



*When we were first married, we thought that doing what felt good was freedom. As time passed, we discovered where true freedom lies.*

By Cindy Lambourne

When Hal and I were married in 1972, we didn't even consider a traditional wedding. We didn't feel the need for the white dress and all the fuss, and we certainly did not plan to have a temple marriage, even though both my family and Hal's were members of the Church. I was crazy in love with Hal, a Vietnam War veteran with shoulder-length strawberry-blond hair and a full, red beard. I would have married him anywhere.

We started our married life wearing bell-bottoms and living in a small apartment. We hung tapestries on the walls and melted candles in wine bottles. Our first big purchase was a yellow Volkswagen bus.

There was so much to be passionate about in that turbulent time in history. The music was daring, the fashions controversial, and the parties wild. "If it feels good, do it" was the banner of the day, and we embraced it. We indulged our appetites as no other generation had dared. We declared that we would always be free.

### Returning to the Gospel

As the years passed, however, we became the dreaded "establishment": we held jobs, paid taxes, had children,

owned a home, and voted. We had good times and hard times, as most couples do, but eventually I began to realize that the freedom we had so adamantly declared in our youth was in jeopardy, threatened by the very indulgent lifestyle we had chosen.

I worried about how much alcohol my husband consumed. It wasn't fun anymore. He was overbearing and sometimes unkind when he drank. It got worse as time passed. There were arrests for driving under the influence, bitter arguments, and a separateness that cut deep. Finally we had a confrontation in which I gave Hal the choice to either get help or find someplace else to live. Gratefully, he chose to check into a recovery center for veterans. When he was released from the program, he confided in me that he felt his best chance at staying sober was to become active in the Church.

At first I resisted. After all, I had spent a great deal of time and energy convincing myself that I didn't need the "outdated" beliefs I had grown up with. Still, it was wonderful to truly be in love with my husband again, so if this would help him stay sober, I would try.

A missionary couple from the stake began visiting us once a week. They read the Book of Mormon with us and



# WE FOUND TRUE FREEDOM IN OBEDIENCE

reviewed basic gospel doctrines. We also learned about blessings that the Lord wanted to give us. I felt a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel take root in my heart.

My relationship with my husband became deeper as the two of us developed a relationship with our Father in Heaven. The road was bumpy and the going rough at times. Old habits were hard to break, and new habits took time to make. As we worked toward becoming worthy to receive the blessings of the temple, the Spirit testified that we were finally headed in the right direction. Our family was sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on our 21st wedding anniversary.

## Together Forever

Five years later I started to notice a yellow tinge to Hal's eyes and skin. Shortly after, he was diagnosed with viral hepatitis C. We were told that he would need a liver transplant.

While we waited for a liver, Hal went into a coma and had to stay at the hospital. After several weeks, I got a phone call from the hospital telling us that there was a liver for Hal, which meant he had a chance at recovery. I

prayed for a successful surgery so the generosity of the donor would not be in vain.

The surgery was a success, and Hal came home a few weeks later. Things were good for three years, and then Hal again began to suffer from symptoms of liver disease and was admitted to the hospital. We were told that the hepatitis was destroying the new liver and that because the disease had moved so aggressively, Hal would not be considered for a second transplant. The doctors felt that a year was the most we could expect.

Just one month later, surrounded by his loving family, my brave husband passed on from this life. The importance of the changes we had made in our lives and the steps we had taken to embrace the gospel took on new meaning that day. The powerful covenants the two of us had made with our Heavenly Father sustained me in the days following my husband's death and continue to support me and give me hope. Because of the gospel and temple sealings, I know I will be reunited with him if I do my best to abide by Heavenly Father's law, where real freedom exists. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



## BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

"As we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us. Those blessings provide the resources we need to act rather than simply be acted upon as we go through life."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Power of Covenants," *Ensign*, May 2009, 21.