

The Biggest TEST of Her Life . . . So Far

While preparing for her big test, Andrea learned the key to passing the ultimate test.

BY ADAM C. OLSON
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As a young teen growing up in Santiago, Chile, Andrea González never had much except for a dream—a university degree that would allow her to support her family if necessary. To get there, she hoped to graduate from seminary, get good grades at school, and score high

enough on her college placement exam (PSU) to go to a university where she could study engineering.

But by the time she had started her final year of high school in preparation for the PSU, she started to wonder if any of that was possible. “All my goals seemed impossible to achieve,” she recalls.

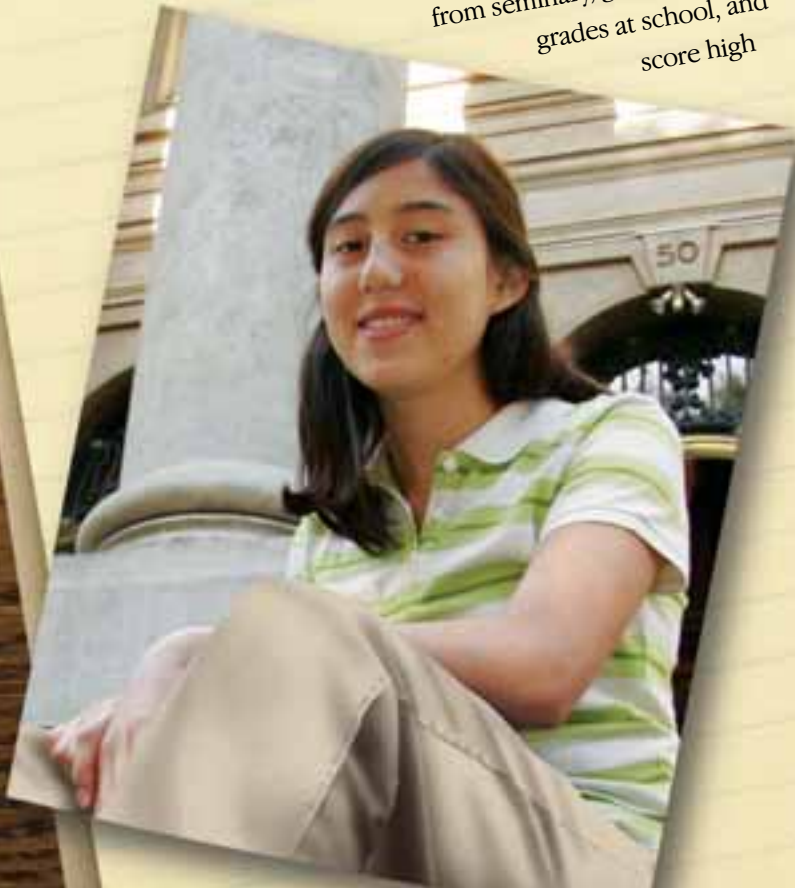
No Easy Goals

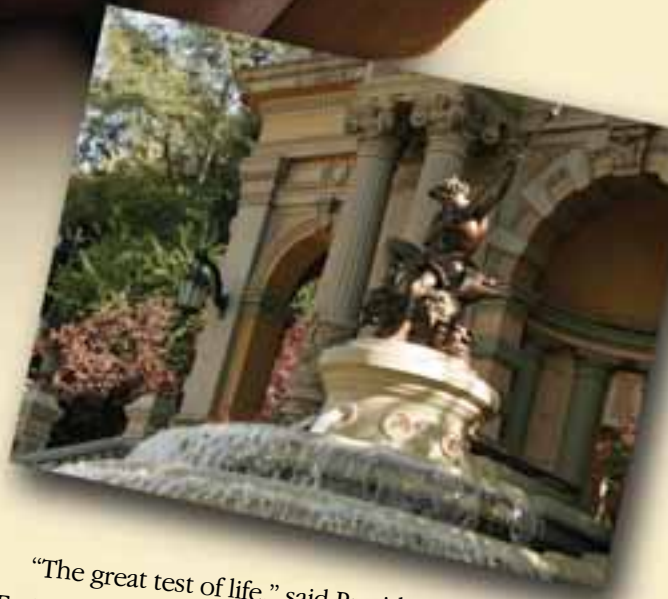
Andrea was trying to break into a competitive and male-dominated field of study. Because of the competition, the top universities were looking for extremely high scores on the math portion of the PSU, scores usually earned by those who could afford to attend private schools.

To try and overcome these obstacles, Andrea kept a daunting schedule her final year. She was up early and studying after school until late, eating when she had a free moment and squeezing in seminary four nights a week.

“It was discouraging sometimes,” she says. “I had to sacrifice a lot. I don’t know how many times my friends heard me say, ‘No, I’ve got to study’ or how often I’ve been teased for being smart.”

But she knew she couldn’t give up if she wanted to secure her future.





Passing the Test

Her sacrifices paid off. On the math section of the PSU, Andrea was one of 200 students in the country to earn a perfect score of 850 and one of only two girls from public schools to do so.

She also graduated from seminary, got the good grades she studied so hard for, and was named by her classmates as the year's "Best Friend" because of all of the time she spent helping others with their own studying.

But Andrea believes her success has less to do with how much she *knows* than it does with what she knows she must *do*. In other words, blessings come from following the Lord's counsel, not our own (see 2 Nephi 9:28–29). "It's not worth anything to be smart if we ignore God," she says. "You always have to put God first."

The Other Test

Learning that principle as she studied for her college entrance exam was critical to the *other* test Andrea was taking—the test of life that everyone must take.

The Lord Himself explains this test in the scriptures: "We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

"Heavenly Father tests us to see what we will do," Andrea says, thinking back on the difficult schedule she had to keep and the teasing she sometimes had to endure. "To pass life's test, we have to be obedient," Andrea says.

And not just when things are going well but during the hard times too.

"The great test of life," said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "is to see whether we will hearken to and obey God's commands in the midst of the storms of life."¹

No Test Is Too Much with Him

Often her two tests collided. That's when Andrea learned that putting God first was the secret to passing both tests.


Many times she had to choose between Church activities and school activities, between studying the gospel and studying for her test. She says she learned early on that she felt better if she chose Church first. It strengthened her testimony that Heavenly Father would help her with *her* concerns if her first concern was *Him*.

These experiences also taught Andrea another important lesson. "He is capable of helping me with the tests He has given me," she says.

Or as one of her heroes, Nephi, said, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

Andrea knows that even though she has passed her first test, there is a lot she must learn before she'll feel ready to pass the next.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM C. OLSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED; BACKGROUND: PHOTOGRAPHS BY CRAIG DIMOND



But she knows if she puts God first, He'll help her pass that test too. ■

NOTE

1. "Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady," *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 38.

THE LORD'S TEXTBOOKS

As Andrea prepared for her big test, her math and science texts weren't the only books she studied.

"The scriptures are the Lord's textbooks," she says. "In the scriptures are the things God wants us to understand. We have to study the scriptures."

When she was discouraged, she didn't turn to her schoolbooks. "I read the Lord's texts to lift my spirits. When you're discouraged, reading the scriptures will help."

She especially learned to love the Book of Mormon. "It has changed my life," she says. "The examples of those people in the scriptures have really helped me."

The way Nephi trusted that God could help him get through his trials was a great example as Andrea has faced her own tests. "Nephi has helped me a lot," she says.

It was Nephi who said, "But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20).

To learn from Nephi's example of faith in the Lord, read the following verses: 1 Nephi 3:7; 4:1; 7:12; 9:6; 17:3, 50; 2 Nephi 4:19, 34.



Congratulations,
Andrea, on a
perfect test
score!