


# IT STARTED *with* STANDARDS

By Danielle Stockton



**T**hroughout my life, even before joining the Church, I always tried to hold high standards, and above all I wanted to keep my integrity pure and stay true to myself. As a teenager, I often felt alone and disillusioned by the fact that I seemed to be part of a small minority who strove for purity and high moral standards.

For instance, when I did not reciprocate the interest some boys showed me, some people I knew were dismayed. They told me I should have gone on a date with those boys simply to be able to tell people I was dating someone. (Of course, it was understood that “dating” meant something much more serious than going out for ice cream.) Regarding one boy, a girl I knew said, “He’s a drummer and looks like a surfer, so

why wouldn’t you want to date him?” These arguments didn’t resonate with me, and I withstood these temptations. I do not regret my decisions, but it was often a difficult and lonely path.

However, in some respects, I treasure these experiences, because they caused me to inquire into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to find others with standards that were aligned with mine.

I was somewhat familiar with the Church and its teachings because my family had met with missionaries when I was six years old. Ten years later, during the time I was struggling with my peers’



*Joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was by far the most rewarding spiritual journey of my life.*



challenges to my personal standards, my mother happened to go to [mormon.org](http://mormon.org) and ask for the missionaries to visit again. I decided I needed to look into the Church again, too.

I appreciated how the members and missionaries were so welcoming and willing to answer my questions, such as why the Holy Ghost is a gift and how families can be sealed for eternity. And when I learned about basic aspects of the Church, such as the fact that we were all spirit children of God and that there are modern-day prophets, through my prayers the Spirit revealed to me that the teachings are true.

When I first attended a Latter-day Saint ward, I felt a sensation of joy and pure energy I had never experienced before. Peace and contentment flowed through me as I soaked in the loving atmosphere and listened to heartfelt testimonies. Everyone radiated happiness, and their giving spirits touched me. I later found out that these feelings came from the Holy Ghost.



However, the first time I strongly felt the Holy Ghost's guidance was when I was reading the pamphlet titled *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. I could identify somewhat with Joseph Smith's confusion, and I saw pure truth in the statement: "They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).




Joseph's story penetrated so deeply into my core that I felt a burning sensation in my chest and began to cry. At that moment, I knew with all my heart that this is the one true Church. After reading the pamphlet, I told my mother, "I know it is true. I am ready now."

Ultimately, my experience with the Joseph Smith pamphlet was the catalyst for my baptism and confirmation—and much more. My mother and I were baptized in March 2009, my father was baptized two months later, and we were all sealed in the temple just over a year later. Every day, I am grateful that I converted to the Church. The Holy Ghost has been a constant, loving companion to me, and He has influenced my life in both major and more mundane ways, as well as in ways I was not even aware of at the time.

In fact, I once received a strong impression from the Holy Ghost that a friend needed comfort, so I spent more time with her and gave her short notes telling her how much she meant to me. A couple of days later, she found out that she had been rejected from the college she had applied to, and I was better able to comfort her in her disappointment.

I now live surrounded by people with high standards who share my views about the true importance of loving relationships, and I look forward to one day being married in the temple and sealed for eternity. Converting to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has enhanced and given new meaning to my life. I keep the Joseph Smith pamphlet with me even today, because every time I read it, I am filled with joy about God's gift of truth to me. **NE**



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