . . : ‘*Cast not away therefore your confidence*, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. . . .’

“In LDS talk that is to say, ‘Sure it is tough—before you join the Church, while you are trying to join, and after you have joined.’ . . .

“‘. . . Don’t give up when the pressure mounts. . . . *Certainly don’t give in to that being who is bent on the destruction of your happiness.* . . . Face your doubts. Master your fears. ‘*Cast not away therefore your confidence.*’ Stay the course and see the beauty of life unfold for you” (“Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence” [Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 2, 1999, 2–4], [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu)).

**Discuss:** How have you stayed on course during challenges and opposition?

**Read:** Satan works constantly to lead us off course and keep us from accomplishing the Lord’s work and plan. He desires to deceive, confuse, distract, and dissuade you. He wants you to justify sin. He does so by appealing to any weakness of the flesh, including pride and desires for personal gain or ambition. He will confront you and attempt to make you question your beliefs and your identity as a child of our Father in Heaven. As you strive to make and keep spiritual commitments in your life, he will attack you, as he did Moses (see Moses 1:12–22), Jesus Christ (see Matthew 4:1–11), Joseph Smith (see Joseph Smith—History 1:15), and many others.



**Ponder:** How can you prepare to defend yourself against the various ways that Satan will attack you?

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**Activity:** Divide into new groups of three and discuss the following question:  
 (5 minutes) What actions do you intend to take to protect yourself against Satan's lies and attacks?

**Activity:** Individually read and ponder the doctrines in the table below.  
 (15 minutes)

1. Read "Satan's lies about doctrine" to understand various methods Satan uses to attack or prevent faith in these precious truths.
2. Read additional teachings about avoiding Satan's lies, as found in the third row of the table.
3. Write in your study journal additional lies that Satan uses to deceive, distract, and dissuade us from embracing the Lord's doctrines.

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
<b>DOCTRINE</b>	God is my Father, and He knows me and loves me.	Christ has power to deliver me back to my Father.	Because I am a child of God, I can be blessed with all of the gifts and talents necessary to return to live with Him.
<b>SATAN'S LIES ABOUT DOCTRINE</b>	God doesn't answer my prayers.  It's too hard to tell the difference between the Spirit and my own thoughts and emotions.	I need to do this on my own.  This is just who I am; there is no need to repent.	I am nobody special and don't have many talents.  I am not really spiritual; I don't fit in with the members of the Church.  The Lord cares more about men than women.
<b>READ TEACHINGS ABOUT AVOIDING SATAN'S LIES</b>	Moses 1	David A. Bednar, "In the Strength of the Lord," <i>Ensign</i> or <i>Liahona</i> , Nov. 2004, 76–78	Sheri L. Dew, "You Were Born to Lead, You Were Born for Glory" (Brigham Young University devotional, Dec. 9, 2003), speeches .byu.edu  Moses 7

**Discuss:** What insights have you gained from this activity?

### THE SAVIOR AND OVERCOMING OPPOSITION

**Read:** A great scriptural insight about enduring opposition comes from the Savior Himself. The Father asked Him to descend through and below all things. The scriptures teach that as He approached Gethsemane, He became “sore amazed” (Mark 14:33) at the sacrifice asked of Him. He desired “that [He] might not drink the bitter cup.” However, He endured, gave glory to the Father, and “partook,” or submitted and “finished” all that the Father asked of Him (D&C 19:18–19).

To fulfill the Father’s plan for your life and to reach your great potential, you will need to rely on Jesus, who overcame all things, to endure and accomplish whatever the Father may require of you.

To prepare for the hardships that will come, you can build habits that will strengthen you.

**Ponder:** What can I do this week to establish or maintain habits that will empower me to rely on the Savior and overcome the opposition that I will face?

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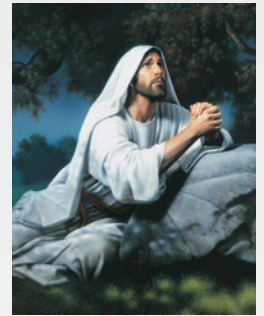
**Discuss:** What action do you feel impressed to take that will bring you closer to the Savior and help you overcome opposition?

**Commit:**

- On your mission, when you worked with others to strengthen their faith, what did you do to help? Create a plan to protect yourself spiritually from opposition to your faith.
- Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



# 8 A LIFE OF SERVICE

## Have an opening prayer.

**Report:** Let's start by introducing ourselves to the group and sharing our experience in working to keep our commitments this past week. As part of your introduction, please share the following:

- Your name
- Your mission
- How long you've been back from your mission
- An insight or question that came from keeping your commitments this past week

## THREE KEYS TO A FULL LIFE

### 1. A Key to Success

**Read:** President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught that those who are “pursuing the righteous goals of obtaining an education and finding an eternal spouse” should remember that “working diligently in the Lord’s vineyard will greatly upgrade your résumé and increase the probability for success in both of these worthy endeavors” (“Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 57).

**Ponder:** Why will serving in the Lord's vineyard increase your probability of success in other areas of life? In what ways can you improve your service?

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**Discuss:** What examples have you seen of faithful service to the Lord blessing other aspects of your life?

### 2. A Key to Happiness

**Read:** Consider the following example of a returned missionary who learned the value of service:

One day, a young returned missionary came to his old mission president, Elder Don R. Clarke of the Seventy, for advice. This young man had been an excellent missionary, a hard worker, faithful, and dedicated. And now, several months after his mission, he was miserable. After he explained all of

his struggles and worries, President Clarke said, “Elder, go to the hospital to visit the sick and serve others every week.”

**Discuss:** How could Elder Clarke’s counsel help this returned missionary? How is service related to your spiritual progress?

### 3. A Key to Retaining a Remission of Sins

**Read:** The scriptures further explain the importance of serving others.

When King Benjamin taught his people, he wanted them to understand the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and that serving would help them receive the full power of the Atonement in their lives:

“And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, . . . administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26; see also Alma 34:29).

**Discuss:** What blessing of service did King Benjamin promise? Why does this blessing come because of service?

## AN INVITATION TO CONTINUE SERVING

**Read:** President Thomas S. Monson taught:

“The Savior taught His disciples, ‘For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.’

“I believe the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives” (“What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 85).

After returning home, many returned missionaries believe that they have to get back into the “real world.” But this is inaccurate. You are never to become part of this world; you are to rise above and shine before the world (see Matthew 5:16). Review the plans you made at the end of your mission to continue to serve others.

**Discuss:** What did you learn on your mission about the importance of losing yourself in the service of others?

**Read:** Consider the following example of a returned missionary named Francis:

Francis lives in Africa. After returning home from his mission, he wanted to further his education but had no money. He also wanted to get married but could not afford to.

He developed a plan and borrowed some money to start a business so he could earn what he needed. However, the business failed. Francis had

so little money that he ended up living on the streets and was not only unemployed but also in debt. He did not know what to do. He went to the temple to seek guidance. While there, he heard two words: "Trust me!"

Later Francis felt impressed to introduce himself to a Church leader. Francis told the Church leader about his challenges and dreams, and the leader helped him find a part-time job. Francis worked very hard and did so well that his employer offered him full-time work. He continued to be diligent at work and was soon promoted. His employer continued to be impressed by Francis's diligence, and he agreed to help pay for Francis to finish his undergraduate degree and attend law school while he worked.

When Francis started his part-time work, he was also impressed that he should be married in the temple. Francis soon helped his new wife find work, and together they paid back their debt and planned to start a family. Francis also felt he needed to help others like himself. He prayed diligently to determine what to do. The Spirit impressed him to use his spare time and his talents to write two books that have now become part of the local school curriculum, as well as a text to help teach literacy throughout his country. He later became a bishop and continued serving faithfully at church.

**Ponder:** What are the principles that Francis used to better his life?

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**Activity:** Divide into groups of three and discuss the following question:  
(5 minutes) What principle stood out to you as you read about Francis's experience?

**Read:** The Lord wants you to continue to live the principles that brought you close to Him on your mission. Do your best to avoid becoming casual in your relationship with the Lord. You are on a lifelong mission to become the person that Christ wants you to become and to help others to do the same. As you diligently seek His guidance, the Lord will bless you with a greater understanding of your life's purpose. He will bless you with opportunities to serve and lift others.

**Activity:** Individually create a plan to serve others:  
(10 minutes)

- (In class)
1. In your study journal, write specific ways that you can serve others each week under the heading "Weekly Service Plan." Consider the following as you write your plan:
    - a. How much time can you dedicate each week to serving others?
    - b. What skills and experiences did you gain on your mission that prepared you to help and serve others?

- (In class)
2. Share with your action partner your ideas about your weekly service plan.

(At home) 3. Pray to know if there are other ways that your Father in Heaven wants you to serve at this time in your life. Write down any additional ideas you gain from your prayers in your Weekly Service Plan.

(At home) 4. Commit to fulfilling your Weekly Service Plan.

**Commit:**

- Complete and act on your plan to serve someone each week.
- Complete your My Plan worksheet at the back of this manual, and review it regularly. If you haven't already, you may want to share it with a family member.
- Share what you learned today with another returned missionary, another young single adult, or a member of your family.

Choose an action partner for this week and take two minutes to share with each other the commitments that you feel impressed to work on. Decide how you will follow up with each other during the week.

**Have a closing prayer.**



*"Please use the skills you learned on your mission to bless the lives of people around you every day. Do not shift your focus from serving others to focusing exclusively on school, work, or social activities. Instead, balance your life with spiritual experiences that remind and prepare you for continued, daily ministering to others."*

M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Young Adults," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 69

# COMMITMENTS

*The following actions will help you come unto Christ and continue on a lifelong path of discipleship.*

1. **Be true and faithful to your covenants.**
2. **Seek personal revelation about your life's mission.** Seek and receive guidance from the Lord by studying the Book of Mormon daily, frequently reviewing your patriarchal blessing, and worshipping in the temple.
3. **Obey the Lord's commandments and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.**
4. **Find a mentor.** Discuss your goals with him or her and seek regular counsel and advice.
5. **Set goals and work diligently to accomplish them.**
6. **Plan and work to become self-reliant.** Commit to taking responsibility for your spiritual and temporal self-reliance throughout your life. Begin charting a course to self-reliance. If you live in an area with a stake self-reliance resource center, join a self-reliance group.
7. **Search for opportunities to serve others.**







# MY PLAN WORKSHEET

During the next few weeks you will use this worksheet to revise the plan you prepared on your mission or to create a life plan now that you are home.

1. What were the most important lessons I learned on my mission?

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2. What are some of the most fundamental priorities of my life?

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3. What is God's purpose for my life? What will I do with my potential?

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4. What challenges do I face in realizing my purpose?

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5. What motivates me to overcome temptation and live righteously so the Lord can guide and strengthen me?

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## CIRCLE SOME OF THE SKILLS YOU DEVELOPED OR STRENGTHENED ON YOUR MISSION.

Language skills	Approaching strangers	Positive attitude
Discipline	Persistence (the ability to handle rejection)	Teaching new ideas
Training others	Leadership	Teamwork
Getting along with others	Responsibility for others	Finding people to teach
Solving problems	Budgeting	Service
Courage	Physical endurance and stamina	Creativity
Building relationships of trust	Dependability	Good character
Leading meetings	Public speaking	Setting goals
Resourcefulness	Planning and organizing	Managing time
Listening well	Work ethic	Patience
Reading skills	Study skills	Humility
Receiving revelation	Relying on the Lord's timing	Other:

6. How will these skills help me succeed in my education and future employment?

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7. How much money does a family in my area need each month to live a safe, modest life?

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8. Write three jobs that interest you. Try to speak with people who do these jobs. Ask them, "What education, training, and experience were required for you to be hired? What are the most exciting and difficult parts of this job? Does this job provide enough income to support a family?"

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9. Where do I want to be spiritually and temporally in one year? In five years? Why?

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10. How am I working with the Lord to solve my problems?

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11. What habits from my mission do I want to continue now that I'm home? Who can help me and hold me accountable?

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12. What counsel did I receive from my mission president?

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13. What am I doing each day to feel the Spirit in my life?

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THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

