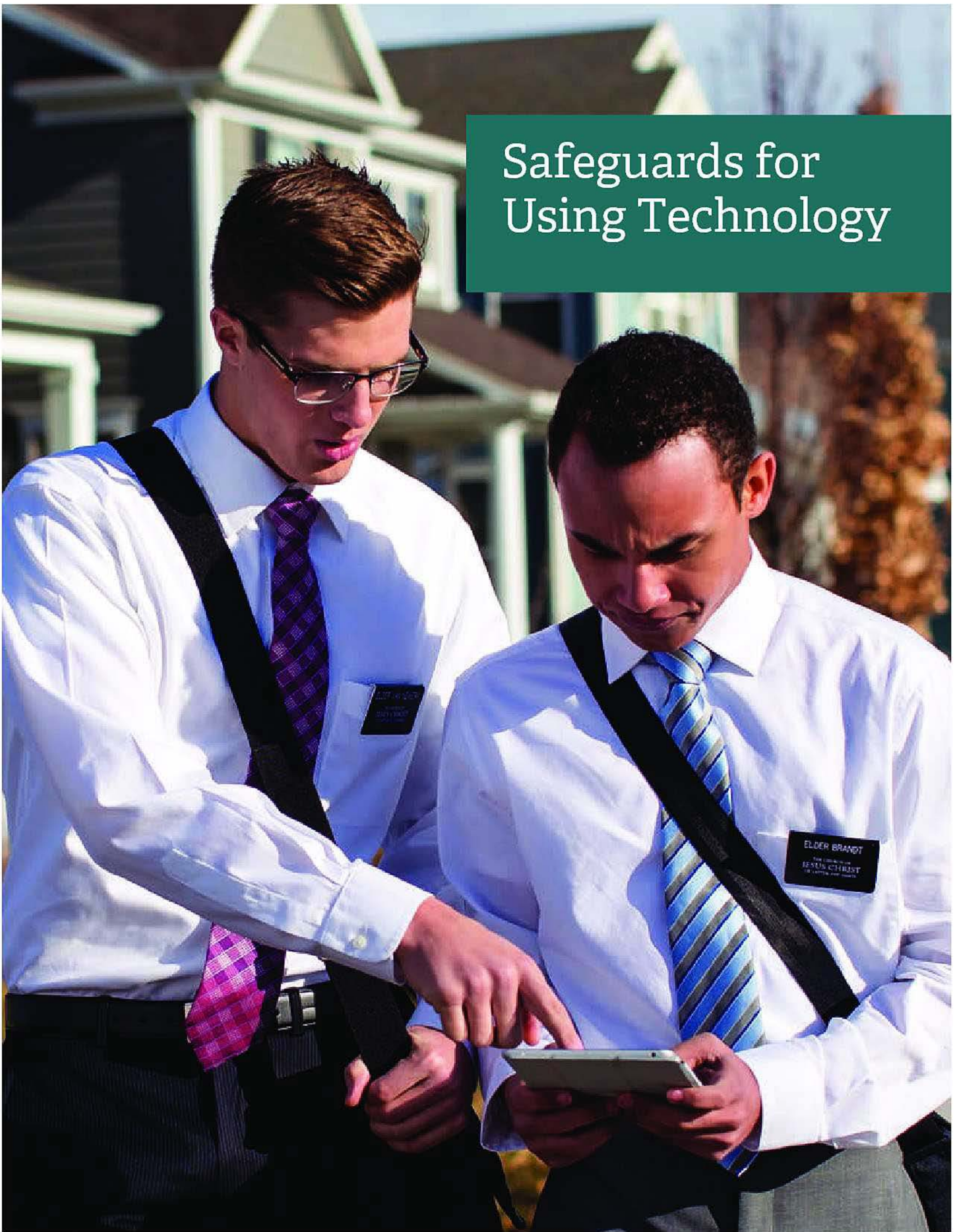


Safeguards for Using Technology

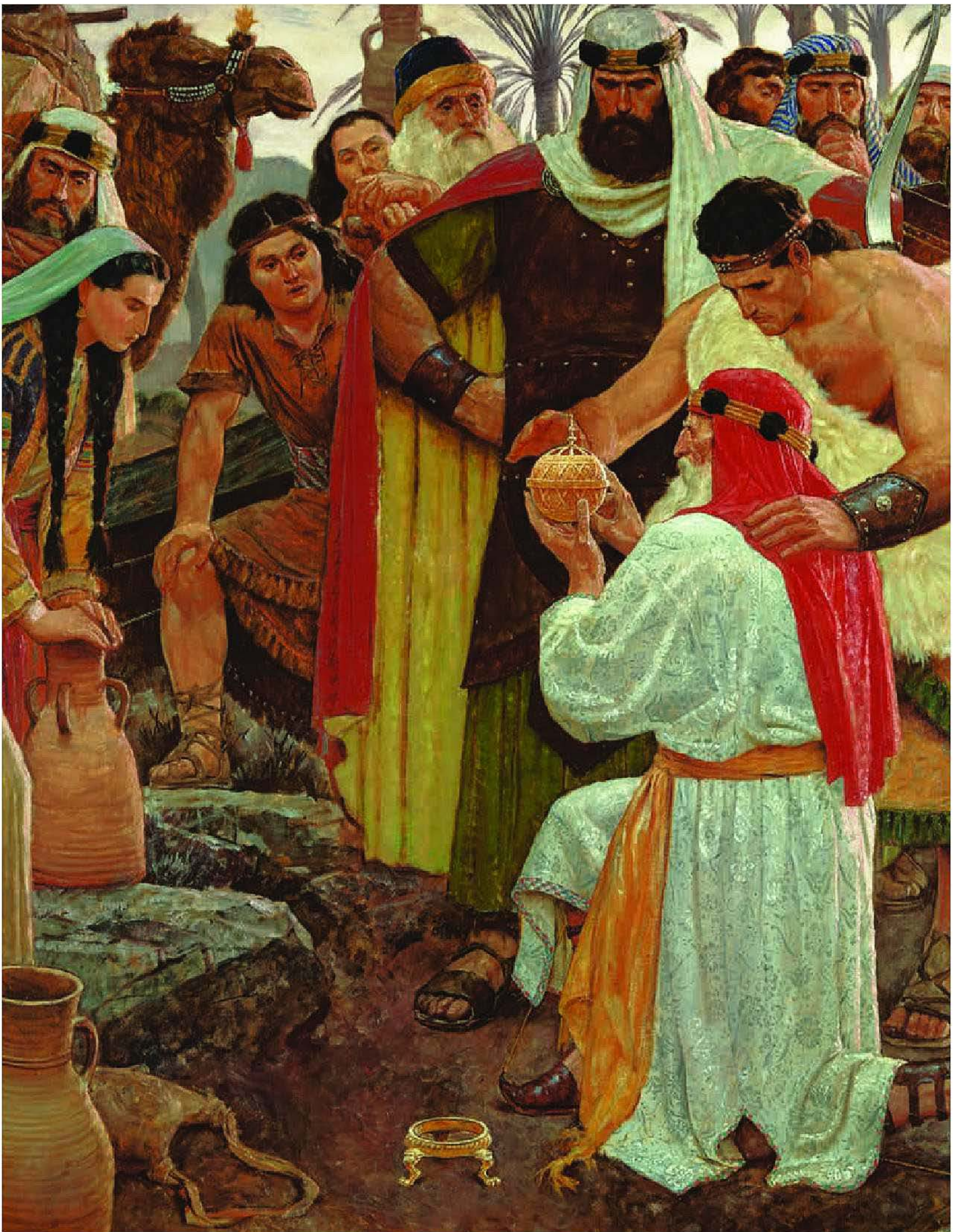


Safeguards for Using Technology



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As you learn to follow these safeguards instinctively, you will become a more effective instrument in the Lord's hands, and you will unlock the door to blessings in your life and in the lives of those you teach.





Introduction

Throughout history, God has used divine instruments to further His purposes. For example, the Urim and Thummim aided in the translation of God’s word, and the Liahona provided Lehi and his family with direction as they journeyed to the promised land. Concerning divine instruments in our day, President Spencer W. Kimball proclaimed, “I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse” (“When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10). Since President Kimball’s address, many technological instruments have been revealed to further the Lord’s purposes, and you are now able to utilize these tools in your work. Elder L. Tom Perry announced: “Missionaries are now authorized to use the Internet in their proselyting efforts. . . . Missionaries will use computers in meetinghouses and other Church facilities” (“Missionary Work in the Digital Age” [worldwide leadership training meeting, June 2013]; [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts)).

This technology you are now receiving is intended to help you in your service to the Lord as He hastens His work. While this technology is meant to do good, Satan strives to use this technology to promote evil and to frustrate the work of the Lord. It is essential that you learn to use these tools according to the purpose for which they were created—to further the work of salvation. This booklet contains



"The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan by which we can become what children of God are supposed to become. This spotless and perfected state will result from a steady succession of covenants, ordinances, and actions, an accumulation of right choices, and from continuing repentance" (Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 33).

safeguards that will help you use these tools appropriately to fulfill your missionary purpose and to further God's purpose of "bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

These safeguards will also open the door to inspired ways of using technology that will strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ and the faith of those you serve. They act like a lock on a temple door, keeping unholy things from entering your mind. Paul taught, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). These safeguards will protect you and help you avoid harmful information and experiences that are offensive to the Spirit, including inappropriate content such as pornography. They will also help you avoid wasting time on activities such as games, news, sports, videos, and inappropriate social media use. Applying these principles will increase your capacity to help others and will bless you throughout your life.

Learn to follow the safeguards instinctively. They will help you as you strive to become more Christlike. "The Savior has shown the way. He has set the perfect example, and He commands us to become as He is (see 3 Nephi 27:27)" (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 115). The choices you make regarding how you use technology should help you become more like the Savior. Rely on grace—the help or strength given through Christ's Atonement—as you seek to become an effective instrument in the Lord's hands.

Individually, with your companion, and with other missionaries, you will learn and commit to following these safeguards. You will also learn a process to help you when you are feeling vulnerable and susceptible. Revisit this information often. Study, ponder, and apply these principles until they become a normal part of the way you think and act.



Safeguards for Using Technology



Safeguard 1

Be in Tune with Spiritual Promptings

Nephi promises in 2 Nephi 32:5, “If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.” Righteously using your agency under the direction of the Holy Ghost will be your best means for doing good while using technology, and it will be your best protection against evil.

The apps provided on your mobile device have filters designed to protect you from inappropriate content. However, even the strongest filters cannot protect you 100 percent of the time. The best filter you have is your own will and desire to make righteous choices. Elder David F. Evans stated: “The only really effective filter for lifelong technology use is the individual heart and mind of the individual young person. . . . We have great faith that . . . thousands of [missionaries will] develop worthy lifelong digital habits, which will bless their lives and their families forever” (“Elder David F. Evans Discusses Expanded Missionary Efforts,” mormonnewsroom.org). Missionaries should take seriously the responsibility of continually striving to “purify [their] hearts” (D&C 88:74).

Your Heavenly Father has given you two very special and powerful gifts that will help you: your moral agency and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Lord stated His will: “that every [person] may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every [person] may be accountable for his [or her] own sins in the day of judgment” (D&C 101:78). President Boyd K. Packer taught, “No member of this Church—and that means each of you—will ever make a serious mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Holy Ghost” (“How to Survive in Enemy Territory,” *New Era*, Apr. 2012, 3).

“No member of this Church—and that means each of you—will ever make a serious mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Holy Ghost.”

President Boyd K. Packer



Along with your companion and other missionaries, prayerfully commit to:

- Follow the safeguards and process in this booklet.
- Pray daily for specific guidance on how to use this technology.
- Watch for and heed warning signs that come from the Holy Ghost (see *Preach My Gospel*, 96).
- Record in your journal promptings you receive about how to use technology to increase your effectiveness in missionary work.



Safeguard 2

Be Focused on Your Missionary Purpose

The Lord has said, “And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things” (D&C 88:67). To have your eye single to the glory of God means to have your focus completely on God’s purpose—which is also your purpose as a missionary.

Everything you do—including how you use these proselyting technologies—should be centered on your purpose, which is to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end” (*Preach My Gospel*, 1). Your desire to share the gospel will help you avoid becoming distracted.

Turn on your device only after your intention is clear. Before turning on your mobile device or computer or opening an app, determine with your companion what you will be doing. Consider the amount of time you will take and how these activities will lead to helping people exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent, make and keep covenants, feel and follow the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end. Follow your mission president’s guidelines regarding which digital activities are appropriate. Experience has shown that people are more likely to encounter inappropriate content on the Internet when they are casually surfing the web without a specific purpose in mind.

“And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.”

D&C 88:67



Along with your companion and other missionaries, prayerfully commit to:

- Ask yourself, before using any technology, how it will help people:
 - Exercise faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.
 - Repent.
 - Be baptized or prepare to receive other ordinances.
 - Feel and follow the Holy Ghost.
 - Endure to the end.
- Turn on your device only after your intention is clear. If you can't remember why you are using your device, stop what you are doing and review your plans.
- Use daily planning as a time to determine how you will use technology in proselyting and how your plan will help you reach your proselyting goals.
- Limit the use of technology when you are feeling bored, lonely, angry, anxious, stressed, or tired, or when you feel any other emotion that makes you vulnerable or susceptible.
- Select a background screen image that reminds you of your commitment to your purpose.



Safeguard 3

Be Disciplined

In 2 Nephi 2:26, Lehi teaches, “Because that they are redeemed from the fall [the children of men] have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon.” Use your agency to be disciplined and make righteous choices regarding how you use technology. Regarding the connection between agency and discipline, Elder D. Todd Christofferson has said, “Moral discipline is the consistent exercise of agency to choose the right because it is right, even when it is hard” (“Moral Discipline,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 105). Since discipline is strongly connected with agency, make a conscious effort to choose to be disciplined as you use mobile devices in your missionary work.

Develop the discipline to use your mobile device only when it is appropriate to do so. When you are talking face-to-face with people, do not check messages or answer calls. Take control of how you use these tools. Do not let them control you. You may know people who are addicted to their mobile devices. They seem oblivious to the social environment around them as they send and check text messages, engage in video games, or do other activities on their devices. As a missionary, do not become distracted by your mobile devices. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught: “Handheld devices, such as smartphones, are a blessing, but they can also distract us from hearing the ‘still, small voice.’ They need to be our servants, not our masters” (“Be Still, and Know That I Am God” [Church Educational System devotional, May 4, 2014]; lds.org/broadcasts).

“Handheld devices, such as smartphones, are a blessing, but they can also distract us from hearing the ‘still, small voice.’ They need to be our servants, not our masters.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard



Along with your companion and other missionaries, prayerfully commit to:

- Avoid checking or responding to digital messages while you are talking with someone face-to-face.
- Avoid using your device as an excuse to prevent talking to people in person.
- Avoid checking or sending messages during sacrament meetings, ward council, or missionary training meetings.
- Use settings and features on the device that allow you to minimize interruptions during meetings, appointments, and conversations.
- Use study and planning times to locate content for proselyting use.
- Set up and use social media according to the guidelines in Missionary Work in the Digital Age.



Safeguard 4

Be One

The Lord has said, “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). Help your mission develop a culture of unity, obedience, compassion, caring, vigilance, and accountability so that you can all strengthen, encourage, and support one another. All missionaries should be encouraged to follow these safeguards and should feel comfortable asking for help when needed. Developing this culture of trust will help you and other missionaries avoid isolation, build and strengthen righteous habits, and protect one another from temptation.

As you strive to build righteous habits, seek help from other missionaries and prepare to help missionaries around you. As a companionship and as a district, be one in protecting and strengthening one other: “And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106). Also remember to be one with the Lord and to rely on Him in all of your efforts to follow the safeguards.

Talk with your companion and members of your district if you are unsure about whether or not you are misusing technology. If you feel tempted for any reason, ask your companion or mission leader for help. Remember, nearly all challenges associated with the Internet or with pornography happen in isolation. Therefore, you must never use your device when you are alone. This guideline includes not taking your device with you into the bathroom and not using your device while your companion is in the bathroom. Allowing your companion and other missionaries to help you be aware of where you may need help is a healthy approach and an expression of love.

“And if any man among
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let him take with him
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he may be edified in all
meekness, that he may
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D&C 84:106

Because these interactions between missionaries may be uncomfortable or difficult, remember the following principles as you seek to help other missionaries or seek help from other missionaries:

- “Companions . . . strengthen each other in times of difficulty. They can provide protection from physical danger, false charges, and temptation. Love and respect your companions” (*Missionary Handbook*, 30).
- Always assume the best intentions. For example, if your companion is not following one of the safeguards, assume that he or she does not realize it. Do not assume that he or she is knowingly disobeying the rules.



Work together in unity as a companionship whenever you use your mobile devices.

- Do not discuss your past transgressions with other missionaries. Reaching out to others for help does not mean sharing experiences from your past or explaining why you may be vulnerable. Speak with the mission president privately if you have questions about worthiness. Remember, “Your loyalty is first to the Lord, then to your mission president, then to your companion” (*Missionary Handbook* [2006], 32).
- If you do learn or witness something personal about another missionary, always keep confidences and do not gossip about that missionary with others. Simply express love and support to the struggling missionary, and do not ask prying questions. “All missionaries—especially [mission leaders] and those in the [mission] office—must maintain confidentiality by not talking to others about private matters” (*Mission President’s Handbook* [2006], 20).

- If it appears that some missionaries are not following the safeguards, approach them in a way that is non-threatening and non-judgmental. In a warm and understanding way, ask questions such as, “Can you help me understand why you did that?” Then make a plan together. Ask, “What do you think we should do?” and “How can we help each other?”
- Follow the process on page 15 of this guide: (1) be aware and acknowledge, (2) choose to act, and (3) learn and improve.
- If a missionary struggles to follow these safeguards, involve the mission president or another appropriate mission leader. Seek counsel on how you can best help the struggling missionary.
- Missionaries who are struggling with misusing technology usually already know that what they are doing is wrong. When they reach out for help, they need to feel compassion, support, and love, not shame or guilt. React calmly, and always seek the Spirit’s guidance.
- Work with your companion and district to agree on ways to support one another. If you find that your habits are slipping, talk with your companion or a mission leader. With their help you can:
 - Make a new plan.
 - Set additional safeguards.
 - Ask them to help you be accountable.
 - Evaluate any circumstances that you should change to help you stay focused on your purpose.

Remember, the Lord has confidence in you and in each missionary He has called. He has provided companions and leaders to protect and support you. He knows the challenges you face, and He is prepared to help you as you assist Him in this great work. Being one as missionaries will not only lift the work; it will prepare you for family and Church responsibilities following your mission.



Along with your companion and other missionaries, prayerfully commit to:

- Ensure that you can see your companion's screen at all times.
- Have your companion review all posts, comments, and messages before you send them. (This does not apply to letters to the president or emails home.)
- Participate as a companionship in all social media teaching events, including emails, texts, Facebook messages, Skype, and FaceTime.
- Invite mission leaders to regularly review how you are using proselyting technology.



What Should I Do If I'm Feeling Vulnerable or Susceptible?

1

Be aware and acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Understand how they can make you more vulnerable to misusing technology.

2

Choose to act. Respond in righteous, productive ways to what you are feeling.

3

Learn and improve. Use your experiences to continue learning and improving for the future.

Learning to live the safeguards is not as simple as saying you will do it; it requires effort and practice. Even after the safeguards have become a natural part of how you think and act, you will have times when you may feel vulnerable or susceptible. Perhaps you developed poor technology habits before your mission that have been difficult to overcome. Some missionaries struggled with pornography prior to their call and may be tempted to fall back into former patterns of behavior. Whatever the situation may be, the process above will help you adjust to living the safeguards and fortify yourself against temptation. Remember that you do not have to overcome challenges on your own. Rely on the strength that comes through Christ's Atonement as you strive to live the safeguards and overcome personal weakness.



1. Be Aware and Acknowledge

In order for you to learn to live these safeguards instinctively, you need to be aware of when your thoughts or actions are not in harmony with these guidelines. You also need to be aware of when you are feeling something that can make you more vulnerable. For example, being bored, lonely, angry, anxious, afraid, stressed, hungry, or tired can make it more difficult to use technology wisely. Being aware of these conditions and emotions will allow you to respond to what you are feeling in a positive and constructive way. King Benjamin taught, “If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your



deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:30).

All missionaries experience weaknesses and feelings of vulnerability. Instead of hiding or ignoring these feelings, honestly acknowledge them in order to help yourself choose a better response and overcome temptation. Admit to yourself what you are feeling, and determine if there is a specific event or circumstance that you may be reacting to. Be open with your companion and other trusted missionaries so they can help you be aware of what you are feeling and how it is impacting you. In your prayers, be open with Heavenly Father about what you are feeling so He can help you and give you strength to overcome temptation through Christ's Atonement.

Honestly acknowledge feelings of vulnerability in order to help yourself choose a better response and overcome temptation.





2. Choose to Act

Once you are aware that you are feeling vulnerable or that you are not following one of the safeguards, decide what you will do to follow the safeguard, and then choose to act on that plan. Write down what specific actions you will take to follow the safeguards and reduce feelings of vulnerability and susceptibility.

If you feel tempted to seek inappropriate content through the Internet or act in any way contrary to these safeguards, you can take several actions that will help you cope with these emotions. Apply the actions that work best for you. The following are suggestions you might consider using:

- Pray for strength and protection against temptation. Tell Heavenly Father how you feel.
- Share, explain, and talk through your feelings with your companion, district leader, zone leader, or sister training leader. Remember, “Do not counsel [with] missionaries of the opposite sex, even if [they] are serving in a leadership position. Such talk can lead to inappropriate feelings and relationships” (*Missionary Handbook*, 34).
- Get up and move. Go for a walk with your companion, or go exercise.
- Recite a scripture or sing a hymn that will help you focus on the Savior.
- Stop what you are doing, close your eyes, and take deep breaths to the count of four. Do this for a few minutes. Don’t return to your online activity until you have remembered your purpose and are relaxed and focused again.
- Evaluate your physical state. Do you need water, a snack, or some rest? Address your needs.
- Recall in detail a spiritual experience or a beautiful scene that could help you take a mental break for a minute or two.

- List five things you are grateful for.
- Take five minutes and write in your journal what you are feeling.

Review *Adjusting to Missionary Life* for additional ideas on managing emotions of vulnerability, and add relevant ideas to your plan. Also refer to the online course “Safeguards for Using Technology” as you create a plan. Share this plan with your companion, mission leaders, and mission president.

Follow your established personal plan when you begin feeling vulnerable or susceptible.





3. Learn and Improve

As you work to follow the safeguards, learn from your experience. To learn and improve is to repent, which brings you closer to Christ as you apply His Atonement. As you turn to Him, He will help you improve. He has promised, “If [my children] come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. . . . My grace is sufficient for all [those] that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27). God will help you learn from and improve on your previous mistakes so that you gain strength over your weaknesses. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, God forgives and forgets those past mistakes.



When you find yourself being tempted to misuse technology, you can learn from your experience by paying attention to the choices you make and the results that come from them. Record your experiences and feelings in your journal. Learn to recognize patterns in your thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that make it difficult for you to use technology righteously. You can avoid temptation by avoiding these patterns. For example, you may find yourself more likely to get

distracted on your device when you don't have meaningful and specific plans for the day. By choosing to always plan meaningful activities, you are less likely to be distracted on your device.

Companions and mission leaders will also help you learn and improve. Remember, while the adversary uses secrecy and isolation to lead people into darkness, the Lord encourages us to seek light through honesty and truth. Building strong, righteous relationships with your companions and district members is one of your best protections and allows you to form a culture of righteous and purposeful behavior.

By choosing to always plan meaningful activities, you are less likely to be distracted on your device.



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