

# Raising An Army of Helaman's Warriors: Helping Our Youth Prepare for Missionary Service



*Helping Our Youth Become Converted*

“The most important responsibility that we,  
as members of the Church of Jesus Christ,  
have is to see that we are converted to the  
truthfulness of the gospel.”

–Harold B. Lee

*(Stand Ye in Holy Places [Deseret Book: Salt Lake City,  
Utah, 1974], 90).*

# The Problem



- ❧ **Problem: Getting the Gospel into the hearts of our youth.**
- ❧ Our youth know the gospel intellectually probably more so than any generation. However, that gospel knowledge hasn't seemed to convert them.
- ❧ Many are involved in behavior that is not appropriate for the mission field.



# True Conversion Drives Behavior

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- ❧ Our children can quote scriptures on charity while they club their sibling over the head with a golf club.
- ❧ They can recite the story of David and Bathsheba; or better yet, Joseph and Potipher's wife and yet not be worthy to bless or partake of the sacrament due to sexual sins.
- ❧ Some may be able to quote modern Prophets or the *For Strength of Youth* pamphlet on modesty or sexual purity while wearing a bikini or while plagued with a pornography addiction.
- ❧ No, you cannot be engaged in deviant behavior and be converted to the gospel at the same time. It simply doesn't work. Why? Once again: True conversion drives our behavior.
- ❧ Nevertheless, conversion and deviant behavior cannot coexist. Conversion would drive us to behaviors that are childlike, submissive, meek, humble, patient, and full of love (Mosiah 3:19).

# We Are Loosing Too Many

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- ❧ Unfortunately, we are losing many of our youth today because they never have become deeply converted to the gospel.
- ❧ The times in which we live are becoming extremely difficult.
- ❧ Many of our youth are falling into sin and temptation.
- ❧ Others simply lack the faith to be a solid member of the Church.
- ❧ Some are simply lazy, and the gospel is an inconvenience to them.

# We May Lose Some of Our Youth



**“The spiritual strength sufficient for our youth to stand firm just a few years ago will soon not be enough.** Many of them are remarkable in their spiritual maturity and in their faith. **But even the best of them are sorely tested. And the testing will become more severe”** (Elder Henry B. Eyring, “We Must Raise Our Sights,” *The Religious Educator*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2001, 2; emphasis added).



# Question?



To borrow a question from our Former General Young Women's President, Sister Susan Tanner, "Is the gospel getting down into the depth of their souls so that they will never forsake their covenants?"

# Distinction Between Conversion and Testimony

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- ❧ **Being converted, however, and having a testimony of the gospel are two different things.**
- ❧ **It is one thing to believe. The devils also believe and tremble** (James 2:19).
- ❧ Or in other words, Satan also knows that this gospel is true. Satan can testify that Joseph Smith is a Prophet, that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that the Plan of Salvation is God's plan for our happiness, and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth. Yes, even Satan knows all of that!
- ❧ It is not enough for our youth to believe, or even know. They must become! In order to become, the gospel must move from their heads, into their hearts.



# The Devils Also Believe



	Utah County Males	Utah County Females	Pacific Northwest Males	Pacific Northwest Females	East Coast Males	East Coast Females
God Lives and is real	95	96	97	97	95	97
Jesus Christ is the Divine Son	97	98	97	99	95	98
Joseph Smith actually saw God the Father and Jesus Christ	95	96	96	95	91	94
The Book of Mormon is the Word of God	94	95	96	95	93	94
The Bible is the Word of God	92	94	93	94	93	97
President Thomas S. Monson is a Prophet	96	97	96	97	95	95
God Answers Prayers	90	90	90	92	88	88
I have a strong testimony of the gospel	75	81	77	76	73	75
I have been guided by the Spirit with some of my problems/decisions	75	82	76	78	74	77
There have been times in my life when I have felt the Holy Ghost	86	88	84	86	81	82



# Public Religious Behavior

	Utah County Males	Utah County Females	Pacific Northwest Males	Pacific Northwest Females	East Coast Males	East Coast Females
Attend Sacrament Meeting	92	91	98	95	95	95
Attend Sunday School	86	82	95	91	95	92
Attend priesthood or young women meeting	88	88	98	94	93	93
Give testimony in meeting	7	13	11	14	10	19

# Private Religious Behavior

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	Utah County Males	Utah County Females	Pacific Northwest Males	Pacific Northwest Females	East Coast Males	East Coast Females
Pray privately	68	79	66	73	60	70
Read scriptures on my own	47	59	46	58	41	45
Pay full tithing	73	74	74	75	74	73
Fast on fast Sunday	58	61	59	60	54	56

# Family Religious Behavior

	Utah County Males	Utah County Females	Pacific Northwest Males	Pacific Northwest Females	East Coast Males	East Coast Females
Family has family prayer	65	58	71	58	57	54
Family reads scriptures together	38	32	34	26	28	25
Family holds family home evening	45	40	51	42	47	41

# LDS Deviant Behavior



	Utah County Males	Utah County Females	Pacific Northwest Males	Pacific Northwest Females	East Coast Males	East Coast Females
Beat Up Other Kids	19	5	25	6	25	8
Defied a leader or teacher at Church	16	12	12	10	20	18
Shoplifted	36	19	39	22	34	20
Damaged Someone's Property	29	13	29	11	26	12
Cheated on a Test	69	65	72	74	66	73
Drank Alcohol	16	13	13	19	24	27
Viewed Pornography	39	16	46	21	43	27

# Testimony and Conversion

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- ❧ **We are not hoping to be simply one degree better than the rest of the world. Our youth need to be much better if they are to make a difference.**
- ❧ Indeed, it is somewhat disappointing to see how many of our youth cheat on tests, engage in pornography and heavy petting, skip school, vandalize property, and are defiant toward their teachers.
- ❧ **Mind you, these are the same youth who know that God lives; Jesus is the Christ; that Joseph Smith is a Prophet, and the Book of Mormon is true.**
- ❧ **“Testimony won’t save us,** but testimony coupled with faith and conversion, which includes staying power, which is endurance, will exalt us” (Hartman Rector, Jr., *Conference Report*, Apr. 1974, 159-161.)
- ❧ **“It would appear that membership in the Church and conversion are not necessarily synonymous. Being converted, as we are here using the term, and having a testimony are not necessarily the same... either. A testimony comes when the Holy Ghost gives the earnest seeker a witness of truth.... Conversion, on the other hand, is the fruit of, or the reward for, repentance and obedience”** (Marion G. Romney, *CR*, October 1963, 24).

# A Lesson from Peter



- ✧ In the Bread of Life sermon in John 6, Jesus taught doctrine that required a full commitment to God. Many of Jesus's followers left him at that point. However, when Jesus asked the twelve apostles if they would leave too, Peter spoke forcefully, declaring, **"Lord, to whom shall we go? Though hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."** (John 6:68-69).
- ✧ On another occasion, Peter testified to Jesus, **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matthew 16:16).
- ✧ However, despite these statements, Jesus later told Peter, **"When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"** (Luke 22:32).
- ✧ The implication here is **that Peter knew intellectually that Jesus was the Messiah, but that testimony had not sunk into his heart and caused him to change.**
- ✧ Peter's testimony did not guide his behavior; consequently, he did not stand up for his convictions. He actually denied that he knew the Savior several times.
- ✧ However, once Peter became converted, he was an unstoppable force for good. He boldly testified and told the Jews they had killed the Christ, and invited them all to be baptized (Acts 2:36-38).

# “Shot in the Arm”

## Conversion

∞ EFY

∞ Trek

∞ Youth Conference



- When some of these youth come home from such *spiritual highs*, families are elated.
- **Sinners have become Saints in a matter of hours!**
- However, many parents become disappointed when reality sets in, **which is usually somewhere between two hours and two days after our youth have come home from their wonderful adventure.**
- **In some ways, these experiences are like ingesting some kind of energy drink.** For several hours, a person can operate at peak performance, but once the caffeine and sugar are burned off, individuals can turn back into zombies quite quickly.

# Shot in the Arm Conversions

- ❧ **“Shot-in-the-arm,” dramatic conversions do not last. Please do not misunderstand.**
- ❧ There is great value in youth conferences, treks, and EFY.
- ❧ **However, conversion is a process, not an event, and there are many different experiences that will impact a child’s conversion – not just one.**
- ❧ Therefore, EFY and Youth Conferences are part of the conversion process, but alone, they will fall short.
- ❧ These events are great supports for those youth who already have testimonies, but they cannot stand alone in the conversion process.



efyExpress

EFY Express is a day of faith-promoting  
and fun events based on the weeklong  
Especially for Youth program.



# Oil in Our Lamps



“The Lord gives us, each one, a lamp to carry, but whether or not we shall have oil in our lamps depends solely upon each one of us. Whether or not we keep the commandments and supply the needed oil to light our way and to guide us on our way depends upon each of us *individually*. We cannot borrow from our Church Membership. We cannot borrow from an illustrious ancestry. Whether or not we have oil in our lamps, I repeat, *depends solely upon each one of us*, it is determined by our faithfulness in keeping the commandments of the living God.” (Harold B. Lee, ed. Clyde J. Williams, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, 1996, 145-146, emphasis added.)

# Drop by Drop



“In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living.

Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures - each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity - these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 256).

- ✧ Solid and consistent gospel study, prayer, and service to others will do more for a youth over time than pulling a handcart through the desert once.
- ✧ Now, couple the consistency of prayer and scripture study, for example, with a handcart experience – then it all combines for an optimal spiritual experience.

# A Defining Experience



“As a teenager living in Somerset, New Jersey, Todd Christofferson participated in the cast of the Hill Cumorah Pageant near Palmyra, New York, for two summers. During the production his first year, young Todd remembered the words of a former bishop. He had encouraged the youth of the ward to never give up striving with the Lord until they had “burned into [their] hearts a testimony of the gospel.”

“Todd had taken the words of his priesthood leader seriously and had prayed about his testimony from time to time. But there in Palmyra, the cradle of the Restoration, he determined this was the time and place he was going to get a sure confirmation.

**“One night after the performance, I went to the Sacred Grove alone,” he remembers. “It was a beautiful summer evening. I took off my shoes, went in, and began to pray. I prayed very diligently for an hour, maybe more – and nothing happened.”**

“After some time, he gave up and left. Disappointment consumed him. What had he done wrong? Why hadn’t Heavenly Father answered his prayer?”

# A Defining Experience



“In what seemed like no time at all, the two-week stretch of pageant performances ended, and Todd returned to New Jersey. **About a month later, as he was reading the Book of Mormon at home in his bedroom, he received his answer.**

**“Without my asking for it, the witness came,” he recalls. “It came without words, but I received a very powerful spiritual confirmation – the kind that leaves no doubt – about the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith.**

**“Looking back on that experience, I realize that we can’t dictate to God when, where, or how He will speak to us. We just have to be open to receive what He disposes, when He disposes it. It comes according to *His* will.**

“I’m glad that Heavenly Father didn’t respond to me that night in Palmyra. I might have thought that you have to be in a special place to get an answer to prayer or to gain a testimony. But you don’t have to make a pilgrimage to Palmyra to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet or that the Book of Mormon is true. You don’t have to go to Jerusalem to know that Jesus is the Christ. If Heavenly Father found me in Somerset, New Jersey, He can answer the prayers of anybody, anywhere in the world. He knows us intimately, and He can answer us whatever our place or circumstances” (Quentin L. Cook, “Elder D. Todd Christofferson: Prepared to Serve the Lord,” *Ensign*, Aug 2008, 10-15).

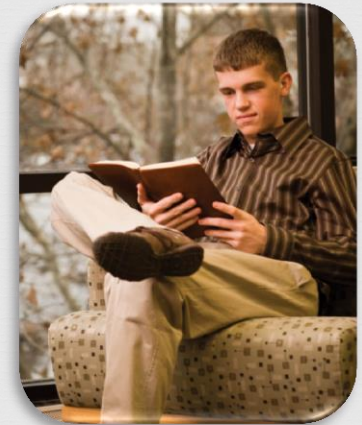
# The Youth Study



90% Correlation



Prayer



Scripture Study



Ordination to  
Melchizedek Priesthood



Full Time Missionary Service



Temple Endowment



Temple Marriage

# Conversion is a Process



From *True to the Faith*, we learn that **“Conversion is a process, not an event. You become converted as a result of your righteous efforts to follow the Savior.** These efforts include exercising faith in Jesus Christ, repenting of sin, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end in faith.”



# Miraculous Conversions Are Rare

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**“A person may get converted in a moment, miraculously. That is what happened to Alma the younger. He had been baptized in his youth, he had been promised the Holy Ghost, but he had never received it. He was too worldly-wise; he went off with the sons of Mosiah to destroy the church. ... In his instance the conversion was miraculous, in the snap of a finger, almost. ... But that is not how it happens with most people. With most people conversion is a process; and it goes step by step, degree by degree, level by level, from a lower state to a higher, from grace to grace, until the time that the individual is wholly turned to the cause of righteousness. Now this means that an individual overcomes one sin today and another sin tomorrow. He perfects his life in one field now, and in another field later on. And the conversion process goes on, until it is completed, until we become, literally, as the Book of Mormon says, saints of God instead of natural men”** (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, From an address at BYU First Stake Conference, 11 February 1968; see also excerpts from an address at BYU in 1976).

# Cut the Drama



- Several years ago, Elder Gerald Lund shared the experience of a girl who felt that she did not have a testimony. **She began to fast every other day. Not only did she deeply desire a witness, but she wanted a dramatic display and a “Pentecostal-like” spiritual outpouring. One day, in tears, she related to her father, “I don’t have a testimony.” Her father wondered how she came up with such an idea. She opened up her heart and revealed, “Because I have never experienced anything like Alma the Younger, or Paul, or King Lamoni.”**
- Elder Lund then made this plea to those who teach the gospel:
- “It is unfortunate, it makes me weep, that inadvertently, we who are teaching the gospel sometimes make our youth feel that if their conversion is not dramatic, if it is not remarkable, then it is not true. **When you teach the Book of Mormon, you teach Alma and Lamoni. But you remind them that for every Alma the Younger there were a thousand unnamed Saints who just lived good lives and who lived righteously from the time they were young. For every King Lamoni there were thousands of Lamanites who didn’t have to go into a trance or an unconscious state; they just heard his words and believed and were converted”** Gerald N. Lund, *Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund: Gospel*



# Evidence of True Conversion

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- ❧ Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that **a true convert “changes his whole way of life, and the nature and structure of his very being is quickened and changed by the power of the Holy Ghost”** (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 162).
- ❧ Therefore, the converted person is a changed person—changed for the better.
- ❧ President David O. McKay added that **the converted person is happy because they sense “the uplifting, transforming power that comes from this nearness to the Savior, this kinship with the Living Christ”** (President David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, June 1962, 7).
- ❧ **One clear indicator of true conversion is happiness.** Show me a teen that is miserable and unhappy and we will show you a teen that needs to become converted and get the Spirit into their lives.

# Evidence of Conversion



- ☞ Alvin R. Dyer once said, **“True conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ produces a compelling influence for good. It makes one more agreeable to live with, more kindly, more tolerant of others; less prone to criticize or find fault; more apt to strive for the better things in life, shunning the base and carnal; seeking always to restrain sordid inclinations, and replacing them with gentle, righteous ones”** (Alvin R. Dyer, *The Challenge*, 68).
- ☞ Therefore, when our youth become converted, they do not only take upon themselves the Saviors name, but also his attributes.

# Conversion is the Process of Sainthood

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“Converted implies not merely mental acceptance of Jesus and his teachings but also a motivating faith in him and his gospel. **A faith which works a transformation, an actual change in a person’s understanding of life’s meaning and in his allegiance to God in interest, in thought, and in conduct. In one who is really wholly converted, desire for things contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ has actually died.** And substituted therefore is a love of God, with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments” (Elder Richard G. Scott, “Full Conversion Brings Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 25).

# It Begins with the Family

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“I believe our problems, almost everyone, arise out of the homes of the people. **If there is to be a reformation, if there is to be a change, if there is to be a return to old and sacred values, it must begin in the home.** It is here that truth is learned, that integrity is cultivated, that self-discipline is instilled, and that love is nurtured” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Walking in the Light of the Lord,” *Ensign*, November 1998, 99).



# Role of Parents



**“We [parents] do two things; we *teach and we testify*. We have to teach first so that we will have a basis for a **testimony**. We don’t just bear testimony promiscuously; we bear testimony to back up teaching. [Parents] teach and testify”** (Bruce R. McConkie, *Area Conference Report, Sydney Australia 1976, 19*; emphasis added).



# Testimony Nurtured in the Family

**“A testimony is best nurtured in the family setting.** Once nurtured, that testimony will be strengthened in the meetings of the Church, through study of the words of the prophets recorded in ancient and modern writings, and through doing the work of the Church. [Church magazines]... will be great aids to families in helping each member gain a testimony, for the gaining and keeping of testimonies should be a family project. **Do not neglect anything that will help to strengthen the testimony of any member of your family**” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1970, 11).



# Pitching Our Tents Towards the Temple

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## ☞ Mosiah 2:5-6

- ☞ The imagery of these verses is powerful. Parents, are the doors of our figurative tents facing the temple? Do they also face the prophet and the brethren? Are our tent doors open to receive instruction, or closed – rejecting the words of living prophets? Which way does your tent face as a family? Nevertheless, King Benjamin's sermon appeared to be extremely effective.

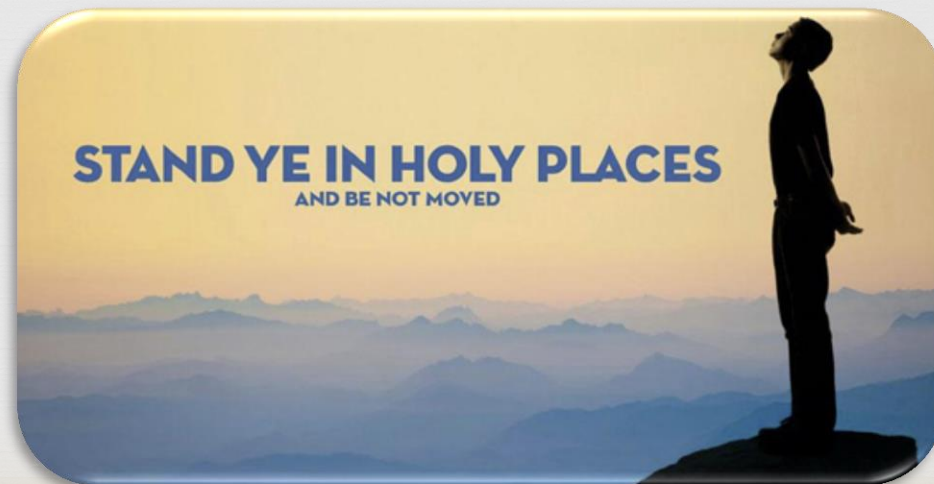
## ☞ Mosiah 26:1-4



# Getting the Gospel into their Hearts

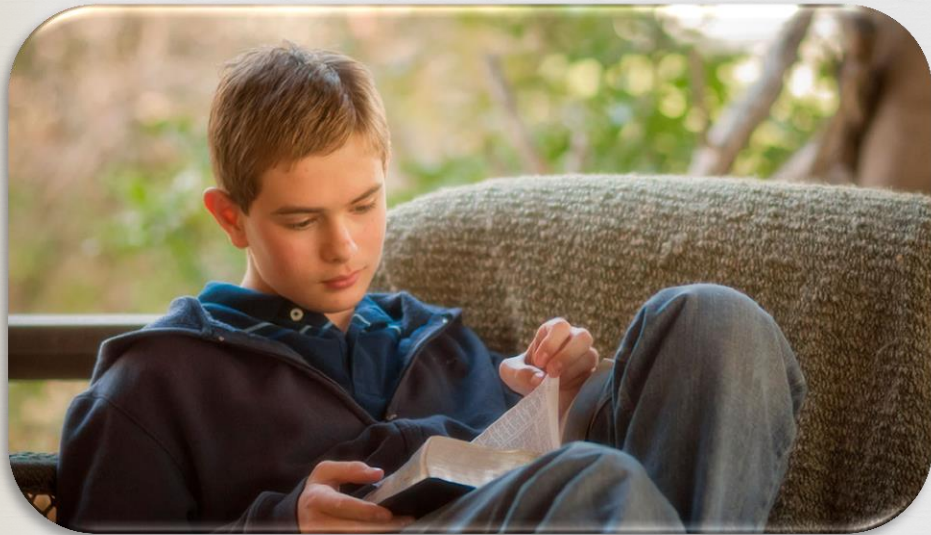


“The only safety we have in the world for our children is what they build within themselves. We can make restrictions against drinking and smoking, and we can make regulations to guide the affairs of people. We can throw all the protections possible around them, but after all, the thing that holds them in the final test is what is inside of **them**” (Marion G. Romney, as cited in F. Burton Howard, *Marion G. Romney: His Life and Faith* [1988], 153).





# Conversion is Getting the Gospel into their Hearts!!!



“Conversion means embedding the gospel into our hearts” (Susan W. Tanner, “Written in the Fleshy Tables of the Heart”, 2005 *Spring President’s Message*, 3).

# How Will You Help Them Get the Gospel in Their Hearts?

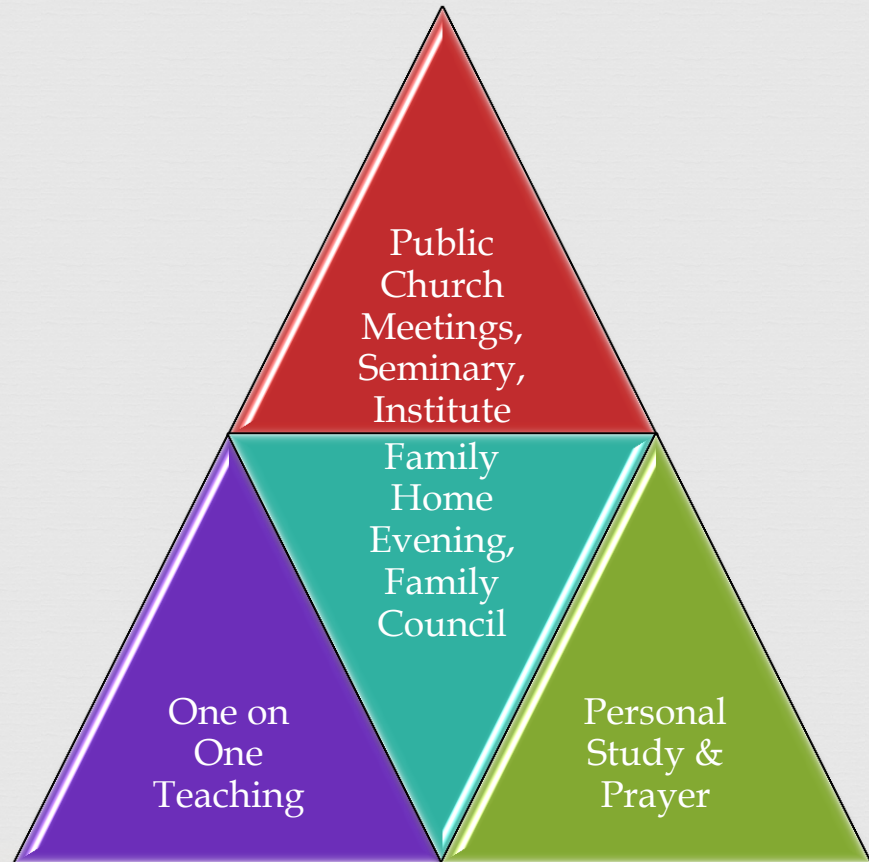


- ❧ **The best way that you can help your children become converted to the gospel is to have a strong relationship with them.**
- ❧ **If you are connected to your children emotionally, you can teach and influence them in powerful ways that matter.** They will come to you for answers to their questions, and you will share personal experiences with them which will distill upon their minds and hearts.
- ❧ **Conversely, if you do not have a relationship with your children, your influence is null and void.** There is little teaching that will occur in their hearts if your relationship with them is shoddy at best. In fact, your children will have little desire to become converted because of you.

# One-on-One



- ❧ What rarely occurs today is a parent visiting with their child – one on one. When was the last time you had a gospel discussion with one of your children – just you and them?
- ❧ You and your child will get more mileage out of this experience than twenty family home evenings!



# Words from the Wise



- ❧ A grandmother from Utah, reflecting back on her own childhood, wrote of her parents, **“Just knowing I was loved and valued as a daughter primarily contributed to me buying into what my parents taught.”**
- ❧ Another mother from Texas, reflecting on her childhood, shared with us, **“What my parents thought of me mattered more than what my peers thought. Even though we didn’t have Family Home Evening every week, I felt like my parents were teaching me daily. I always knew they loved me.”**
- ❧ Once children feel from their parents that they are loved and accepted, they are then ready to have the gospel sink deep into their hearts.

# Words from the Wise



*I remember seeing my mom praying and my dad would always get teary bearing his testimony. My mom was also consistent in trying to do the things that we should be doing—family prayer, family scripture study, and family home evening. We were never perfect, but she would be inspired after a good talk in Church or General Conference and we would go at it for several weeks, or a month or two, and then slowly begin to drift off course. However, another Church talk or Conference message would always get us back on track. Fast forward one generation and with my own children, we never miss Family Home Evening, we never miss Family Prayer, and we never miss Family Scripture Study.*

# Words from the Wise



- ❧ When I asked a 30-year-old woman from Texas what her parents did to help impact her testimony as a youth, she related:
- ❧ *We always read scriptures together and prayed together every night. We always had Family Home evening even though it was hard to get together and most of us didn't want to. My parents were always strong in their church callings. My parents were never shy to admit their feelings about the Church, how they knew it was true, how it had changed their lives, and would always bear their testimony to us.*
- ❧ I also had the chance to interview the mother of this 30-year-old Texas female. I asked her what she and her husband did to help their children get the gospel deep in their hearts, she said:
- ❧ *Our family has been accused many times of spending too much time sitting in a circle and just talking and laughing. We have even skipped activities or other Church events because our discussions have gone on for hours. I truly feel this activity has been a great bonding experience for our family and we have become united in building our testimonies through sharing our feelings about the gospel with each other. Our Family Home Evenings can easily turn from 20 minute lessons to three hour discussions.*

# Steps to Testimony



“First, to keep our testimony we must feed it, regularly and plentifully. The steps that lead to a testimony: **desire, prayer, study, and practice, must be trodden continuously**.... To keep his testimony, a person must increase in the use of gospel principles. **There must be stricter conformity with the higher as well as the lesser laws of life – more activity in Church service; increasing charity and kindness; greater sacrifice for the common good; more readiness to help advance the plan of salvation; more truth in all we do**” (John A. Widtsoe, *Gospel Interpretations*, 37).

# For Parents



**“Years ago when I served as a stake president, a man came to confess a transgression. His confession surprised me. He had been an active member of the Church for years. I wondered how a person with his experience could have committed the sin that he did. After some pondering, it came to me that this brother had never become truly converted.** Despite his Church activity, the gospel had not penetrated his heart. It was only an external influence in his life. When he was in wholesome environments, he kept the commandments, but in a different environment, other influences might control his actions.

**“How can you become converted? How can you make the gospel of Jesus Christ not just an influence in your life but the controlling influence and, indeed, the very core of what you are?** The ancient prophet Jeremiah spoke of the law of God, the gospel, being written in our hearts. He quotes the Lord speaking about us, His people in the latter days: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11; emphasis added).



# Step #1 For Parents



**“As a first step, you must lay aside any feeling of pride that is so common in the world today. By this I mean the attitude that rejects the authority of God to rule in our lives. ...**

You hear it expressed today in phrases such as “Do your own thing” or “Right and wrong depend on what I feel is right for me.” That attitude is a rebellion against God, just as Lucifer rebelled against God in the premortal world. He rejected God’s right to declare the truth and establish the law. Satan wanted, and still wants, the power to declare arbitrarily what is right and wrong. Our beloved Creator does not force us to accept His authority, but willingly submitting to that authority is the first step in conversion” (D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11).

# Step #2 for Parents



**“Further, for the gospel to be written in your heart, you need to know what it is and grow to understand it more fully. That means you will study it. When I say “study,” I mean something more than reading. It is a good thing sometimes to read a book of scripture within a set period of time to get an overall sense of its message, but for conversion, you should care more about the amount of time you spend in the scriptures than about the amount you read in that time. I see you sometimes reading a few verses, stopping to ponder them, carefully reading the verses again, and as you think about what they mean, praying for understanding, asking questions in your mind, waiting for spiritual impressions, and writing down the impressions and insights that come so you can remember and learn more. Studying in this way, you may not read a lot of chapters or verses in a half hour, but you will be giving place in your heart for the word of God, and He will be speaking to you.”** (D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted” *Ensign* May 2004, 11-13)

# Step #3 For Parents



“I mentioned praying as you study to understand the scriptures, but your prayers must not be limited to that. In the Book of Mormon, Amulek tells us we should pray about everything in our lives. He says, “Pour out your souls [to God] in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.” Your Heavenly Father wants you to pray about your hopes and fears, your friends and family, your school and work, and the needs of those around you. Most of all, you should pray to be filled with the love of Christ. This love is given to those who are true followers of Jesus Christ, who ask for it with all the energy of their heart. This love is the fruit of the tree of life, and tasting it is a major part of your conversion because once you have felt your Savior’s love for you, even the smallest part, you will feel secure, and a love for Him and for your Heavenly Father will grow within you.

# Step #3 for Parents



“After Amulek talked about prayer, he spoke about something else that is an important element of your **conversion – serving others. Otherwise, he said, “your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing.”** In other words, to be converted, you must not only open your heart to a knowledge of the gospel and the love of God, you must practice the gospel law. You cannot fully understand or appreciate it unless you personally apply it in your life. Jesus said that He came to serve, not to be served. So it must be with you. You must look outward and **care about others.** You can be compassionate; you can be friendly; you can share; you can help others in a hundred small ways. As you do, the gospel of Jesus Christ will become a part of you” (D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11-14).

# Step #4 For Parents

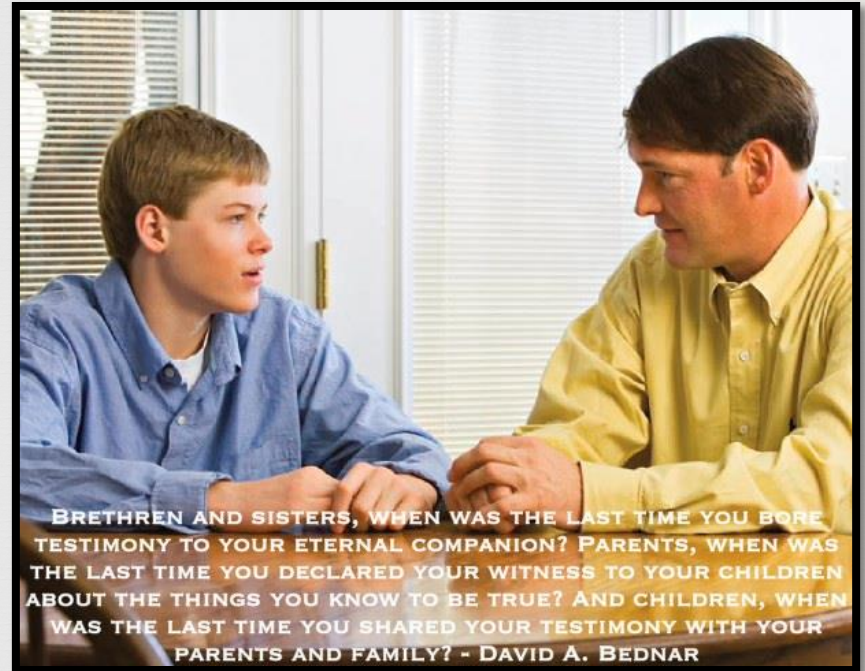


**“Let me mention one other thing. In ancient times when people wanted to worship the Lord and seek His blessings, they often brought a gift. For example, when they went to the temple, they brought a sacrifice to place on the altar. After His Atonement and Resurrection, the Savior said He would no longer accept burnt offerings of animals. The gift or sacrifice He will accept now is “a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” As you seek the blessing of conversion, you can offer the Lord the gift of your broken, or repentant, heart and your contrite, or obedient, spirit. In reality, it is the gift of yourself – what you are and what you are becoming.**

**“Is there something in you or in your life that is impure or unworthy? When you get rid of it, that is a gift to the Savior. Is there a good habit or quality that is lacking in your life? When you adopt it and make it part of your character, you are giving a gift to the Lord. Sometimes this is hard to do, but would your gifts of repentance and obedience be worthy gifts if they cost you nothing? Don’t be afraid of the effort required. And remember, you don’t have to do it alone. Jesus Christ will help you make of yourself a worthy gift. His grace will make you clean, even holy. Eventually, you will become like Him, “perfect in Christ.” (D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11-13).**

# How Parents Help in the Conversion Process

1. Desire
2. Repetition
3. Learning from the Heart
4. Practice



# Key #1: Desire



- ☞ President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ” (President Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and A Warning*, 33).
- ☞ President Harold B. Lee taught that “the greatest poverty is the poverty of desire.”
- ☞ If you have a child who has no desire for a testimony, pray for that child until they do.
- ☞ As you know, parents cannot give the gift of desire to their children. We cannot “make” someone desire a testimony
- ☞ If our youth are not hungry, they will not eat
- ☞ If we can find out what questions they have and what the desires of their hearts are, then we can be better equipped to feed them.
- ☞ **Although we cannot create a desire, we can certainly help create a “need” for the gospel. Ponder that for a while.**

# Key #2: Repetition



- ☞ Youth must hear the doctrines over and over. Enos had been taught the doctrines often by his father. Because of that repetition the doctrines sank deep into his heart.
- ☞ President Kimball: We need not so much be taught, as reminded
- ☞ Once again, the “Shot-in-the-arm” approach to testimony or conversion rarely works. The gospel must be lived, over and over again. Sometimes, the answers we are seeking do not come all at once. Answers come after consistency and effort. Some youth will read the Book of Mormon one night and wonder why an angle didn’t appear in their room. Reading each day, and praying morning, noon and night will bring yield great dividends.



# Key #3: Learning from the Heart

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- ☞ Teach by the Spirit
- ☞ Identify the Spirit
- ☞ Help children understand how the Holy Ghost works
- ☞ Let Children Teach the Gospel
- ☞ Help Children memorize scriptures
- ☞ **“I suggest that you memorize scriptures that touch your heart and fill your soul with understanding. When scriptures are used as the Lord has caused them to be recorded, they have intrinsic power that is not communicated when paraphrased. Sometimes when there is a significant need in my life, I review mentally scriptures that have given me strength.** There is great solace, direction, and power that flow from the scriptures, especially the words of the Lord” (Richard G. Scott, “He Lives,” *Ensign*, November 1999, 88).

# Keep a Written Record



- ☞ Another way for our youth to learn the gospel and have it sink into their hearts is to keep a journal.
- ☞ Keeping a written record of our lives helps us to remember the great things the Lord has done for us.
- ☞ President Henry B. Eyring has often spoken of the importance of keeping a written record of our lives. He said, “**Journals are a way of counting our blessings. . . . As you start to write, [you could have an experience with the gift of the Holy Ghost.] [You] could ask yourself, ‘How did God bless me today?’ If you do that long enough and with faith, you will find yourself remembering blessings.** And sometimes, you will have gifts brought to your mind [by the gift of the Holy Ghost] which you failed to notice during the day, but which you will then know were a touch of God’s hand in your life” (Elder Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 11).

# Key #4: Practice



- ☞ Youth must apply the gospel in their lives; they must pray, repent, and keep covenants.
- ☞ “Stated simply, **true conversion is the fruit of faith, repentance, and consistent obedience**” (Elder Richard G. Scott, “Full Conversion Brings Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 24-26).
- ☞ “**Peace, joy, satisfaction, happiness, growth, contentment, all come with the righteous living of the commandments of God.**” (Elder Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1952, 23).
- ☞ “**If we..... keep the commandments of God; if we take the side of the Church on all issues, both religious and political; if we take the Holy Spirit for our guide; if we give heed to the words of the apostles and prophets who minister among us—then, from an eternal standpoint, all things will work together for our good**” (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, April 1980, 100).

# The World is Darkening Quickly

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- ☞ Yes, the world will become dark, but we must not let that drag our youth down to such a low level.
- ☞ Elder Richard G. Scott declared, “**True conversion yields the fruit of enduring happiness that can be enjoyed even when the world is in turmoil and most are anything but happy.**”<sup>38</sup>
- ☞ No matter how sick and problematic the world becomes, those youth who have paid the price to become deeply converted will be able to smile despite the less than favorable conditions.
- ☞ Those who are converted will be at peace, and will be happy. That is because they will always have the Spirit with them.

# Our Youth Must Stand on Their Own Two Feet

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President Harold B. Lee declared, “The time is here when each of you must stand on your own feet. Be converted, because no one can endure on borrowed light. You will have to be guided by the light within yourself. If you do not have it, you will not stand” (Elder Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 95).



# How Firm a Foundation



3. Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid.  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to  
stand,  
Upheld by my righteous, upheld by my righteous,  
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

# How Firm a Foundation



4. When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee o'erflow,  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee.....they deepest distress.

# How Firm a Foundation



5. When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, thy dross to consume,  
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.



# How Firm a Foundation



7. The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose  
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, I'll never, no never,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

# Pure Steel



“Years ago I was in a Church History class at Brigham Young University. We had studied the Missouri persecutions, the exile from Nauvoo, the sacrifices of the Saints as they made the arduous journey across the plains to the Rocky Mountains—especially of the Willie and Martin handcart companies.

“After we rehearsed that catalog of adversity and suffering, one of the students asked this question: ‘**Why was the way so hard? I know they were being tested, but did it have to be so relentless, so intense?**’ The professor’s answer showed tremendous insight into the purposes of God. He said, ‘**What you have to realize is this. There was a great work to be done, and these people were just common folk. They weren’t great crusaders or proven heroes. However, by the time they reached the valley, many of the physically weak had died, and almost all of the spiritually weak had apostatized. So what Brigham Young had left to work with was pure steel.**’ (Gerald N. Lund, *Hearing the Voice of the Lord: Principles and Patterns of Personal Revelation* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007], 306).



# The Lord Expects Much from Our Youth

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“The special spirits who have been reserved to live in this time of challenges and who overcome will one day be praised for their stamina by those who pulled handcarts” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Notwithstanding My Weakness*, 18).

