Now that I am older, what do I know and feel that I wish I would have understood more fully when I was younger?

Asia Area

Tinesh Kalra  
Goa, India

“In my youth, I was rebellious and wanted to be free. And as soon as I was given some freedoms, I did many of those things that were not considered right by those in authority. I also searched for purpose in life because making money, amassing property, and then leaving it all behind didn’t make sense—neither did having a family and leaving it behind. I read and inquired much but found no satisfactory answers. “Now that I am older and have found gospel truths, I know better the purpose of life, the importance of family, and the value of keeping my body clean. Knowing has made all the difference! I have felt the approbation of God as I have lived these beliefs. Frequently I wish I had known these things earlier and saved myself from much unhappiness and others from heartache.”

Joshua Subandriyo  
Jakarta, Indonesia

“During high school I spent too much time hanging out with friends and didn’t do much schoolwork. Then at age 19, I got baptized. My conversion brought a change of attitude. I began to work hard, served a mission, completed my higher education, established a family, served in the Church and community, and continue to try to be useful to others. I wish I had known the importance of education and study during my teenage years and had chosen friends who would have encouraged me to do so.”

Djarot and Julinda Subiantoro  
Bintaro, Indonesia

“When we were young, we used to think we had so much to accomplish that we didn’t have time to pray. Now, we realize, as a poem teaches, ‘I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.’ (See Alan Grant, ‘The Difference.’) “Not just accomplishment but good and bad information from all over the world have come into our homes and compete to get our attention and time. The more we are bombarded, the more we need to pray to get wisdom, strength, and guidance to choose the right.”
Juswan Tandiman
Bekasi, Indonesia

“As we pursue our education, it’s natural to be passionate in classes that teach the subject we are majoring in and treat rather lightly other classes. We may find this pattern repeated in other pursuits in life—parenting, career, and so on. That kind of attitude of ingratitude can be an invitation to cultivate interest in things that seem unfamiliar or less important. Learning to respond well to these cues will save us not only from various should-haves, could-haves, and would-haves, but it will also enrich our lives with new meaning and appreciation.”

Aischa Tandiman
Bekasi, Indonesia

“I’m grateful that the gospel has been such an important part of my life—at any given time since I embraced it. The gospel, along with my strong testimony that we are indeed His children, has somehow kept me above water no matter what I didn’t know back then and had to learn along the way, sometimes even the hard way.”

Elder Yoke Sang Freddie Chan
Selangor, Malaysia

“Being physically healthy is a way we show gratitude to our Father in Heaven for having a tabernacle to house our eternal spirits. Not only should we excel in our academic life, but we should also excel in living the Word of Wisdom. Maintaining a healthy body enables us to enjoy life a little longer. I am sick and have lung cancer. I will not be able to see my grandchildren serve a mission or get married, yet I know the restored gospel will bring us together in glory.”

Michael Chua
Sarawak, Malaysia

“I wish that I would have understood more fully when I was younger the love that Jesus taught and commands us to follow. It would have made me a better son, husband, father, and friend. In President Gordon B. Hinckley’s words, ‘Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning of youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death.’”
Chimedbaatar Tseden
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

“I know that God loves His children no matter what; He doesn't care about the small differences like whether someone is rich or poor, old or young.”

Sumamaan Khanakham
Bangkok, Thailand

“I have learned to always put God first in my life. Living the gospel has become part of me like the blood in my veins. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ has been my strength, helping me to repent, do better each day, and be cleansed of sin. All of this has helped me fully understand that I am a child of God. He really does love me. I can be like Him, and I will return to His presence again.”

Rebecca Chen
Taichung, Taiwan

“Never do for others—even our children—what they can do for themselves. We want to be nice and generous when they need our help, but we learn from experience that not all help is good for the recipients. Sometimes struggles are all we need to become stronger, to develop our God-given potential. We can seek guidance from the Spirit to find the balance.”
Elder Won Yong Ko
Seoul, South Korea

“I hope every member lives with the eternal perspective that life does not end here, but it will last through eternity. When we are young, everything seems important, and it feels like we will never have a chance if we miss this one. If we have an eternal perspective and live faithfully, ‘the word of Christ, which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss … [will] carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise’ (Alma 37:44, 45). If we live with this perspective, we will be able to give more to our families, our coworkers, and our communities and become a person they want to be with.”

Yoshikazu Yokoyama
Tokyo, Japan

“I am still learning in my old age to ‘let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto hearers’ (Ephesians 4:29). If I had understood when I was young this great advice that Paul taught, I would not have hurt other people but would have been a comfort to my friends.”

Yasohachi Honda
Tokyo, Japan

“I wish I would have understood more about the privilege of being a student at BYU–Hawaii and a part of the fulfillment of the words uttered in 1955 by President David O. McKay: ‘One man said the world needs men who cannot be bought or sold, men who will scorn to violate truth, genuine gold. That is what this school is going to produce. More than that, they will be leaders! Leaders! Not only on this island, but everywhere. All the world is hungering for them. ... You mark that word, and from this school, I'll tell you, will go men and women whose influence will be felt for good towards the establishment of peace internationally.’ If I remember this in my daily life, I will be the peacemaker and man of character I strive to be.”

Choi Myeong Soon
South Korea

“I used to think happiness was measured by our possessions, but as I grew older, I came to know that our happiness is as big as the size of our love. I have especially learned that we can find the ultimate happiness when we lose ourselves in service to the Lord and others.”
Han In Ja  
Seoul, South Korea

“There are trials, tribulations, and difficulties waiting ahead. But have strong faith in Heavenly Father and press forward like Esther, the daughter of Israel. Set a goal and seek the right way to achieve that goal, strive continually, and endure to the end in the gospel. When we do so, Heavenly Father will always be with us, blessing us and helping us with His guidance.”

Lee Mi Duk  
Daegu, South Korea

“My father died in an accident and my mother was seriously injured when I was sophomore in high school. I thought nothing good would ever happen in my life. Forty years later, as I look back on my life, there were countless amazing and joyful events that I could not have imagined back then. If we don’t stray from the gospel, all the hardship that we face will make our lives more meaningful.”

Tetsuko Haneda  
Japan

“I wish I had understood more fully when I was younger that Heavenly Father loves me.”
Sione Moala Fineanganofo  
Tongatapu, Tonga  

“The need to budget my time wisely for education, work, pleasure, the PCC night show, my Church calling, and extracurricular activities was my greatest challenge. We Tongan boys would stay up all night making foods for wedding receptions. I was so tired and wanted to catch up on sleep that I missed church and didn’t partake of the sacrament.  

“There were times I missed work to complete my incomplete school assignments. Not until I was behind with my loan payment did I realize I needed to value work.  

“After being at CCH (now BYU–Hawaii) for over a year, I realized my mistakes. I knew if I didn’t change my ways, I wouldn’t accomplish my goals. I am so glad I did.  

“My counsel to you of younger generations is to make good use of your time.”

Samisone Uasil’a  
Nuku‘alofa, Tonga  

“I am so thankful to have been educated at BYU–Hawaii, and I now see how important this is in raising a family and being a parent. Being educated helps prepare us to live in the world today. My hope and vision for all students of BYU–Hawaii is to remain faithful, integrate spiritual and secular learning, and return home to build up His kingdom in your country.”

Aliitasi Talataina  
Apia, Samoa  

“I couldn’t understand why my mother had to wake us up at 4:00 every single day, light a kerosene lamp, and then have nine of us children read from the Bible, sing a religious song, and pray. Next everyone was assigned to do chores. After school we returned to hard work. I didn’t understand why we were taught not to repeat what other people said about others. I didn’t understand why we cooked big meals on Sunday but were sent to various homes with the food and then left with very little.  

“I wish I understood the divine principles behind all these practices when I was younger, for I would have expressed my sincere appreciation to my parents. Now that I am older, I have come to understand why. They truly loved me and they were actually preparing me to be a better parent than they were.”
Fei Ucunibaravi  
Suva, Fiji

“As a single parent to my six children, I wish I had learned to trust in Heavenly Father and to understand the Atonement of our Savior when I was younger so I could raise my children by teaching them through my actions how to exercise agency in righteousness. Fortunately, however, four of my children have families now, and I am grateful to see how they are bringing up their own children.”

Elder Keith P. Walker  
Queensland, Australia

“Knowing what I now know, I would certainly spend more time thinking about education and its future benefits. I would also think more about my divine identity and purpose in life.

“I would also take a different approach regarding teaching our children. I would be a lot more proactive to ensure that the home is the center of learning. This would totally change our overall parenting approach and how we implemented family scripture study, family prayers, and family home evening. I hope I could be a far better husband and father with an eternal understanding of Heavenly Father, His Son, and the plan for all of His children to be happy and return home to Him.”

Carl Maurer  
Queensland, Australia

“It is much easier to develop Christlike qualities when you are young. Learn good qualities early so that ‘natural man ways,’ which so easily become hard to change, will not define who you are. Develop patience for circumstances and for others while young. Don't lose hope early; life is a wonderful adventure and journey. Each day is a part of that. Don't be looking ahead to be happy in some future place. Have a happy time along the way.”

Robert Gordon  
Queensland, Australia

“I wish I had understood the generational power of a work ethic earlier. Those with less natural talent but a propensity to work hard do better in the long run. I admire a friend who turned up with his boys on a Saturday morning from time to time to help do my lawns. It was a kind gesture to me, but the value was really what he was teaching his boys about work. He didn't leave that to quorum service projects. You have to plan and work that plan for the best results.”
Sid Going
Northland, New Zealand

“I never fully appreciated my heritage when I was young. The men in my family have been hardworking farmers. My grandfather and grandmother Percy and Gertrude Going were the first to join the Church. They have set an example of putting the Lord first. I look back now and wish I had more fully appreciated their sacrifice. Remembering those sacrifices when I was younger would have helped me be more appreciative of my faithful parents and grandparents and would have helped me make better decisions along my path of life.”
Laura D. Amistad  
Cagayan, Philippines

“Early in my life, my grandparents would say, ‘Time is gold!’ I felt I had to make my time always profitable—to accomplish, to do something. As my strength of shoulder and limbs begins to fade, I know there are many things I can do better to prove myself to the Lord. But I do not have the luxury of time now. Had I known this earlier in my life, I could have started to make more wonderful, meaningful, and unforgettable memories rather than wasting my time chasing achievement.”

Modesto M. Amistad Jr.  
Cagayan, Philippines

“The happiest and saddest moments we experience in our lives are best shared with our family—the source of greatest comfort and peace. We are blessed to have goodly parents and siblings who really love us and know what is best for us. We owe our parents our lives. There is no place like a home adorned with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Carlos Revillo Sr.  
Santos City, Philippines

“Now that I am older, I wish that I had had more love, kindness, compassion, patience, persistence, and courage to share the message of the Restoration. I have become more mindful of my friends and relatives. They need to enjoy the blessings, as I have, of joy and peace in this life and the promised blessing of eternal life.”

Amparo Revillo  
Santos City, Philippines

“My father was an alcoholic, drinking almost every day. When he was drunk, he would beat my mother and my brothers. I never felt his love as a father and a provider for the family. I have learned from my mother that my father started acting that way when tragic events happened to our family. My eldest brother was innocently murdered. A few years later, another brother suffered the same fate. After that, my father became discouraged. He lived a lonely life and died miserably.  

“Now that I am older, I wish I would have known and understood more fully the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the principle of love and forgiveness. I now feel compassion for my father and have long ago forgiven him. I have had done the necessary temple work for my father to give him a chance to accept the gospel even after death. Because of the gospel and what I now know, I may still have the chance to experience my father’s love.”
Cesar A. Perez Jr.
Cebu, Philippines

“As a mission president, I had the opportunity to witness the transformation of many young people who started their mission shy and not sure of themselves and who slowly and surely developed into mature, confident, and good teachers and leaders. Many of these returned missionaries are now leaders in their respective stakes and districts. When I ask them how they have continued to be consistent contributors to the kingdom of God, their response refers to the doctrine, principles, and skills they learned during their mission. Had I earlier understood this principle of service, I feel I could have done more to motivate many young people to serve a mission and be blessed by their experience.”

Fe A. Perez
Cebu, Philippines

“When my husband and I started our marriage, I was new to the Church. Because my husband and I worked on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays were our only days together. But when my husband was employed with Seminaries and Institutes, his assignment sent him on Saturdays to another island for a meeting. A year later, he was called as our bishop, which meant Sunday meetings, interviews, and home teaching. What time was left for us, his growing family?

“At first, I suffered in silence. But realizing that I could not change the situation, I changed! I turned to God. He knew my circumstances. It is imperative to look to Him for direction, strength, and happiness. My abiding faith in Him became my anchor of courage to support my husband in every calling God gave him.”

Arsenio and Aida Pagaduan
Cabanatuan, Philippines

“Our conversion to the Church really changed our perspective and direction in life. Before we got married, we agreed to have three children. As we learned the teachings of our prophets, that agreement changed and we had seven children born in our family. Whenever we worried about the financial future and how all seven could go to college, we remembered that the Lord would provide.

“As we look back now, our seventh child has graduated cum laude from BYU–Hawaii, finished his doctorate degree, and is now a postdoctoral fellow. And he has been sealed to his wife. So our counsel is to really trust the Lord under any circumstance, to follow the counsel of our prophets, and to understand more fully the great importance of the temple ordinances.”
Edison M. Cabrito
Baguio, Philippines

“In 1975, missionaries came to visit us and taught us about family home evening. After that night, we never saw the missionaries again. Ten years after, in 1985, we were experiencing the greatest challenge of our life. It made my wife question, ‘Is there a God?’ After a week, missionaries again came to visit us and shared the lessons. We were baptized, amid the strong persecution from relatives. On my 31st birthday, I received the Melchizedek Priesthood. It was the greatest gift. Had I known about this priesthood when I was young, I would have searched for the missionaries myself.”

Florciele P. Cabrito
Baguio, Philippines

“A couple of years ago, our eldest daughter was diagnosed with cancer. In 45 days of being diagnosed, she passed away and left two handsome sons, who we are now blessed to be taking care of. Should we have experienced such great loss when I was younger, I would have felt pain, resentment, wondering, ‘Why is this happening to me?’ But my testimony of the blessing of the temple has become so much stronger. I have felt Heavenly Father’s arms around me and my family as we have gone through this trying time.”

Elder Manuel M. Agustin
Quezon City, Philippines

“Having been employed in technology and operations research for 37 years, I find that I could have accelerated my growth if I had developed the following skills earlier in my career:

• Human relations—especially as related to motivation of people. Qualities like empathy, open-mindedness, and discernment contribute significantly.
• Finances—a good understanding of finances broadens perspective.

“I find that these disciplines, especially if acquired early in life, are necessary not only for career improvement but also for enhancing Church service, family relations, and personal achievement.”

Bernadette Mari B. Agustin
Quezon City, Philippines

“I was able to give up working and be home when our three children were in grade school, and I tried my best to make up for time I had already lost. I am now a grandmother who understands more deeply the counsel of our prophets for mothers to care for and nourish their children. I wish I had had more courage, more faith to believe and follow this counsel. I wish that I had understood more fully the simple joys that can come from a baby, a wonderful gift from God. I see this joy now as our daughter, a college graduate and returned missionary, chooses to do online jobs so she can stay at home and take care of her baby. If we want to move from good to best in building a family, it is wise to heed the counsel of our prophets.”
Miguel R. Valdez  
Santa Rosa, Philippines  
“I wish I had acquired early in life some practical, home-based skills that I could have used in the beginning of our marriage. These skills would have converted our expenses into savings since I could have personally attended to repairs rather than hiring someone to do them for us.”

Soledad Estelita R. Valdez  
Santa Rosa, Philippines  
“The old saying ‘Time flies’ is very true. I wish I had realized it long before I got married. Making a to-do list has helped me evaluate my daily performance truthfully and honestly see what I have completed. When I use my time in the best way, I can be more useful to the Lord in my family, at church, and in the workplace.”

Benson Misalucha  
Baguio, Philippines  
“One thing I am more certain of is that we cannot be grateful enough to our Father in Heaven. I wish that I had counted my blessings more often, especially during the difficult times. I wish that when I was younger I had understood more that gratitude removes our blindness to all that is good in life. Often being grateful is the first step to all the virtues we need to develop as part of our mortal probation.”

Arleen Misalucha  
Baguio, Philippines  
“Reflecting on the years gone by, I often wonder if they would have been more wonderful had I known better how to find joy in the here and now. I realize that I was often so engrossed in the many tasks of a young mother that I sometimes missed wonderful opportunities to just sit back and play with our children, read with them, and relish the joys of growing with them through their tender years. How I wish I had known then that such moments are precious.”
William A. Hernaez  
Iloilo City, Philippines

“In our younger days it was common in our culture that children didn’t really have much choice on what course or career they should pursue. It was tempting for my wife and me to follow this culture and commit the same mistake—until we were taught and understood gospel culture and the value of exercising one’s agency. We realized that the right thing to do is for each of our six children to make the crucial decision of what he or she feels is worth pursuing in life. My hope is that our children too understand and will raise their own families in the gospel.”

Llywyllyn G. Hernaez  
Iloilo City, Philippines

“As a young convert in the Church, I thought I needed only to set secular goals to prepare me to have a brighter future. Gradually, however, I came to realize that I should develop and improve not only temporally but also spiritually. I was able to complete my academic studies, and after only two years of Church membership, I was able to serve a full-time mission and then marry in the temple and raise a family—which is the greatest thing I have achieved. As I have grown older, seeing things in their proper perspective has influenced my choices and priorities for good.”

Nenita R. Gapiz  
Pasay City, Philippines

“When I graduated from the university in 1957 with a degree in pharmacy, I was quick to congratulate myself for a job well done. But did I really do well? I was a mediocre student and didn’t study that much. As I look back, there are always nagging questions. Would I have been more successful had I exerted more effort? Could I have achieved more if I had pressed a little harder? Unfortunately, I do not know the answers. But knowing what I know now makes me wonder.”

Melanie R. Gapiz  
Pasay City, Philippines

“By talking to my young nephews and nieces, I know they cannot fully comprehend yet what life is all about because they haven’t lived long enough to learn what they need to learn. If I knew when I was their age what I know now about life and what really matters, I would probably have made fewer mistakes and wiser decisions. I would have understood that everything we do in our youth has a great effect on our older self. Yet being young is probably an excuse to make mistakes, and getting old lets us learn from them. The gospel teaches us that it is never too late as long as we try our best to make things right or better.”