

THE ANSWER IN VERSE EIGHT

*Joseph Smith found his answer in James 1:5.
I found mine a few verses later.*

By Angelica Nelson

It was 11:00 at night, and I was in my bedroom after being out with a few high school friends. I knew I hadn't made the best decisions that night. "But," I reasoned, "I hadn't made the worst ones either."

Frustrated, I picked up a homework assignment. I was so tired that I just wanted to get it over with and go to bed. "I still need to read my scriptures. But I'll just skip them tonight," I thought.

I began thinking of everything I was expected to do. Read my scriptures, attend early-morning seminary, attend church and Mutual, get good grades, be involved in extracurricular activities, have a part-time job . . . The list went on.

I felt so much pressure in every area of my life, especially as the only female Latter-day Saint in my high school. I reminded myself again and again that I might be the only female Latter-day Saint my peers ever met, so I had to be a good example. Yet I knew I was starting to slip.

"I wish I could be carefree like my friends," I thought. I also wished I didn't

feel so awful when I went to a party or said a bad word, but the truth was I did. It made me feel physically sick when I made choices I knew weren't the right ones. For some reason, though, I continued to make them.

It was almost midnight when I finished my homework assignment. In five hours my alarm clock would be beeping. I would wake up, drag myself to seminary, and try to get through another day of high school.

Then it dawned on me. I didn't have to obey all the rules. I could stop attending church, seminary, and Mutual if I wanted to. Just because my family went, it didn't mean I had to.

It was such a liberating thought. I crawled into bed and was almost asleep when I had a strong impression to read the scriptures. "No," I thought. "I'm done."

Again I felt it. This time I thought, "Maybe just one last time."

In seminary that year, we had been studying the New Testament. I turned to where my marker was in James chapter 1. This was the chapter Joseph

Smith had read that inspired him to go to the Sacred Grove and pour out his heart to Heavenly Father. "How ironic," I thought. I started reading.

Verse 5 was familiar to me: "If any of you lack wisdom . . ." But it was verse 8 that opened my eyes that night. It said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." I froze. Then I reread it.

I was being double-minded. I claimed to be a Latter-day Saint, but my actions were beginning to say otherwise. And if I continued, no matter what path I chose, I would be unstable and unsure and thus very unhappy.

I needed to know if the gospel was true. I needed to know if getting up every morning at 5:00 a.m. to study the gospel was worth it. I needed to know that I was trying to live my life to the best of my ability, despite at times being ridiculed, because it truly would bring me the most happiness and joy.

It was almost 1:00 in the morning then, but I knelt beside my bed and poured out my heart to my Father in Heaven. I asked Him to help me know what was right, to know which path to



take, to lead me by the hand and take away the confusion I was feeling.

Simply, clearly, and peacefully, the thought came to my mind, "You already know." And I did.

I got off my knees, shut off my light, and went to sleep. Four hours later my alarm went off. Sleepily, I shut it off. A minute later I was up getting ready for another day, early-morning seminary included.

It has been years since that wonderful midnight experience. My testimony still continues to grow. Sometimes it is stronger than at other times. The difference is I know and I have never once looked back. ■