

Your Next Step

By Elder Randall K. Bennett

Of the Seventy



Your loving Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, invite you to take your next step toward Them. Don't wait. Take it now.

My heart sank during a recent meeting with wonderful Latter-day Saints. The question was asked, “Who desires to live with Heavenly Father again?” Every hand went up. The next question was “Who has confidence you’ll succeed?” Sadly and surprisingly, most hands went down.

When we perceive a gap between who we are now and who we desire to become, many of us are tempted to choose to lose faith and hope.¹

Because “no unclean thing can dwell with God,”² in order to live with Him again we will need to be cleansed of sin³ and sanctified.⁴ If we had to do this *alone*, none of us would make it. But we are not alone. In fact, we are *never* alone.

We have heaven’s help because of Jesus Christ and His Atonement.⁵ The Savior said, “If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.”⁶ When faith is exercised, faith increases.

Let’s consider together three principles that will help us on our journey back to our Father in Heaven.

Become as a Child

Our youngest grandson illustrates the first principle. After learning to crawl and then stand, he was ready to try walking. During his first few attempts, he fell, cried, and gave a look that said, “I will never—ever—try that again! I’m simply going to keep crawling.”

When he stumbled and fell, his loving parents did not feel that he was hopeless or that he would never walk. Instead they held out their arms while calling to him, and with his eyes on them, he tried again to move toward their loving embrace.

Loving parents are always ready with outstretched arms to welcome even our smallest step in the right direction. They know that our willingness to try and try again will lead to

progress and success.

The Savior taught that to inherit the kingdom of God, we must become as a little child.⁷ So, spiritually speaking, the first principle is that we need to do what we did as children.⁸

With childlike humility and willingness to focus on our Father in Heaven and our Savior, we take steps toward Them, never giving up hope, even if we fall. Our loving Heavenly Father rejoices in each and every faithful step, and if we fall, He rejoices in each effort to get back up and try again.

Act with Faith

A second principle is illustrated by two faithful Saints, each deeply desirous of finding an eternal companion. Both prayerfully took faith-filled steps.

Yuri, a Russian Latter-day Saint, sacrificed and saved to take a long trip to the temple. On the train he noticed a beautiful woman with a bright countenance, and he felt that he should share the gospel with her. Not knowing what else to do, he began reading from his Book of Mormon, hoping that she might notice.

Yuri didn't realize that the woman, Mariya, was already a Latter-day Saint. Not knowing that Yuri too was a member, and following a prompting she had to share the gospel with him, Mariya began reading in her Book of Mormon as well, hoping that he might notice.

Well, when they simultaneously looked up, Yuri and Mariya were astonished to see the Book of Mormon in each other's hands—and yes, after falling in love, they were sealed in the temple. Today, Yuri and Mariya Kutepov of Voronezh, Russia, as eternal companions, contribute significantly to the growth of the Church in Russia.

The emphasis here is not only on this couple's willingness to act in faith. It's also about a second principle—the Lord more than matches our willingness to act in faith. Our willingness to take a step is not just met; it is exceeded by the Lord's promised blessings.

Heavenly Father and our Savior are *eager* to bless us. After all, They ask only for one-tenth of what They bless us with and then promise that the windows of heaven will open!⁹

Whenever we willingly act with faith in Jesus Christ and take another step, especially an uncomfortable step requiring change or repentance, we are blessed with strength.¹⁰

I testify that the Lord will guide us to—and *through*—our next steps. He will more than match our efforts with His power if we are willing to keep trying, repenting, and moving forward with faith in our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Spiritual gifts are promised not only to those who love God and keep all of His commandments but also, gratefully, to those of us who “[seek] so to do.”¹¹ Strength is given to those who keep seeking and trying.

Two essential weekly signposts that mark our journey back to our Father in Heaven are the

perpetual covenant of the ordinance of the sacrament and our Sabbath day observance. President Russell M. Nelson taught us last general conference that the Sabbath is the Lord's gift to us. Our devoted weekly observance of the Sabbath is our sign to the Lord that we love Him.¹²

Each Sabbath day we witness that we are “willing to take upon [ourselves His name], and always remember him, and keep his commandments.”¹³ In return for our repentant heart and our commitment, the Lord renews the promised remission of sin and enables us to “always have his Spirit to be with [us].”¹⁴ The Holy Spirit's influence improves, strengthens, teaches, and guides us.

If, in remembering Him each Sabbath, we turn our hearts to the Savior through these two important signposts, our efforts are again more than matched by the Lord by His promised blessings. We are promised that, with devoted Sabbath day observance, the fulness of the earth will be ours.¹⁵

The path back to our Father in Heaven leads to the house of the Lord, where we are blessed to receive saving ordinances for ourselves and for our departed loved ones. President Boyd K. Packer taught that “ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God's] presence.”¹⁶ I pray that each of us will always be worthy of and use our temple recommends to serve regularly.

Overcome the Natural Man

A third principle is this: we must counter the natural man's tendency to procrastinate, to put off, or to give up.¹⁷

As we progress along the covenant path, we will make mistakes, some multiple times. Some of us struggle with behaviors or addictions we feel powerless to overcome. But faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ is a principle of action and power.¹⁸ If we are willing to act, we will be blessed with the strength to repent and with the strength to change.

We fail only if we fail to take another faithful step forward. We will not, we cannot, fail if we are faithfully yoked to the Savior—He who has never failed and will never fail us!

Promised Blessings

I promise that each faith-filled step will be met with help from heaven. Guidance will come as we pray to our Heavenly Father, rely on our Savior and follow Him, and listen to the Holy Spirit. Strength will come because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.¹⁹ Healing and forgiveness will come because of God's grace.²⁰ Wisdom and patience will come by trusting in the Lord's timing for us. Protection will come by following God's living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson.

You were created “that [you] might have joy,”²¹ joy you will feel when you worthily return to your Heavenly Father and your Savior and step into Their warm embrace.

I bear witness of these absolute truths. Your loving Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, live. They know you. They love you. They lovingly invite you to take your next step toward Them. Don't wait. Take it now. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. See Moroni 7:40–41.

2. 1 Nephi 10:21; see also Moses 6:57.

3. See Alma 5:21, 27; Doctrine and Covenants 50:28.

4. See Moroni 10:32.

5. See Mosiah 4:6–7; Alma 34:9; Moroni 7:41.

6. Moroni 7:33.

7. See 3 Nephi 11:38.

8. See Mosiah 3:19; Moroni 8:10.

9. See Malachi 3:10; Doctrine and Covenants 41:1.

10. See Moroni 7:33.

11. Doctrine and Covenants 46:9.

12. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015,

129–32.

13. Moroni 4:3; see also Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.

14. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.

15. See Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10, 13, 15–16.

16. Boyd K. Packer, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 24.

17. See Mosiah 3:19.

18. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 3.

19. See Moroni 7:33.

20. See Moroni 10:32.

21. 2 Nephi 2:25.