



AN INWARD HEALING

"Most of us have not reached [a Christlike] stage of compassion and love and forgiveness. It is not easy. It requires a self-discipline almost greater than we are capable of. But as we try, we come to know that there is a resource of healing, that there is a mighty power of healing in Christ, and that if we are to be His true servants we must not only exercise that healing power in behalf of others, but, perhaps more important, inwardly."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "The Healing Power of Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 59.

Loving My Enemies

Name withheld

I knew of the Lord's command to love others, including our enemies, but as I looked at the soldier, I did not love him.

I grew up in a country under occupation. The occupying soldiers did not treat my people well. Many in my town were arrested, beaten, shot, or even killed by the soldiers for no apparent reason. One day when I was 16, the soldiers came to my university and shot one of the students in the head. For two hours they would not allow him to be taken to the hospital. That day I developed hate in my heart for those soldiers. I could not forgive them for the pain they caused my people and could not forget the image of that student.

When I joined the Church at age 25, it was difficult to attend church because checkpoints, curfews, and other travel restrictions were imposed on us. I had to risk my life to sneak out so I could take the sacrament and be with fellow Latter-day Saints. It was hard being the only member of the Church in my family and in my town. I wanted to be with

members of the Church, yet I was turned back by the soldiers almost every week.

One Sabbath as I was trying to cross the checkpoint, the soldier told me that I was not allowed out and demanded that I go home. I looked at the soldier and remembered the Savior's words: "Love your enemies" (see Matthew 5:43–44).

I realized then that I did not *love* that soldier. The hate I felt as a teenager had disappeared after I joined the Church, but I did not love my enemies. The Savior Jesus Christ gave us this commandment, yet my heart could not love those occupying soldiers. This bothered me for days, especially since I was preparing to go to the temple at that time.

One day I came across the following scripture: "Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ" (Moroni 7:48). I felt



Mormon was speaking to me personally and showing me how to love.

I decided to ask Heavenly Father for help. I fasted and prayed for help to love my enemies. For days I felt no change, but I didn't realize that Heavenly Father was gradually changing my heart. About a year later, as I was trying to pass through one of the checkpoints, the soldier told me I was not allowed in. This time I felt differently. As I looked into the eyes of that soldier, I felt an amazing love for him. I felt how much Heavenly Father loved him, and I saw him as a child of God.

I now know, like Nephi, that the Lord gives us no commandment save He shall prepare a way for us that we may accomplish the thing which He commands us (see 1 Nephi 3:7). When Christ commanded us to love our enemies, He knew it was possible with His help. He can teach us to love others if we but trust Him and learn from His great example. ■

“As always, Christ is our exemplar. In His teachings as in His life, He showed us the way. He forgave the wicked, the vulgar, and those who sought to hurt and do Him harm” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” Ensign, May 2012, 76).

HOW DO WE LEARN TO FORGIVE OTHERS?

President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) helps answer this question in chapter 23 of *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* (2011):

- “Before we get into the glory of our Father and enjoy the blessings that we hope to receive through faithfulness, we will have to live the laws of patience, and exercise forgiveness toward those who trespass against us, and remove from our hearts all feelings of hatred toward them.”
- “When we partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, . . . let us purge from our hearts all feeling of unkindness toward one another and toward our brothers and sisters who are not of our faith.”
- “May we have the Spirit of the Master dwelling within us, that we may forgive all men as He has commanded, forgive, not only with our lips but in the very depths of our hearts, every trespass that may have been committed against us.”

Whom do you need to forgive? Prayerfully consider an appropriate time and place to speak with this person (or people) and express your love and forgiveness.