

# Press Forward and Be Steadfast

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You can press forward with vision. The Holy Ghost will help you remain steadfast, and your testimony of the Savior will help you proceed with a perfect brightness of hope.

On a pier in Copenhagen, Denmark, is a bronze statue of a young woman named Kristina. Kristina stands looking out to sea toward her goal to join the Saints in Zion. The wind is blowing against her fiercely, but she does not look back. She is steadfast as she presses forward doing a very hard thing, but one she knows to be right. I love that statue, for to me Kristina represents my own Danish great-great-grandmother who chose to join the Church amid great resistance. I am grateful for her courage and testimony. On her choice that day rested not only my eternal destiny but also the destiny of generations.

In the Book of Mormon, Nephi tells us that we can “press forward” (2 Ne. 31:20). He says we not only can but *must*. Perhaps Nephi, like Kristina, could see that the steadfast choices of one individual affect generations. When Nephi’s father sent him back to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of Laban, Nephi said, “Behold, it is wisdom in God that we should obtain these records, that we may preserve unto *our children* the language of our fathers” (1 Ne. 3:19; emphasis added). Nephi was thinking of his future family, even though he had no prospect for marriage. Remember, his family was *alone* in the wilderness! Nephi not only had a vision of how to return to his heavenly home, but he also had a vision of what he wanted in his earthly home.

The Savior will help you see and understand the vision He has for you. You are His beloved daughters. He knows you personally and has a plan for your life. He has promised that as you live worthily, His Spirit will always be with you.

Just as the wind blew fiercely in the opposite direction Kristina faced on that pier in Denmark, each of you will experience resistance from worldly forces. “Pressing forward” implies resistance. The scripture doesn’t say walk forward, or move forward, or simply proceed forward. It says to *press* forward! In order to do this, you must have a vision of where you are going. The Holy Ghost will help you remain steadfast, and your testimony of the Savior will help you proceed with a perfect brightness of hope.

Several years ago, my husband and I qualified to run the Boston Marathon. The night before the marathon, in an effort to visualize what it would be like to complete the race, we went to downtown Boston about a mile from the finish line. There in the quiet of the evening we laced up our running shoes and ran that last mile to the finish. As we crossed the line we held our hands victoriously high in the air and pretended that we had won the race! We imagined thousands of observers in the stands cheering for us. The next day we ran the race. Twenty-six point two miles (41.3 km) is a challenging distance. There are hills that are called “Heartbreak” for a very good reason. The entire time I was running those hills, I kept in mind that finish line and what it had felt like the night before to

cross the line victorious. That vision of the finish line helped me to finish that marathon in a pelting, cold New England storm.

Your vision of your future will help you press forward. Take a few minutes to envision where you want to be in one year or two or five. Then take action to prepare yourselves. People don't just run a marathon when they decide to do it. They must train daily, slowly building stamina and endurance to run the 26.2-mile distance. So it is with life. It is daily diligence with prayer and scripture study that will help you reach your goals. Your daily decisions will influence generations.

Seminary helped Melissa envision the kind of young woman she wanted to become. She was not a member of our Church, but she enrolled in seminary with her friends. When she turned 18, she was taught by the missionaries. She knew the things they taught her were true! The spirit was so sweet at her baptism. It felt as if not only all her friends and family were present but also her future family. The bishop remarked that he could almost hear her future family saying, "Thanks, Mom!"

Like Melissa, you have made baptismal covenants. Keeping your covenants will enable you to be guided by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost will protect and strengthen you and tell you "all things [that] you should do" (2 Ne. 32:5). This gift sets you apart from the world.

We know you receive a lot of resistance to your standards. Young women in Tennessee and Arkansas told me they face resistance at school because of their beliefs. The young women I met in Haiti also face daily pressure to participate in things that are not appropriate for a young woman of covenant. Yet their eyes shine brightly with the hope of the gospel. They remain steadfast because they listen to the "still small voice" (1 Kgs. 19:12) of the Holy Ghost and obey its promptings.

The Holy Ghost will also guide you as you make decisions regarding your future. Another young woman I know was dating a tall, handsome young man—the star of the school basketball team and senior class president. While discussing their future plans, she explained that she had made a decision a long time ago to marry a returned missionary in the temple. A mission was not part of his plans, and nothing more was said. The following Christmas, he gave her a small gift. As she opened it, she realized that it was a letter from a prophet of God calling her friend to serve a mission. Her righteous influence helped him make that important decision.

You too can influence the young men with whom you associate to "rise a little higher [and] be a little better" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Quest for Excellence," *Ensign*, Sept. 1999, 5; *Liahona*, Sept. 1999, 8). You can help young men prepare for and serve honorable missions. You can help them remain morally clean so they can bear their priesthood with honor. Your righteous influence in the life of a young man can have an eternal effect in not only his life but the lives of generations.

When our daughter Emi was 15, she made a decision. One morning I noticed her Book of Mormon opened to Alma, chapter 48. She had marked the verses that describe Captain Moroni: "Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding. ... Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ" (Alma 48:11, 13).

In the margin she had written, "I want to marry a man like Moroni." Seven years later, she did! Emi gained her vision for her future husband as she read the scriptures and listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. She also came to know and understand the Savior and His "great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8).

As you read the scriptures, you will come to know that the Savior is not only the light and life of the world; He is our one bright hope. Through Him you can have the hope of returning to live with your Father in Heaven. Through Him you can repent and overcome the things that will keep you from being steadfast. Through Him you can find the strength and courage to press forward even when the winds of resistance blow.

Now you may not have to stand on a pier and make difficult choices like Kristina. And you may never find yourself pressing forward on the hills of a marathon. But you will find yourself faced with choices that will have eternal implications. You can press forward with vision. The Holy Ghost will help you remain steadfast, and your testimony of the Savior will help you proceed with a perfect brightness of hope.

There may be some steep hills ahead, but our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has promised to climb with you every step of the way. There has never been a more important time to press forward and be steadfast.

And so I say with Nephi: “Wherefore, ye *must* press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope. ... Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, ... and endure to the end, ... thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Ne. 31:20; emphasis added). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.