

AM I GOING TO DIE?

By Gregory Hamblin

I didn't know why my son was suddenly scared by thoughts of death, but the truths of the gospel contain the reassurance he needed.

My seven-year-old son was pedaling furiously and going nowhere. The chain had fallen off his bike. I went over to help him out of his predicament, flipping the bike over so I could access the chain. As I worked, he said, "Dad? When I die, will I be all covered in blood?"

Somewhat shocked, I looked up at him. He was in tears.

"What? No!" I said. "You're not going to die." I sat on the curb, and he sat on my lap. He cried and cried. Where had this come from?

"Will my insides fall out?" he asked.

Had my little boy been watching horror movies or something? "No!" I said. Again I told him he wasn't going to die.

"No, Dad. Everybody is going to die, right?"

I took a deep breath. This was not a conversation I expected to have with such a young child.

When I became a father, I promised myself I would never withhold the truth from my kids, but the thought of telling any of them that they would

someday die was a nightmare. I tried to dodge his question. "You don't need to worry about that right now," I said. "You just be a happy boy and have fun and don't worry. You're going to be alive for a long, long time."

"I don't want to die," he said.

"What do I do here?" I asked myself. Thoughts of saying the wrong thing and forever traumatizing him whirled around in my head. "What do I do?" I offered a silent prayer for help.

I began to tell him about the plan of salvation. I told him that we are all visitors to this world. I told him how each of us is a being made of two parts: a body and a spirit. I told him that when people die—and, yes, we all will someday have to die—it's just our physical bodies that stop working. Our spirits are eternal and will never die (see Alma 40:11).

I told him that Jesus Christ is our Savior because He made it possible for us to all be together, even though we sometimes have to be apart for a while. I taught him that the Savior died for us and was resurrected and

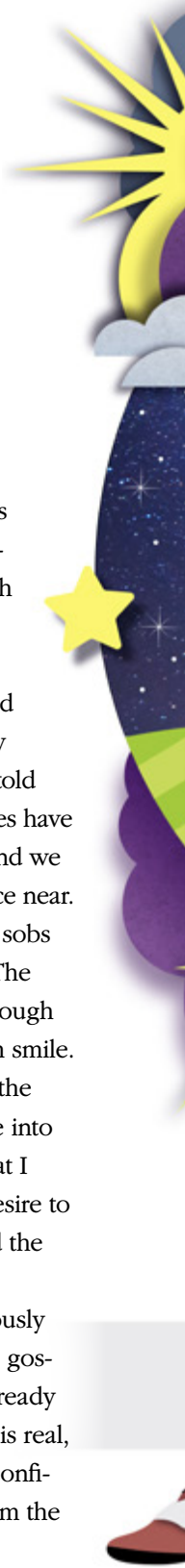
that because He lives, our spirits will someday return to our bodies, and we will never face death again (see Alma 11:43–45).

He asked if I had ever seen a dead person. I told him that I had been able to say good-bye to my grandparents at their funerals. I told him that even though their bodies have died, their spirits are still alive, and we can sometimes feel their presence near.

My son's fears subsided, and sobs turned into his typical giggles. The idea of relatives visiting even though we couldn't see them made him smile.

We walked together back to the house, pulling the repaired bike into the garage. I thought about what I had said. I thought about my desire to tell the truth to my children and the answers I had given my son.

In that moment I felt enormously grateful for my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because I already knew that the plan of salvation is real, I was able to speak to my son confidently and honestly and give him the strength to overcome his fears.





My preparation for this moment began long before my son was born. When I was preparing for a mission, I had a goal to gain a testimony of every aspect of the gospel that I might be required to teach. The part I had struggled with the most was the Resurrection of the dead.

I studied, pondered, and prayed. I fasted and asked for a testimony. After a while, the Holy Ghost witnessed to me that the Resurrection is real, that there truly is life after death, and that the promises of the plan of salvation are real. (See 1 Nephi 10:19.)

That testimony became important on my mission, but it became one of my most treasured gifts when my son needed to find peace.

I'm so grateful for that witness, and I testify that the plan of salvation is real.

I testify of the importance of strengthening our testimonies so that when we or our loved ones feel fear, we can find peace in our testimonies and understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.