

Duty to God and

As the following stories show, great things can happen when parents and youth work together on Duty to God and Personal Progress.

Duty to God with Dad

By Paul VanDenBerghe
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Aleks Miller and his father, Chris, work together on Duty to God every Sunday.

After learning about the new *Duty to God* booklet in a special fireside last year, Aleks Miller—deacons quorum president of the North Shore Ward, Vancouver British Columbia Stake—was eager to get started. He and his father set up a schedule to meet each Sunday to work on a section of the booklet together.

“My dad and I, every week, sit down and look through a section of the book,” says Aleks. “We start with a prayer and then we study a section. We read the scriptures, answer the questions in the section, and then write down how we can implement what we’ve learned into our lives.”

Aleks often shares with his mother what he and his father are working on. “I talked with my mom about the sacrament and the meaning of the prayers and wrote down some ideas about how I as a deacon could help make the sacrament more meaningful for her,” he says.

After only a few weeks of these Duty-to-God-with-Dad meetings, Aleks noticed it was making a difference in his life. “It makes me feel really good,” he says. Sitting down with his father is not always the first thing Aleks wants to do on a Sunday afternoon, “but when we start learning and reading together I’m a lot happier and I feel better about doing it,” he says.

Aleks has set new goals and is gaining a greater understanding of the gospel as he studies and learns with his father. “One of the sections in *Duty to God* suggested we study a few topics in *For the Strength of Youth* and then write down a goal for each one so that we can do better,” explains Aleks. “I chose honesty. So one of my goals was to let my parents know when I do something wrong instead of just keeping it to myself.”

Another topic Aleks chose was education. “My goal was to go an entire month in school with no messing around in class and finishing all my work so I wouldn’t have any homework,” he says. “It’s going pretty well, and now I have a lot of extra time.”

Now Aleks is encouraging all the deacons in his quorum to work on fulfilling their Duty to God. And he offers the same advice to anyone else who is thinking about opening the booklet and getting down to work: “Just do it,” he says. “If you can’t seem to get started on your own, do like I do, and ask your dad to do it with you.” ■

Personal Progress

Helping Daughters with Personal Progress

By Melissa Merrill
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Annette Barnes helps her daughters Lisa and Katie set meaningful goals for Personal Progress.

Annette Barnes of Georgia, USA, didn't always love Personal Progress. Although her first two daughters, Christie and Lori, both earned their Young Women medallions, Annette saw the program as just another project in her teens' already-too-full schedules.

That changed when Annette decided to complete Personal Progress herself so that she could better support her youngest daughters as they participated. She worked alongside Lisa, now 17, for three and a half years. While mothers should not feel obligated to participate in Personal Progress with their daughters, Annette says doing so showed her how the program could strengthen her daughters.

Today, Annette serves as the Young Women president in her ward and is working with her youngest daughter, Katie, 14, in completing Personal Progress.

The Barneses commit time on Sunday afternoons to the program. "Progress doesn't always require big chunks of time," Annette says. "We just need to be consistent."

Annette recalls that in an effort to jump-start one of her daughters on a particular value, she gave her an assignment, to which her daughter reluctantly agreed. Even though her daughter knew Annette was just trying to help, the experience, Annette says, wasn't as positive as it might have been.

"I've learned that it's better to give my daughters lots of ideas and then step back and let them choose. It's best to explore ideas together and then let this be theirs—their *Personal Progress*."

Annette has found that Personal Progress is a setting in which she can share her testimony with her children. "There are little moments when you're talking—when they come to you and ask you to sign something so they can pass off a goal—that you can ask, 'What did you learn?'" says Annette. "Sometimes I listen and then simply tell them 'That's great' and let them go on their way. But other times there's a chance to tell them about a similar experience I had or a different principle I learned from doing the same goal. Personal Progress regularly provides little moments like that to bear testimony in informal ways."

Annette attributes those moments to her decision to become more involved with the program. She says, "I know someday I will be released as the Young Women president, but I will never be released as a parent. I will be able to see the benefits of Personal Progress in my daughters' lives, not only for them but for my grandchildren as well. And that is an exciting, heartwarming prospect.

"Personal Progress really does change lives. I know because it has changed ours." ■

For more information on this topic, see the following articles:

- Henry B. Eyring, "Help Them on Their Way Home," *Ensign*, May 2010, 22–25
- Robert D. Hales, "Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation," *Ensign*, May 2010, 95–98
- Mary N. Cook, "Never, Never, Never Give Up!," *Ensign*, May 2010, 117–19