



No One Will Ever Know

BY ELDER STANLEY G. ELLIS

Of the Seventy

I was born and grew up in Burley, Idaho, USA. My father had a farm and a ranch there, so I spent my time working in the out-of-doors. My family had been members of the Church for generations, and I was raised in a faithful home. But while I was in high school, my testimony was tested by an opportunity I had sought out.

I knew of a person from our high school who had been an exchange student. I thought it sounded like an interesting experience, so I researched the idea of becoming an exchange student, found out the procedure, and applied. I was accepted. I was then 16 years old. I had taken one year of German, so I assumed, as did my adviser, that I would be assigned to go to Germany. This particular exchange program took all your information, matched it up with families willing to act as hosts, then assigned you to a country.

When I was accepted, I was assigned to Brazil, and I agreed to the assignment. I lived with a wonderful family in São Paulo. They had six boys and one girl, just like my family at home. Fortunately, they spoke English. It turned out to be a great experience, even though I was there only for the summer.

During my time in Brazil, I made some

friends who were in that stage in life when they were experimenting with things. They started inviting me to go out with them to have fun with some girls they had met.

I was thousands of miles from home in a country where nobody knew me except my host family. The friends who would invite me to go out with them used the line “No one will ever know.” In many respects that was true. Certainly, none of my American family would ever know. I was a teenager, far from home, with an invitation to do what was wrong, and nobody would ever know.

But I knew that I would know. I knew the Lord would know, so I said no to their invitations and continued to say no. They asked repeatedly, sure that they could persuade me. It was not a one-time challenge, but every time I declined, I grew more determined to stand my ground.

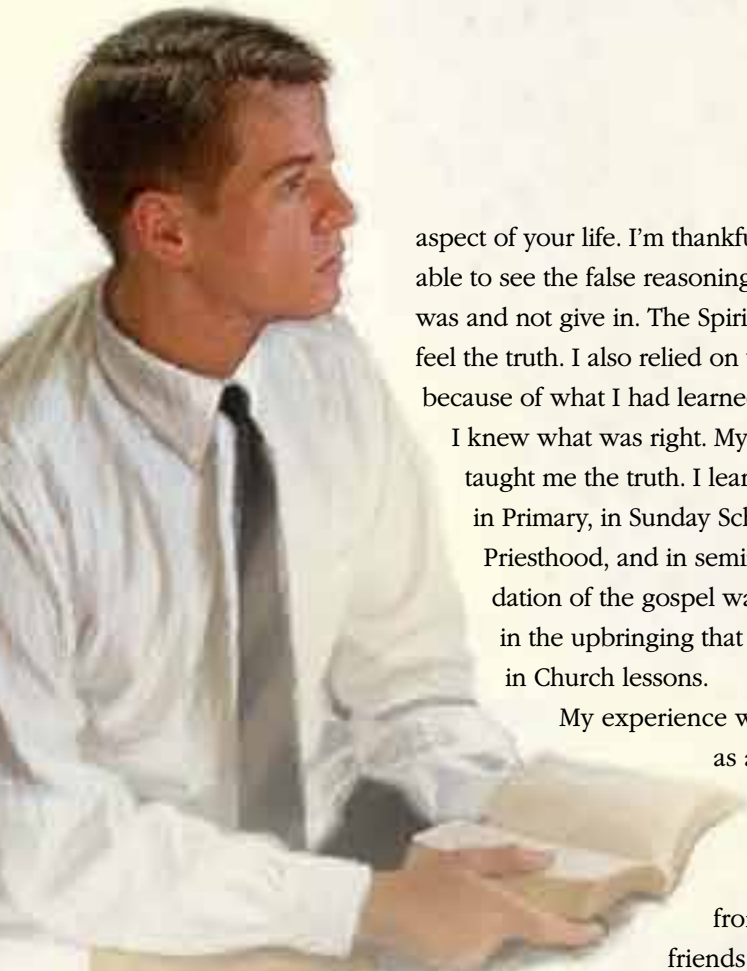
Satan’s Rationalization

“No one will ever know” is a rationalization that Satan uses against us in our lives. It’s a lie. I discovered that for myself during my summer in Brazil. Falling for Satan’s lie is, in fact, how many people get into such things as Internet pornography. They think they can do it in a way that no one will ever know. But in every case, they know and God knows.

Please don’t ever buy into that lie in any



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aspect of your life. I'm thankful that I was able to see the false reasoning for what it was and not give in. The Spirit helped me feel the truth. I also relied on the fact that because of what I had learned in my family, I knew what was right. My parents had taught me the truth. I learned the truth in Primary, in Sunday School, in Aaronic Priesthood, and in seminary. That foundation of the gospel was in my home, in the upbringing that I had had, and in Church lessons.

My experience with temptation as an exchange student came from the outside, from persistent friends. It was an external challenge to the things I believed, and I was able to stand firm. But as additional experiences came to me, I learned that we are going to be tested from all sides. Some of the most difficult challenges are internal ones, when the temptations that have to be resisted take place in the quiet of our own hearts and minds.

Proving the Lord

One of these challenges came when I chose to pay an honest tithe when I was away from home. Every year my dad would take us to tithing settlement. He would help us calculate our tithing, and we would pay it. All during the time I was growing up, I developed this habit of paying tithing. If you had asked me at the time, I would have told you that I had a testimony of tithing.

When I finished high school, I had been

admitted to Harvard University, so I worked that summer and earned money to pay for the expenses that weren't covered by my scholarship. By the end of the first semester, I had foolishly spent all the money that I had earned to get me through the whole year.

At the start of the second semester, I got a job. I couldn't work very much because I was a full-time student, but I worked a few hours a week and received my first paycheck. Of course, it wasn't very much, but it was all I had to get by until the next paycheck.

Then the question arose in my mind, "What about tithing?" I had been in the habit of paying my tithing but had always had sufficient money to pay the tithing. Here I was faced with the challenge: do I pay my tithing when I don't know if I've got enough money to get through the next two weeks?

As I thought about it, I remembered the scripture in Malachi 3:10, where the Lord promises, "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

So I realized that was my answer. I would leave it up to the Lord. I paid my tithing, not sure if I had enough money to carry me until the next paycheck. And a miracle happened. I made it through that two weeks.

It came to me so powerfully that the Lord keeps His word. The Lord came through the way He promised. Just as the scriptures say, if we pay our tithing, He will bless us. That same miracle happened every two weeks throughout the rest of the semester. Before, I had thought I had a testimony of tithing, but now, because of my correct decision, I had a powerful testimony of tithing. The Lord

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always does what He says, so my testimony continued to grow step-by-step.

Believe the Lord

I would encourage you, while in your teen years and as you develop your own testimony, that you need to take the Lord at His word. When the Lord promises something, we can count on it because, as the scriptures teach us, God cannot lie. The Lord keeps His word. Whenever the Lord makes a promise either through His prophet

or directly through His scriptures, we can count on it.

In the scriptures we are encouraged to turn to the Lord. “Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened” (3 Nephi 27:29).

I learned through these and other experiences that this scripture is true. Heavenly Father is always there for us. Whether our challenge is external or internal, His plan, His scriptures, His love, and His gift of the Holy Ghost will see us through. ■