



# Losing Apollo

**By Breanna L. Gallagher**  
(Based on a true story)

*Having a pet die or run away is a difficult experience many children face. In this story, the Holy Ghost and a wise father reassure a boy when he loses a loved pet.*

Here's the ball, Apollo," Matt called to his golden retriever. "Now go and get it, boy!" He threw the ball, and Apollo ran and caught it in his mouth. Matt always had fun playing ball with Apollo. His dog had been his favorite companion ever since they got him as a puppy two years ago.

"Matt, it's time for dinner," his mother called from the porch. "So just one more throw."

"OK, Mom." Matt threw the ball so hard it rolled into the street. Without looking, Apollo immediately chased after it and was hit by an oncoming car.

Quickly, Matt and his mom ran to where Apollo lay. "He's really hurt, Matt," Mom said. "We need to take him to the vet right now."

Matt's dad and older brother rushed outside. They lifted Apollo and placed him in their car. At the veterinarian's office, Dr. Maxfield took Apollo into the examination



room. Matt and his parents sat in the waiting area.

“Can we say a prayer to help Apollo?” Matt asked his parents as tears streamed down his face.

Dad nodded. They bowed their heads and prayed to Heavenly Father, asking that Apollo would be healed. When they were finished Matt’s tears were gone and he felt much better. He was sure Heavenly Father would help Apollo.

Finally Dr. Maxfield came in. Matt jumped up and ran to him. “Is Apollo better now? Can I go see him?”

“I’m really sorry, Matt,” Dr. Maxfield said. “Your dog was badly hurt. I did all I could to help him, but he died.”

Apollo was dead! Matt put his hands over his eyes and sobbed.

Later that night, Matt couldn’t stop thinking about what happened. “Dad, why didn’t Heavenly Father answer my prayer? I prayed that Apollo would be

healed. I knew that Heavenly Father could do it.” Matt wiped his eyes.

“Heavenly Father answers all prayers,” Dad said. “He answered yours too—just not in the way you wanted.”

“But, Dad, He didn’t answer my prayer. Apollo died.”

“Let me ask you a question,” Dad said. “Do you remember when you asked me if you could go to the train tracks with some friends last week?”

“Yes,” Matt said. There was a field a few blocks from his house that had train tracks in it. Matt had never been there before.

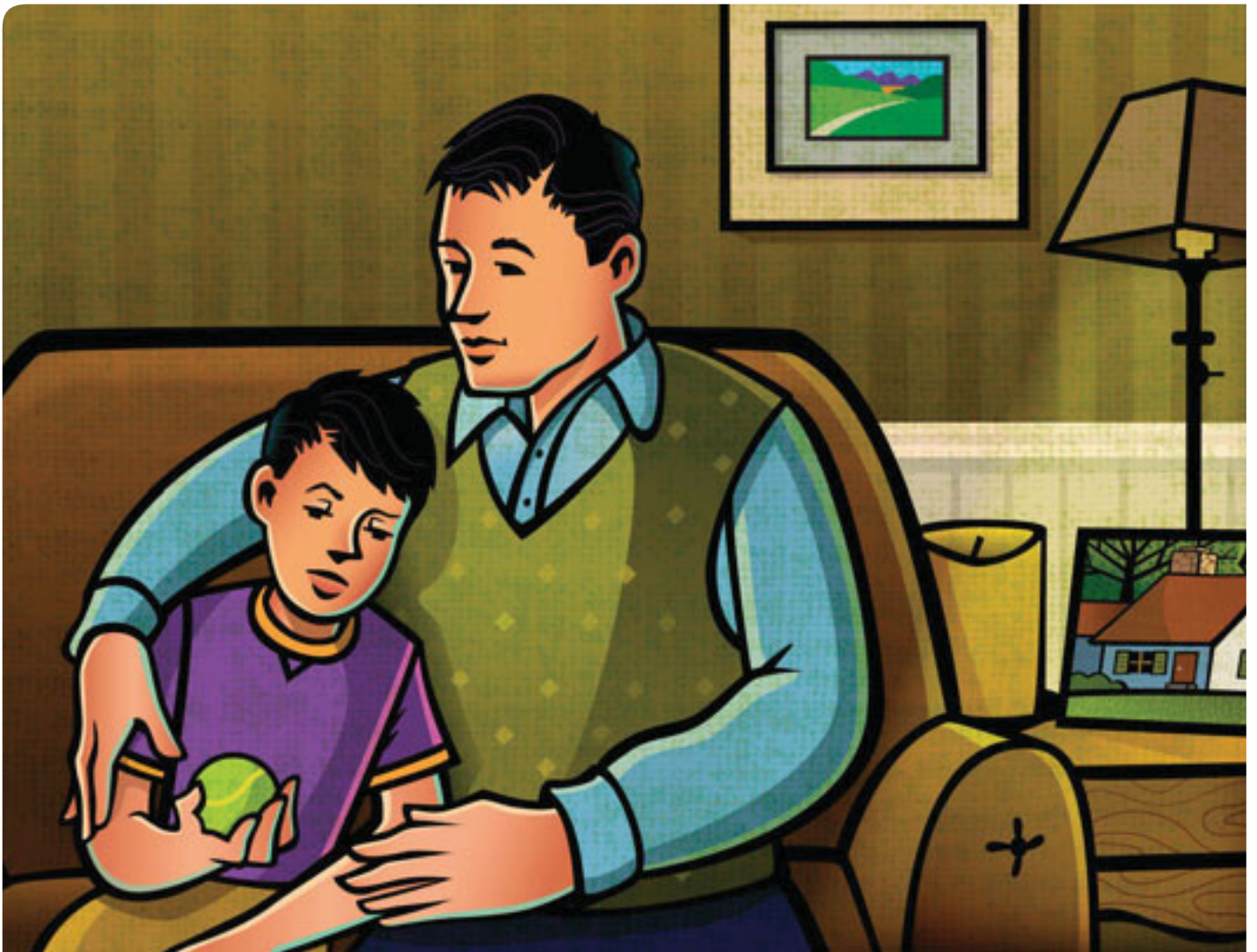
“When you asked me, you wanted me to say that you could go, right?”

Matt nodded.

“But how did I answer your question?”

“You told me that I couldn’t go,” Matt said.

“Even though that wasn’t the way you wanted me



to answer your question, I still answered it," Dad said. "Every time you pray and ask Heavenly Father for something, He listens and answers you. But sometimes we think He doesn't answer our prayers because He doesn't answer us the way we want Him to."

"Why doesn't He answer us the way we want?" Matt asked.

"Matt, even though I said no the other day, does that mean I don't love you?" Dad asked.

Matt shook his head.

"Why do you think I told you that you couldn't go?" Dad asked.

Matt stared out the window for a moment and then looked at Dad. "I guess it's because you know that the train tracks are dangerous and that I might get hurt if I play on them."

"That's right," Dad said. "You didn't realize it, but I did. Heavenly Father also sees things that we don't. That

is why He sometimes gives us answers that are different from what we want."

"But how did Heavenly Father answer my prayer if Apollo died?" Matt asked.

"Before you prayed you were really sad. How did you feel after?"

"A lot better—like everything would be all right."

"Heavenly Father knew you would be very sad when Apollo died, so He sent His Spirit to comfort you," Dad said. "That's one way we can know that Heavenly Father loves us all."

"Even Apollo?"

"Yes, even Apollo." ♦

**"We are the children of a loving Heavenly Father."<sup>1</sup>**

Sister Silvia H. Allred, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency

