

“You Are Not Alone”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Dear brothers and sisters, I am very pleased to be with you today. By and through wonders of technology, I can feel your closeness as a group and as individuals. I am deeply impressed when I think of you, a group of more than 65,000 students taking part in BYU-Pathway and living in over 180 countries throughout the world.

Sixty-three percent of you live outside the United States. You come from many nations, communities, and cultures. Most of you are feeling your way through the obstacles of daily life and trying to find your place in the world. Many of you desire to improve your life’s situation by gaining more and better education.

Like, for any of us, getting through each day is a challenge. You even might have physical, emotional, or spiritual challenges that press upon you almost every day.

Many of you are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We thank you for your faith and commitment to follow Jesus Christ and walk the path of discipleship. Thank you for your leadership and dedication to the work. Thank you for your desire to bless the lives of others. I especially want to recognize those who have served full-time missions for the Church. Thank you for your sacrifice and service.

For those who are not members of this Church, please know that we welcome you and embrace you as our brothers and sisters. You are fellow pilgrims embarking on this wonderful journey of improving our own lives and the lives of others. We are grateful for you. You enrich our lives.

A personal story

Many of you know that I love aviation and that I have flown all kinds and types of airplanes around the globe for many years. But let me share with you an important part of my story.

By the time I was 11, I had been a refugee twice. My family had been forced to abandon our home and seek refuge in different lands. As a child, I remember playing in the bomb craters of a city ravaged by war and wearing worn and ill-fitting clothes that others perhaps considered as not especially fashionable. Since we came from different areas, others my age sometimes ridiculed me because of my accent and made fun of me because I didn’t fit in.

Because of having to start over so often, my family sometimes lived in very humble circumstances. I remember once living in the corner of an attic. I can still remember the sound of mice padding all around me as I tried to sleep at night.

Every member of my family contributed to our efforts to survive. My mother opened a business to do other people’s laundry. I was the in-person pickup and delivery service. That was my job as a child. My delivery vehicle was my bike with a cart attached that I rode through the streets of our small town after coming home from school.

Therefore, my dear friends, to a small extent, I can understand the hardships many of you are enduring. And you need to know that all this changed my life for the better because of the blessings of the gospel and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I want you also to know that I deeply care about you. I weep with you. I rejoice with you. I feel with you. I love you. I want you also to know that you are not alone. Your Heavenly Father knows you. He hears your prayers. He is

aware of your every tear. He loves you with infinite love and watches over you. Even when you might feel you are alone, you are not, because He is always there.

One way He extends His arm of compassion to you is through this wonderful BYU-Pathway program that offers support and resources designed to help you as you walk the often-challenging path that leads to a better way of life.

Onto new horizons

It is no accident that I am speaking to you in front of these miraculous machines that have the capacity of defying gravity, climbing higher and higher, and soaring on to new horizons.

When I was a young man wondering what path I should take, I found myself at the outskirts of the Frankfurt Airport in Germany, watching airplanes take off and land with amazing grace and precision. How I wanted to sit in the cockpit of one of those beautiful flying machines! I knew that the fulfillment of such a dream would not come easily. I would have to commit myself to dedicated and hard work beyond my perceived capacity. I would have to spend long hours, day and night, learning and engaging myself, which appeared almost beyond my abilities.

But first, I needed to learn English. That was a language my tongue, somehow, was not designed to speak! How would that ever be possible?

But because my dream was so compelling, these things stopped being obligations — instead, they became opportunities! Yes, they were difficult. Yes, at times the effort seemed too hard, and I wanted to quit. But I knew if I pressed on, if I gave it my all, the Lord would help me. I learned of the reality of the scriptural promises “If God be for us, [what] can be against us?”¹ and “For with God nothing [is] impossible.”² I know many of you feel the same.

You are not alone

I wish I could sit down with each of you — just you and I, just one on one — and have this conversation. I would want to know everything about you: how you started, where you are headed, and what challenges you are facing. Perhaps we would laugh and cry together.

But, during our conversation, I would repeat what I have said before: You are not alone, never ever. Remember, Jesus Christ is your strength. He loves you. He stands with you. He is there. And we are with you too. We love you. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints loves you enough to extend these precious resources to you and encourage you as you continue your exciting journey through life. The Lord wants you to succeed! We want you to succeed. We rejoice with you as you reach your goals. There are compassionate and gifted men and women — most of whom you might never meet — who are committed to helping you reach your goals. They are on the sidelines, cheering your every effort.

Like one of those beautiful airplanes, you can defy the gravity of your circumstances and the weight of the challenges of your life and lift off and fly on to new horizons.

For those who are wondering if [BYU-Pathway] is really for you, I urge you: please begin. Just do it! The education you receive will lead to certificates and degrees in areas of great demand for people with training. Seventy-two percent of [BYU-Pathway] students are employed after finishing their first certificate. Those improvements compound as you continue your education.

¹ [Romans 8:31](#)

² [Luke 1:37](#)

To those wondering if they can make it through the program, I say stay with it. The reward of long-term blessings often comes at the price of short-term dedication, commitment, and hard work. You can do this. You are not alone.

I pray you will embrace this rare opportunity and begin the journey to discover your marvelous destiny. Your dreams can become a reality as you trust the Lord and allow BYU-Pathway to guide and help you. Each of you is a child of God, and Heavenly Father wants you to become your best self during this life and into the eternities. Remember, He loves you. As you move forward and upward, you will bless your own life and the lives of countless others in turn.

I bear witness of these truths and give you my blessing as an Apostle of the Lord — indeed, gratitude and love for you — and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.