

Reference list from Mindy Brown for Magnify podcast episode 105, “When Loved Ones Step Away from the Church: Finding True Hope and Peace”

Heard on the podcast:

“Perfection is a quest on both sides of the veil. The scriptures remind us, ‘Wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.’” (D&C 67:13)

Tad R. Callister, “[Our Identity and Our Destiny](#),” BYU Devotional, August 14, 2012

“When the tree that you care most about isn’t having it, when the person in your life that you wish you could minister to or fix right now isn’t letting you fix them, go to the nethermost part of the vineyard, because there are other trees there, and your life has uniquely suited you to serve that kind of tree, trees with exactly that kind of problem. All of us have been uniquely prepared to be able to reach out.”

Joseph Grenny, Episode 201 of the [Church News podcast](#)

“I know some of *you* have loved ones that have left the Church, or are considering leaving, or may have chosen a path that you know will lead to heartache, such as these men have experienced. But I witness to you that the Savior *knows* them, He *loves* them, and He *will not* leave them. He takes the long view and *never* gives up on any of us. He will put people in their paths that can help them, and He can ultimately turn *all* things to their good, *even* the types of things these men have experienced.”

Sister J. Anette Dennis, “[Why I Choose to Stay](#)” BYU Women’s Conference, April 2024

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the

tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God."

Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1929, citing Joseph Smith. Quoted by David A. Bednar, "[Faithful Parents and Wayward Children](#)" Liahona, March 2014

"Parents who honor temple covenants are in a position to exert great spiritual influence over time on their children."

"The 'tentacles of Divine Providence' described by Elder Whitney may be considered a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold eventually. Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ."

Elder Bednar, "[Faithful Parents of Wayward Children](#)" Liahona, March 2014

"Our relationship with Christ can transform our capacity to listen; as the Perfect Listener, He teaches us to hear with our hearts. Learning to listen well is a vital practice of discipleship that can deepen our spiritual rootedness with God and our loved ones. Collaborating with Christ, covenant listeners see, heal, create, and empower others."

Emily C. White and Mindy Brown, "[How to partner with Christ to become the listener your children need](#)" LDSLiving.com, May 15, 2024

"We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it."

Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*, Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2001, 140-141

Additional references:

Thoughts from Mindy

- Remember the long game. Zoom out and then zoom back in, like wearing a reading contact and a distance contact! One of the best parenting skills is learning to look through both simultaneously. It takes practice and patience but it's doable!
- God is not scared or worried. He's patient.
- Keep doing something! Anything is better than nothing. Meanwhile, pray for those who are nearby influencing your loved one—and be specific!

Book Recommendations

Deseret Book titles:

Holding On, S. Michael Wilcox

Faith Is Not Blind, Bruce C. Hafen

When Church Is Hard, Tyler Johnson

From other publishers:

Telling a Better Story, Joshua D. Chatraw

Faith After Doubt, Brian D. McLaren

Scripture

Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed. [Doctrine and Covenants 123:17](#)

Mindy's note: It doesn't say "for his arm to be extended," it says revealed, as if it's ALREADY extended but perhaps we can't see that currently. God doesn't love your future self any more than He loves your present self. He loves YOU.

Quotes

"If you pray, if you talk to God, and if you plead for His help for your loved one, and if you thank Him not only for help but for the patience and gentleness that come from not receiving all you desire right away or perhaps ever, then I promise you that you will draw closer to Him. You will become diligent and long-suffering. And then you can know that you have done all that you can to help those you love and those you pray for navigate through Satan's attempt to derail them.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

"You can find hope in the scriptural record of families. We read of those who turned away from what they were taught or who were wrestling with God for forgiveness, such as Alma the Younger, the sons of Mosiah, and Enos. In their moments of crisis, they remembered the words of their parents, words of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Remembering saved them. Your teaching of that sacred doctrine will be remembered."

President Henry B. Eyring, "[Simple is the Doctrine of Jesus Christ](#)," general conference, October 2024

“Trust your Heavenly Father. He knows your loved one personally and knows how to help them according to their individual needs. He takes the long view. He is not full of anxiety and fear because of their choices.”

“Trust His plan for your loved ones. His love for them is even greater than yours is.”

Sister J. Anette Dennis, “[Why I Choose to Stay](#)” BYU Women’s Conference, April 2024

“It is hard to understand all the reasons why some people take another path. The best we can do in these circumstances is just to love and embrace them, pray for their well-being, and seek for the Lord’s help to know what to do and say. Sincerely rejoice with them in their successes; be their friends and look for the good in them. We should never give up on them but preserve our relationships. Never reject or misjudge them. Just love them!”

“Ultimately, keep living a worthy life, be a good example to them of what you believe, and draw closer to our Savior, Jesus Christ. He knows and understands our deep sorrows and pains, and He will bless your efforts and dedication to your dear ones if not in this life, in the next. Remember, brothers and sisters, always that hope is an important part of the gospel plan.”

Elder Ulisses Soares, “[How Can I Understand?](#)” general conference, April 2019

Mindy’s note:

I love these five points Elder Soares makes:

- Love/embrace them
- Pray for their well-being
- Seek for the Lord’s help to know what to do/say
- Rejoice sincerely with them in their successes
- Look for the good and be their friends

“And if those children are unresponsive, maybe you can’t teach them yet, but you can love them. And if you love them today, maybe you can teach them tomorrow.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “[Teaching and Learning in the Church](#),” June 2007

“If your home is a home where family members are loved unconditionally, regardless of behavior, then your home will have a spirit of warmth that will prepare the heart to receive the testimony of truth. When children and teenagers are loved because of who they are and not for how they behave, only then can we begin to help make much-needed changes in behavior.”

H. Burke Peterson, “[Preparing the Heart](#),” general conference, April 1990
Mindy’s note: I was really moved during this past conference how many speakers specifically called out “warmth.” That might be the secret to navigating our most challenging relationships.

“To rule children by force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. No, we don’t own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “[Listen to Learn](#),” general conference, April 1991

“The nearer we get to our Heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls—to take them upon our shoulders and cast their sins behind our back.”

Joseph Smith to the Nauvoo Relief Society, 9 June 1842

“Every one of us aspires to a more Christlike life than we often succeed in living. If we admit that honestly and are trying to improve, we are not hypocrites; we are human. May we refuse to let our own mortal follies, and the inevitable shortcomings of even the best men and women around us, make us cynical about the truths of the gospel, the truthfulness of the Church, our hope for our future, or the possibility of godliness. If we persevere, then somewhere in eternity our

refinement will be finished and complete--which is the New Testament meaning of perfection.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “[Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually](#),” general conference, October 2017

The following three quotes were included in “[Hope for Parents of Wayward Children](#),” Liahona, September 2022

“Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang.”

Brigham Young (1801–77), Second President of the Church. Quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:90–91.

“If you succeed in passing through these trials and afflictions and receive a resurrection, you will, by the power of the Priesthood, work and labor, as the Son of God has, until you get all your sons and daughters in the path of exaltation and glory. This is just as sure as that the sun rose this morning over yonder mountains. Therefore, mourn not because all your sons and daughters do not follow in the path that you have marked out to them, or give heed to your counsels. Inasmuch as we succeed in securing eternal glory, and stand as saviors, and as kings and priests to our God, we will save our posterity.”

Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901), Fifth President of the Church. In *Collected Discourses*, comp. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. [1987–92], 3:364.

“The measure of our success as parents ... will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families in a perfectly moral environment, and that now is not possible.

“It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should.

“It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled. ...

“We cannot overemphasize the value of temple marriage, the binding ties of the sealing ordinance, and the standards of worthiness required of them. When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them.”

Boyd K. Packer “Our Moral Environment,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 68.

“It is my belief that God will save all His children that he can; and while, if we live unrighteously here, we shall not go to the other side in the same status, so to speak, as those who lived righteously; nevertheless, the unrighteous will have their chance, and in the eons of the eternities that are to follow, they, too, may climb to the destinies of which they who are righteous and serve God, have climbed.”

J. Reuben Clark, *Church News*, 23 April 1960, 3. as quoted in *Crucible*, p. 93

“Among the pernicious dogmas taught by a perverted and mis-called Christianity, is the heinous doctrine that never-ending punishment or interminable bliss, unchanging in kind or degree, shall be the destiny of every soul,--the award being made according to the condition of that soul at the time of bodily death; a life of sin being thus nullified by a death-bed repentance, and a life of honor, if unmarked by the ceremonies of established sects, being followed by the tortures of hell without a possibility of relief. Such a dogma is to be ranked with the dread heresy which proclaims the condemnation of innocent babes who have not been sprinkled by man’s assumed authority. In the justice of God no soul shall be finally condemned under a law of which he has had no chance to learn. True, eternal punishment has been decreed as the lot of the wicked; but the real meaning of the punishment so decreed has been made known by the Lord Himself. Eternal punishment is God’s punishment; endless punishment is His; for ‘Endless’ and

'Eternal' are among His names, and the words are descriptive of His attributes. No soul will be punished for sin beyond the time requisite to work the needed reformation and to vindicate justice, for which ends alone punishment is imposed. And no one will be eligible to enter any kingdom of glory in the abode of the blessed to which he is not entitled through obedience to law."

James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, pp. 90-91

"As I returned home after the funeral I asked myself again, will the natural gravity of the sealing power really bring back, without compulsory means, the children who wander? Yes, *if* we have loved them so well that their own desire to return is strong enough to sustain their complete repentance. This realization helps me in my own marriage and my own family, because I once heard President Howard W. Hunter answer a question about child-to-parent sealings by saying that in the eternities, nobody will be sealed to someone they don't want to be sealed to. That knowledge motivates me to live in such a way that my wife and our children and their children will *want* our family sealings to continue."

Elder Bruce C. Hafen shared these thoughts after a funeral for a young man who had stepped away from the gospel path.

"This probationary estate is the appointed time to begin to know God, and to learn his laws, and thereby to start the process of becoming like him. If we do not so begin we shall never receive the promised reward."

Bruce R. McConkie, "[The Mystery of Godliness](#)" BYU Devotional, January 6, 1985

"God is your Father. He loves you. He and your mother in heaven value you beyond any measure...You are unique. One of a kind, made of the eternal intelligence which gives you claim upon eternal life.

"Let there be no question in your mind about your value as an individual. The whole intent of the gospel plan is to provide an opportunity for each of you to reach your fullest potential, which is eternal progression and the possibility of godhood."

Spencer W. Kimball, "[Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters](#)" general conference, October 1978. Quoted by Joy D. Jones, "[Value Beyond Measure](#)," general conference October 2017.

"The education of the soul is an age-long spiritual adventure, beginning in this life and continuing after death."

Origen of Alexandria, early Christian scholar and theologian

"The great beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the reality of eternal progression—we are not only allowed to change for the better but also encouraged, and even commanded, to continue in the pursuit of improvement and, ultimately, perfection."

Jean B. Bingham, "[I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home](#)," general conference, October 2016

"Repentance will be possible ... even after death. ... It may appear that to teach the possibility of repentance beyond the grave may tend to weaken belief in the absolute necessity of repentance and reformation in this life. [There is] no reason for such objection when we consider that willful neglect here and now will render the process that much more lengthy and difficult in the future."

James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, p. 101

"[Man] cannot be damned [stymied in progress] through all eternity, there is a possibility for his escape in a little time."

Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 346

The following six quotes are included in *The Christ Who Heals*, by Fiona Givens and Terryl Givens. See Chapter 12, "The History of an Idea."

Charlotte Haven recorded Joseph Smith as saying in a Nauvoo sermon that a spirit in the lowest kingdom "constantly progresses in spiritual knowledge until safely landed in the Celestial." (p.118)

Brigham Young: "Those who fail to secure exaltation by the conclusion of their earthly probation "would eventually have the privilege of proving themselves worthy and advancing to a Celestial kingdom but it would be a slow progress." (p.118)

B.H. Roberts: "The ministry alluded to in each kingdom seemed meaningless "unless it be for the purpose of advancing our Father's children along the lines of eternal progress." (p.118)

Elder James E. Talmage: In the first edition of Articles of Faith, Church published: "Advancement from grade to grade within any kingdom, and from kingdom to kingdom, will be provided for. Eternity is progressive."

He later elaborated, "No man will be detained in the lower regions "longer than is necessary to bring him to a fitness for something better. When he reaches that stage the ...doors will open and there will be rejoicing among the hosts who welcome him into a better state." (pp. 118-119)

President Joseph F. Smith: "There is a time after this mortal life, and there is a way provided by which we may fulfil the measure of our creation and destiny, and accomplish the whole great work that we have been sent to do, although it may reach far into the future before we fully accomplish it. Jesus had not finished his work when his body was slain, neither did he finish it after his resurrection from the dead, although he had accomplished the purpose for which he then came to the earth, he had not fulfilled all his work. And when will he? Not until he has redeemed and saved every son and daughter of our father Adam that has or ever will be born upon this earth to the end of time, except the sons of perdition." (p. 119)

J. Reuben Clark: "[We do not] seal our eternal progress by what we do here. It is my belief that God will save all of His children that he can: and while, if we live unrighteously here, we shall not go to the other side in the same status, so to

speak, as those who lived righteously; nevertheless, the unrighteous will have their chance, and in the eons of the eternities that are to follow, they, too, may climb to the destinies to which they who are righteous and serve God, have climbed." (p. 119)

On the side of hopefulness: "I recognize that now is the time to prepare to meet God...[but] if the repentance of the wayward children does not happen in this life, is it still possible for the cords of the sealing to be strong enough for them yet to work out their repentance?...Mercy will not rob justice, and the sealing power of faithful parents will only claim wayward children upon the condition of their repentance and Christ's Atonement....There are very few whose rebellion and evil deeds are so great that they have sinned away the power to repent....Perhaps in this life we are not given to fully understand how enduring the sealing cords of righteous parents are to their children. It may very well be that there are more helpful sources at work than we know. I believe there is a strong familial pull as the influence of beloved ancestors continues with us from the other side of the veil."

James E. Faust, "[Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered](#)," general conference, April 2003

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave."

Joseph Smith, quoted in Lyon, *Symbols*, p. 13

"In the spirit world, 'the gospel is preached to the ignorant, the unrepentant, and the rebellious so they can be freed from their bondage and go forward to the blessings a loving Heavenly Father has in store for them'" (Dallin H. Oaks, "[Trust in the Lord](#)," general conference, October 2019). See 1 Peter 4:6; 2 Nephi 2:11-16; D&C 128:19; 137:7-9; 138:31-35.

Footnote 29, "[Ensuring a Righteous Judgment](#)," Elder James R. Rasband, general conference, April 2020.

Speaking of section 76, Joseph Smith said, "The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee The rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'"

From Joseph Smith, Manuscript History, Book A-1, 192-95, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, published first in *Times and Seasons* 5 (August 1, 1844) and later in Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:252-53. See also Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 195.

"Our progression is an eternal one."

Larry S. Kacher, "[Ladder of Faith](#)," general conference April 2022

"The purpose of God's plan was to give His children the opportunity to choose eternal life. This could be accomplished only by experience in mortality and, after death, by postmortal growth in the spirit world."

Dallin H. Oaks, "[Truth and the Plan](#)," general conference, October 2018