

UNDERCOVER JUDGE

While competing in a national beauty pageant a few years ago, I saw how much the gospel helps me in many aspects of my life. During the pageant, I refrained from negative talking or backbiting. I knew that everyone there was a child of Heavenly Father and that participating in such activities would not be uplifting.



LESSONS FROM DUTY TO GOD

After a few weeks, the other contestants and I found out that there was an undercover judge—our makeup artist. She had always been in the dressing rooms and at photo shoots and appearances, and she heard everything we were saying. Some girls worried the judge had heard the bad things that they were saying, and I was thankful I didn't have that burden on my mind and that I could be at peace. I was able to make a good impression by keeping my standards and not participating in any gossip or foul language.

After the pageant, a judge came to me and thanked me for my mature conduct. All the judges had recognized that I acted different from some of the other girls.

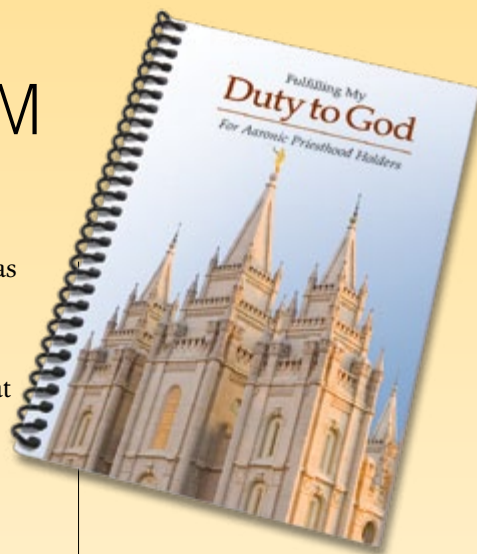
It is so easy to get caught up in worldly things. I know that reading scriptures and praying always to our Father in Heaven are ways to make sure that He is not far from our thoughts and that we are cautious of our actions.

I used the scripture 1 Timothy 4:12 as my motto: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." I learned that I can always ask Heavenly Father for the strength to stand strong and be an example, even when it is hard. I know that He is always there and will always help us, especially if we are dedicated to doing the right thing.
Sarah F., Utah, USA

Fulfilling My Duty to God has helped me in many ways.

Through the guidelines of "Learn, Act, Share," we learn what we need to do and what will help us, and we act upon that and share what we've done with our parents. It's helped me with scripture study, daily prayer, and many other things related to understanding the doctrine and serving others.

I've learned that if I have a question in my mind when I read the scriptures, I will often find an answer to that question while I'm reading. Heavenly Father will help us find the answer by the Holy Ghost as we read the scriptures.



He also answers prayers in other ways. One time we were traveling and lost a ticket for the car park. We were trying to find a manager so we could get out, and I prayed silently that we would be able to find someone and that we would be OK. We did find a manager, and everything was OK. I know that Heavenly Father answers our prayers.

Gieran V., Sydney, Australia

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

After track practice, my brother, my friend, her brother, and I were waiting to get picked up. While we were waiting, we talked with our coach about our religion. He belongs to another faith, but he knew that we were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Even though he had many questions, all four of us were Church members, so I wasn't nervous or afraid he would ask a question that I wouldn't know the answer to. I knew that if I didn't know the answer, then there was a pretty

good chance my brother or friends would know it.

A couple of hours later, when we were picked up, I thought about what I'd do the next time someone asked a question I didn't know the answer to. I decided that I didn't want that to happen and that praying, studying the scriptures, attending church, and partaking of the sacrament would help, because next time my friends or brother might not be there to back me up.

Fani O., Missouri, USA

Editor's note: Read more about being prepared to share the gospel on page 26.

HE HEARD ME

I have to admit, summer came as a much-anticipated relief for me this year. I don't hate school. In fact, I usually love school. But my sophomore year of high school was harder than I'd ever imagined.

The homework load grew and grew all year. The classes were hard, and all of the extra activities that come with high school were making it difficult for me to find time for everything. It stressed me out, and I was always busy. I felt like I never had time to have fun anymore or to see my friends. I felt lonely and depressed.

One night, I got home from babysitting, and I felt overwhelmed. I couldn't stop crying. I pulled out my patriarchal blessing. As I read through it, a phrase caught my eye over and over. My blessing promised me that I

would be blessed with peace in my heart as I went through hard times.

Before I could stop myself, the thought entered my mind, "Then how come I don't feel peace right now?" Immediately the answer came: "Why haven't you asked for it?"

I knelt down and prayed, pouring my heart out like I'd never done before. As I knelt there before my Father in Heaven, I felt the peace that He had promised swell in my heart. I felt love and peace and hope, and I knew that I could never be alone because He would always be there. He understands perfectly, and I can always turn to Him.

Even though the problems didn't just go away, my life did get better. I felt more in control and never without help or misunderstood.

Charly T., Utah, USA