

IT'S A Short Flight

By Jessica Garlick Dyer

My husband, Travis, and I had been sleeping all night in the airport in Denver, Colorado, USA. At 6:00 a.m. I got in line to try to get added to the next flight home. Our flight the night before had been canceled, and we were exhausted.

For us, the exhaustion wasn't just physical—Travis had a midterm exam to take the next day, we had been flying across the country for PhD program interviews, and just five weeks earlier we had suffered the painful stillbirth of our daughter after 34 weeks of pregnancy. Life seemed full of difficulties.

The Father on the Plane

Thankfully, we ended up getting on the plane. As we waited to board, I spotted a couple with a teenage daughter with disabilities who were also trying to get on the same flight. It appeared that they, too, had slept

in the airport. My heart hurt for them. Once on the plane, I noticed that they got seats on the row directly across from us. The tall blond teenager was noticeably nervous. Almost the moment they sat down, she began to fuss. It was a cycle of crying, then silence, and then questioning her parents in a loud voice. She used child-like phrases, causing some to stare or act annoyed.

It was obvious the girl was scared. She had no choice but to be on that plane to get to her destination. When we boarded, the plane ride must have seemed exciting to her—but as soon as the plane left the solid concrete for the air, she panicked.

The girl talked the entire flight, repeating over and over, "It's a short flight, right, Dad?" Sometimes she yelled. She repeated this query the whole way from Denver, Colorado, to Salt Lake City, Utah, sometimes



The sweet interaction I witnessed between a father and his daughter enhanced my appreciation for Heavenly Father and His plan for us.

stammering the words through tears and then moments later with confidence. At times she started to cry hysterically, but her dad would calm her down, saying in a soothing tone, "Yes, it's a short flight."

I sat in awe the whole flight—watching, listening. The girl's father was ever so patient and calm, reassuring his daughter every few minutes. "Yes, it's a short flight." I had no doubt that it must have felt like the longest



flight ever to him. He let his wife sleep while he cared for their daughter, constantly allaying her fears. How tiring it must have been.

My mind was racing: this man and his wife would likely take care of their daughter full-time for the rest of her life, without a break. Still, this father was unruffled. He was noticeably exhausted, yet he never once raised his voice, got upset, or ignored his daughter. I felt humbled, keenly aware of the impatience I had sometimes shown in facing some of my own challenges.

That morning caused me to reflect on what it must be like for our Heavenly Father to watch us panic in a time of trial, only to console us with perfect patience and compassion. He knows “the end from the beginning” (Abraham 2:8). I was also reminded that *everyone* has trials as I admired a father so patiently and lovingly handle a very trying situation.

Just a Short Flight

It's a short flight, right, Dad? I realized that I often ask Heavenly Father this question myself, sometimes with tears and crying. And He responds so constantly and lovingly: *Yes, it's a short flight. You can make it.*

I was relieved for this girl and her dad when the plane skidded on the runway in Salt Lake City. The flight was over. As soon as we landed, in a voice I can still hear in my mind, the girl exclaimed to her dad excitedly, “It was a great flight! It was a short flight, huh, Dad?”

And her father agreed. “Yes, it was a great, short flight.”

I have a feeling that's how we will respond when our individual flights on this earth are over. It is difficult not to know what hard things are around the next turn—but I can testify that, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we are enabled to do

what we need to do in this life to become more like Him. This knowledge brings power, no matter how smooth or bumpy our flight gets.

In the grand scheme of eternity, our mortal passage really is just a great, short flight. ■

The author now lives in North Carolina, USA.



TRUST THE LORD

“My young friends, today I say to you that if you trust the Lord and obey Him, His hand shall be over you, He will help you achieve the great potential He sees in you, and He will help you to see the end from the beginning.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “See the End from the Beginning,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 42.