

Leveling Up

Our Righteousness in The Latter Days

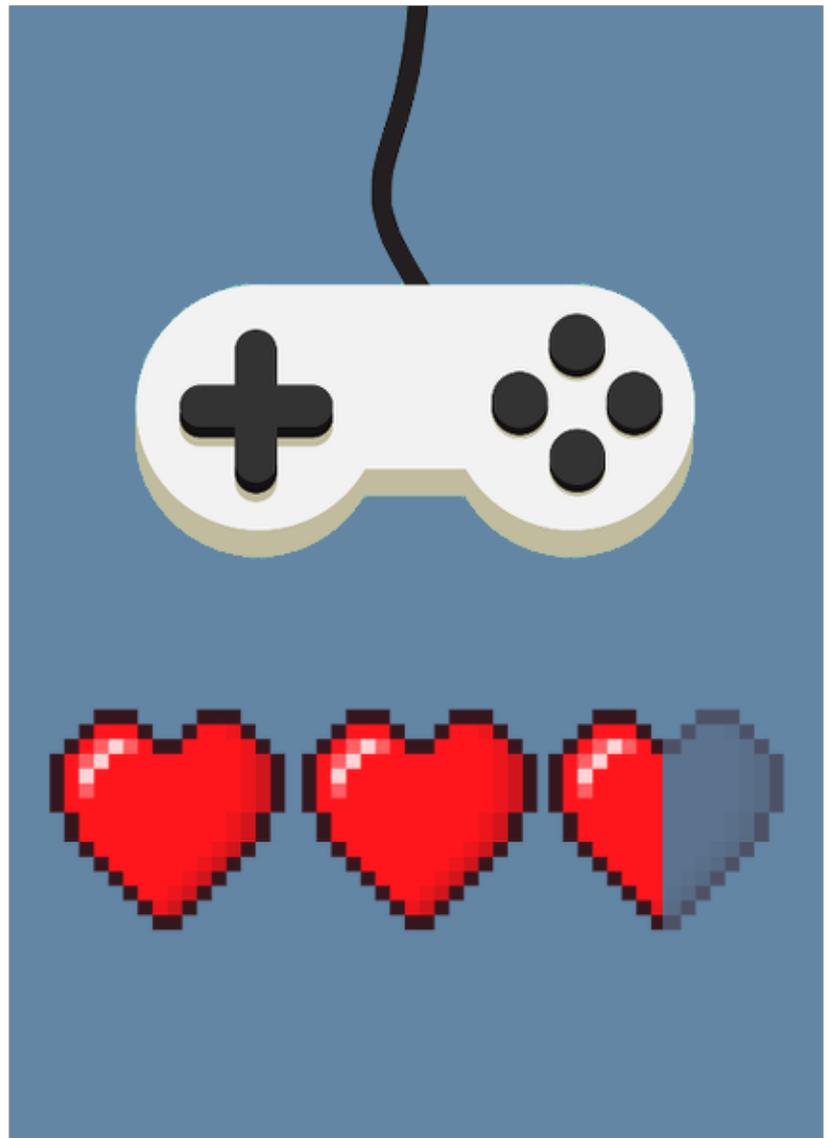
By Bro. Brandon Dulisse

Have you ever been playing a video game when you finally get to the boss level, only to then fall comically short and having to see the “game over” screen over and over? Then, after the load screen, a side-character comes up to you and says, “Maybe you should try leveling up before continuing?” Although the situation is a bit amusing, the reality sets in that you are *not at all* prepared for the next battle and if you’re like me, the next ten hours consist of hard work while gaining the experience and skills that you need to level up. The difference is though, that in real life we don’t have infinite lives or attempts to pass trials. Whether you feel completely unprepared or ready to take on the challenge, God has provided a way to prepare ourselves in the present when we are going into a real-life “boss battle”.

Personally, a lack of preparation in the past has been a struggle for me. While I have always felt strong about God’s plan, there have been days when I knew that I could have done more, or more importantly *less*, especially when it came to things of the world. This complacency was comfortable in the short term but left me unprepared, especially as I ran into the battles of life and many times was forced to retreat, wounded and confused as to why I wasn’t getting closer to God. Whether it was in a relationship, experiences in college, finding a job, or knowing where I should live, I went about my life with God, but without the greater things that He has laid up for me.

The Lord says in the scriptures that “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater* works than these shall he do” (John 14:12) and also “Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief” (Ether 4:13). The Lord is waiting on *us* to rise to the occasion and be the people He has called

us to be so that He can give us the tools to “level up” and be prepared for anything that comes our way! It’s also pretty fitting that our preparation includes armor and even a sword, to really prepare us for battle.



So what are some ways that we can gain experience with the help of the Lord to be prepared?

1. Gain EXP through the testimony of a spiritual mentor.

Our church is full of brothers and sisters who have gone through many of the same battles you or I are facing today. Not only that, I'm sure they have a strong testimony that may help us understand how to get through the battle we're going through.

2. Create an unshakeable Foundation through the study of scripture.

Find some friends that want to do scripture discussion or a scripture "challenge" and commit yourself to reading and discussing a certain portion of scripture daily or weekly.

3. Don't stray from the narrow path and get lost in the weeds.

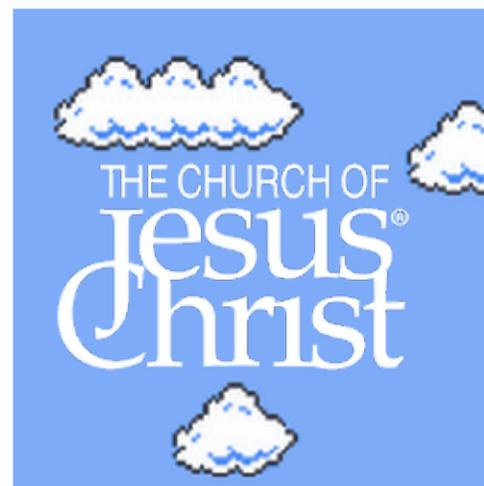
Distractions and temptations push us to places that take time away from our preparation and can set us back with guilt, shame, or confusion. Stay on the path of righteousness by keeping busy with the things of God and making sure we are committed to things of God.

4. Put on the full armor of God.

Ephesians 6:10-18 states that in order to withstand evil we must have:

- Loins (clothed) in truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Feet have the Gospel of peace
- Shield of faith
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of the Word of God
- Prayers in the Spirit

We hear or see that the world is getting more wicked, that the devil is becoming more bold, and the condition of the world is worse than it has ever been. We live in the latter days and sometimes it can seem like the only way to view our future is through a glass half-empty. Fortunately for us, not only has God given us the tools, He has given us the opportunity to be part of the greatest undertaking the world has ever known: the commission of the Church of Jesus Christ! The weight of this work may seem too heavy, but God has called each and every one of us knowing completely that with His help and training, we can do what we have been called to do and "level up" in righteousness!



Are you prepared to complete the four quests listed in the article to complete the challenge? We hope so! But we'd like to add a little something extra to item #1: "Gain EXP through the testimony of a spiritual mentor."

We cannot stress how critical this is to your journey, and we encourage you to find one in your own branch or across the country, as GMBA campout is coming up, and what better place to find a mentor than there? Find a mentor who you have respect for and crave their advice, someone that you really do want to talk to. It's important to recognize that the church is a social body, one heavily built on fellowship and the reliance between brothers and sisters. Those that sit around you every Sunday are there for more than just to say "hello" to in the mornings!

So take some time to get to know those in your own branch and in the rest of the church, we guarantee that you will find a mentor and the experience will enrich your life!