



# Quiet Stirrings of the Heart



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As Latter-day Saints we know that we come to earth to obtain a physical body, to gain experience, and to prove ourselves. Some people have a short mortal experience, and some have a long experience; some have an experience full of trials, and some seem to be on easy street for much of their lives. But when we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness, we are better able to put our experiences in perspective, to grow from our trials, and to have joy.

This simple faith that helps sustain us is developed over a lifetime. I have experienced this cumulative process in my own life.

One experience that was instrumental in this faith-building process happened when I was a teenager. During one summer I worked as a "night waterman" on a golf course. Each night after play on the golf course had concluded, I would water the grounds, resetting the hoses every hour.

Late one evening while I was alone on the golf course, I heard gunshots ring out from a little grocery store across the street. A couple of men quickly exited the store. I jumped the

fence and ran into the building, where I saw that the proprietor had been shot and probably robbed.

I held the man in my arms as he took his last breath. I didn't know at the time that he was dying. The police and paramedics quickly arrived and assumed the man's care.

This experience was a turning point for me. It led me to ponder some of life's deep questions. I later found out that the perpetrators of the crime were young men with whom I had attended school, and I thought about them and about the choices they had made. I thought about my own choices and about the direction I wanted to take in life. I thought about how precious and tenuous life is and about how important it is to have faith.

The Savior's declaration became more profound to me: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). How grateful I was for my knowledge that life doesn't end when we finish our mortal journey.

## An Encounter with a Prophet

Another experience that strengthened my faith occurred some years earlier, when my father was the bishop of our ward. One night

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I was involved in a street football game. My father had to make some visits, and he called me to leave the game and accompany him. I left my friends and changed my clothes, and off we went.

Our last visit that night was at the home of a young woman who was afflicted with cancer. As my father and I visited with the family, a car pulled up in front of the house, and out stepped President David O. McKay (1873–1970), totally unannounced. I had seen pictures of him but had never come close to shaking the hand of a President of the Church.

After President McKay spoke briefly with the family, he gave the young woman a blessing. It was a magnificent blessing. Afterward he and

my father continued to visit with the family. I thought about that street football game and wondered if my friends were still playing. In my impatience I went outside and sat on the front porch to wait for my father.

After a few minutes President McKay came outside and sat down on the top step. He chatted with me for a few minutes. He asked how old I was and all the other usual questions one would ask a young person. And then he told me a story.

When he was about my age, he said, he and his brothers always wanted to go to general conference. It seemed to him that every time the family made those plans, something would happen to prevent the trip. But on one

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occasion they were able to come to Salt Lake City and enjoy attending conference.

During one session, he said, his father introduced him to President John Taylor (1808–87). President McKay told me, “I sat with President Taylor in the Tabernacle for a few minutes just like I’m sitting with you on the top stair of this porch.” He said President Taylor took off his coat, rolled up his shirtsleeve, and showed the evidence of the wounds he had sustained while he was with the Prophet Joseph Smith in Carthage Jail.

That was an impressive moment for me. All these years later I still remember how strongly I felt the Spirit and the power of President McKay’s prophetic calling.

#### **Should I Serve a Mission?**

Yet another experience that built my faith occurred when I was nearing my 19th birthday

and the decision whether to serve a mission was looming. In those days young men were called at age 20. I didn’t know whether I wanted to go, and my mother was concerned. One evening I came home and happened to overhear my parents talking about me. I remember my father saying to my mother, “Blanche, don’t worry about that boy; he’ll make the right decision.”

My parents never knew I overheard them. But their conversation made me think a lot about a mission and what a mission does to build faith. I was grateful my father had confidence that I would serve a mission. I did decide to go, and it was a marvelous faith-building experience.

#### **A Lifetime of Vigilance**

I have had many other experiences that have strengthened my faith. Some have been dramatic. But I have found that most often faith comes through the quiet stirrings of the heart as the Spirit speaks to our spirit. Even a simple thing like taking the sacrament each Sunday is a faith-building experience for me. Attending the temple builds my faith. Participating in the Church and in my callings builds my faith. All these experiences continue to sustain me.

Developing faith requires a lifetime of vigilance. I believe the Lord’s promise when He said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9–10).

I know that as we seek to build our faith, the Lord will pour out His blessings upon us. ■