

He Honored My Request

When I was baptized at 18 years old, I knew that living the gospel of Jesus Christ would become a way of life. I felt the importance and seriousness of living gospel standards, and doing so has blessed my life in many ways.

One gospel principle that is really important to me is honoring the Sabbath day. It allows me to stop my daily routine and to focus my

“I need you all to come to work for the next two weekends,” my boss said. My heart sank. I knew this meant I would need to work on Sunday.

thoughts on my Heavenly Father.

I work in a tourism business in Costa Rica. In this industry, it is typical for people to work on Sundays. When I started my job, I identified myself as a member of the Church. I requested—and was granted—Sundays off.

Because of my unusual request, my colleagues and my boss were curious. They asked me a lot of questions about my beliefs. Over time I had opportunities to explain to them some of the things that Latter-day Saints believe. In many cases my explanations of gospel doctrines earned their respect.

One day my boss gathered our staff for an announcement. “I need

you all to come to work for the next two weekends,” he said. My heart sank. I knew this meant I would need to work on Sunday.

But then my boss continued: “That is, everyone except Juan Carlos. We know that nothing is going to make him come to work on Sunday.”

I was relieved. My boss had honored my request! Because of my behavior and the standards I exhibited at work, I had gained his respect. As a result he was willing to honor my beliefs.

I know that as we make gospel standards a priority in our lives, the Lord will bless us. ■

Juan Carlos Fallas Agüero, San José, Costa Rica





Blessed by Mama Taamino

When I met Taumatagi Taamino, I was a young missionary laboring in my own country. An aging widow, Sister Taamino was slightly bent over from age and hard work, but she always extended her arms to greet my companion and me and kiss us on both cheeks, as is the custom in French Polynesia.

Sister Taamino was frail, and her walk was slow and deliberate, but she took care of everyone. She even made sure that my companion and I always had clean, ironed clothing. Children loved to be around her because she welcomed them and listened to what they had to say. She

Even in her 80s, Sister Taamino worked in the meetinghouse flower beds, weeding and cleaning. This was her way of continuing to serve the Lord.

lived a simple life in a two-room home surrounded by sand, palm trees, family, and friends. Out of respect, everyone called her “Mama Taamino.”

The Tahiti Papeete Mission president had assigned my companion, Elder Tchan Fat, and me to help prepare a group of 80 Latter-day Saints to receive their endowments and be sealed as families in the nearest temple—the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, five hours away by plane. Mama Taamino had traveled to the temple every year for six years,

and this year she would go again. I wondered how she could afford such expensive trips when her living conditions were so meager. Six years later I learned the answer.

In 1976, as president of the Papeete Tahiti Stake, I regularly inspected the stake’s meetinghouses. One day at noon I stopped at the chapel in Tipaerui. At the time, we had paid custodians, and there I found Mama Taamino, now in her late 60s, working as a custodian to help support her large family. She greeted me with her usual “Come and eat,” but I replied, “Mama Taamino, you are not young anymore, and for lunch all you are having is a small piece of bread, a tiny can of sardines, and a little bottle of juice? Aren’t you earning enough to have more food than this?”

She replied, “I’m saving to travel to the temple again.” My heart melted with admiration for her example of love and sacrifice. Mama Taamino traveled to the temple in New Zealand nearly 15 times—every year until the Papeete Tahiti Temple was dedicated in October 1983. At the dedication she radiated joy.

In 1995, this time as a mission president, I saw Mama Taamino again. She had moved back to the atoll of Makemo, not far from her birthplace. Now in her 80s, she could no longer walk, but the wrinkles of her face expressed peace, patience, and a deep understanding of life and the gospel. She still had a beautiful smile, and her eyes showed pure charity.

Early the next morning I found her seated in one of the meetinghouse flower beds, weeding and cleaning. One of her sons had carried her there. After she finished one area, she would use her hands and arms to move herself to the next area. This was her way of continuing to serve the Lord.

In the late afternoon when I was conducting temple recommend interviews, Mama Taamino was brought to where I was seated in the shade of a tree near the chapel. She wanted the opportunity to answer each question required for a temple recommend.

“President, I cannot go to the temple anymore,” she said. “I am getting old and sick, but I always want to have a current temple recommend with me.”

I could tell how much she wanted to return to the temple, and I knew that her longing was acceptable to God. Not long afterward, she left her earthly tabernacle to join those she had faithfully served in the house of the Lord. She took with her nothing but her faith, testimony, kindness, charity, and willingness to serve.

Mama Taamino was a true Polynesian pioneer whose example blessed many of her brothers and sisters—including me. ■

Victor D. Cave, Church Magazines

Taylor’s Talent

Can you tell me what talents Taylor has that I could share with the class?” my eight-year-old’s Primary teacher asked me. She had telephoned because Taylor’s class would be talking about talents they had received from Heavenly Father.

My mind went blank. I thought back over the past eight years, trying to come up with an answer. At four days old Taylor had suffered a stroke that left him with profound brain damage and an uncontrollable seizure disorder. He is unable to see, speak, or communicate. He has never progressed past a six-month-old child’s level of mental development. He

spends most of his days in a wheelchair as we care for him and try to keep him comfortable.

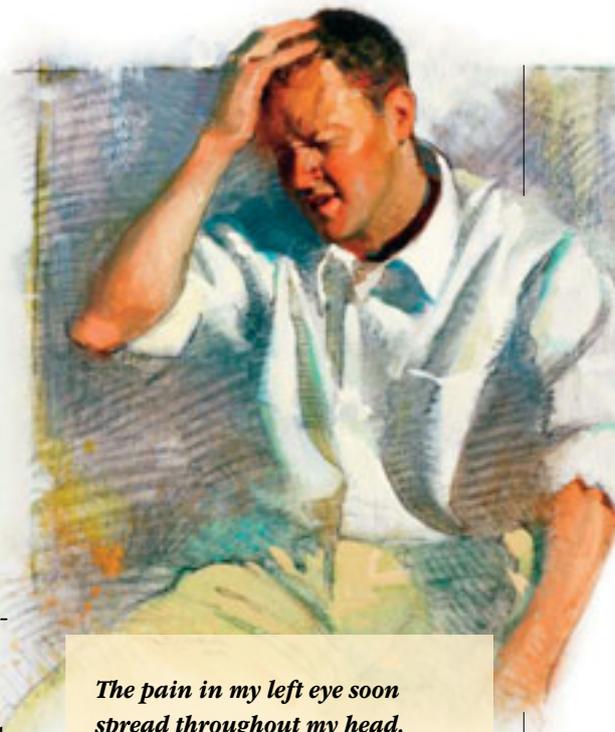
We cheered when he learned to giggle or drink from a special cup, and we celebrated when he could stand and take a few steps. But while we cheered and celebrated on the outside, on the inside we wept with the realization that these small achievements were probably as significant as any Taylor would attain. Somehow I didn’t think this was what his Primary teacher wanted to hear.

I cleared my throat and uncomfortably answered, “Taylor really doesn’t have any talents that I can think of.”

This kind sister then forever altered my relationship with my son by her response.

“I have seen the other children learn to push Taylor’s wheelchair, open doors for him, and overcome their fear,” my son’s Primary teacher told me.





The pain in my left eye soon spread throughout my head. As soon as I lay down, the still, small voice prompted me: “Get up. Don’t go to sleep.”

“As I thought about this lesson, I realized that every child of God has a talent,” she said. “I would suggest that Taylor’s talent is that he teaches others to serve. If it is OK with you, I would like to talk to our class about how I have noticed Taylor’s talent here at church. I have seen the other Primary children learn to push his wheelchair, open doors for him, and overcome their fear to wipe his chin with a handkerchief when needed. I think that is a great talent by which he blesses our lives.”

I murmured in agreement, and we quietly said good-bye. I wonder if that Primary teacher knew what a profound impact that conversation would have on my life. Taylor remained the same. He still requires a great deal of care. Hospitals, doctors, and therapists still take up a large part of my life. But my perspective changed, and I began to notice his talent.

I saw how people around us would alter their behavior as they sought to care for him. I also noticed how he reminds us to slow down, notice his needs, and become more compassionate, observant, and patient.

I do not know God’s purpose in having Taylor face such daunting challenges, but I believe that his Primary teacher gave me a small glimpse of it. He is here to share his talent with us. He is here to give us the opportunity to learn how to serve. ■

Heather Hall, Utah, USA

Call an Ambulance!

In 1991 while I was boarding up the loft of our home, I felt a sharp pain in my left eye. The pain, which felt like a splinter, soon spread throughout my head. I continued working until the discomfort forced me to my bedroom for rest.

As soon as I lay down, however, the still, small voice prompted me. “Get up,” the Spirit said. “Don’t go to sleep.”

As I pondered the warning and thought about what I should do, I decided to get one of the tablets my mother took for migraine headaches. I walked to my parents’ room and found the tablets, but as I began to open the bottle, the voice came again: “Don’t take one of those.”

A short while later, the voice came a third time: “You need to phone for an ambulance—now!”

I had never phoned emergency services before, but I immediately called. An ambulance soon arrived, and two paramedics put me on a stretcher. The last thing I remember was that they asked me my name. Then the lights went out.

Later I woke up in the intensive care unit at the hospital. I was still weak and under the influence of anesthesia, but I remember feeling hands on my head as my father and my bishop gave me a blessing. I heard the words “You will be restored to health, as if nothing had happened.”

After three days in intensive care and four additional days in a hospital ward, I was finally able to return home. Only then did I learn that I had suffered a brain hemorrhage. The surgeon who operated on me later told me that I was “just a click away from dying” and that I would have died had I taken a migraine tablet.

Today I am fit and healthy, thankful that the Lord guided my thoughts that day. I have been sealed in the temple to my loving wife, and we have five wonderful children.

I thank my Heavenly Father and my Savior, Jesus Christ, for the miracle of life. I strive every day to make the most of the time They have given me, and I gratefully remember the protecting influence of the voice of the Spirit. ■

Simon Heal, Queensland, Australia