

Wow. I can't believe I wrote that when I was 16.





Do You BELIEVE IN GOD



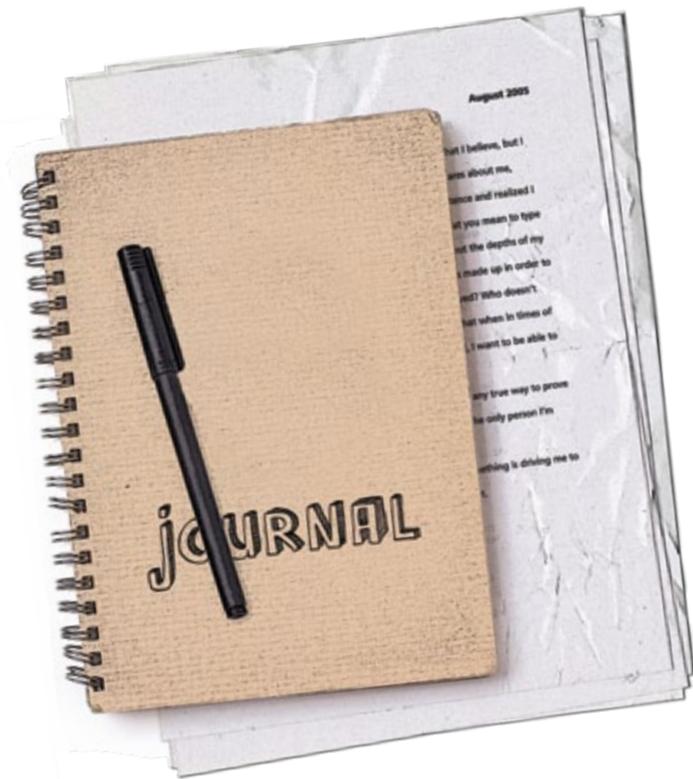
By Alexandria Larsen

My husband and I recently moved, and while unpacking, I came upon a box of my old writings. This is an excerpt from a journal entry I wrote when I was 16 years old. It was about a year after my mother died from cancer and before I was introduced to the gospel.

Do you believe in God, in a power, in a Creator? I don't know what I believe, but I love the idea of God. I love that there is someone who loves me, cares about me, protects me, and wants me to do His work. I look back on the sentence and realized I typed "I love that" instead of "I love the idea that."

It's funny what you mean to type and what you actually end up typing. I can't help but wonder about the depths of my subconscious. Sometimes I think God is just another thing humans made up in order to make themselves feel better, because who doesn't want to be loved? Who doesn't want the safety of a divine force? Who doesn't want to believe that when in times of hopelessness, they can count on God? But if I say I believe in God, I want to be able to say it from the depths of my soul. I want it to be a true belief.

Faith is what all religion is founded on. I don't believe there is any true way to prove



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God exists. I don't need anyone else to believe it or validate it. The only person I'm struggling with is myself.

Now I'm crying. At this point in my life, I want to believe. Something is driving me to think about this so much it's hard for me to get to sleep at night.

After reading this, my eyes wandered to the top of the page where I had written the date, August 2005. I remembered that it was in September of 2005 that I became friends with some returned missionaries who introduced me to the Church. After going to church for several months and asking lots of questions, I decided I wanted to meet with the missionaries. I was baptized about two weeks later; it was the happiest day of my life.

Many people thought my conversion happened quickly—two weeks did not seem long enough. In truth, my conversion started long before I met the missionaries or was even introduced to the Church. As my journal entry testified to me, for a long time Heavenly Father had been softening my heart and helping me prepare to receive the gospel. I now realize more fully the truth in the

words spoken by Alma on faith: “And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21).

When I wrote that journal entry, I had far less than a perfect knowledge, but I did have a desire to believe. “But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words” (Alma 32:27).

It is easy to forget the miracles that happen in our everyday lives. It is easy to forget how Heavenly Father answers our prayers. Reading this helped me remember. This excerpt stands as a testimony to me that our Heavenly Father will not forget about us, that He knows us personally, and that He will help us if we will exercise our faith.

I can now say that there is a way to know the truth. I can now say from the depths of my soul that I know that God lives. **NE**