

I DEFENDED MY FAITH

During my freshman year of college, my eyes were opened to the fact that my life as a student would not be as sheltered as before. Nor would what I held dear be accepted.

I found that I stuck out like a sore thumb when I refused to engage in activities that I knew would harm me physically or harm my relationship with Heavenly Father. However, I feared criticism for being a member of the Church and therefore avoided the topic.

One day in an afternoon class, the professor was leading a discussion on how youth develop amid constant discrimination. A girl behind me replied that the discussion made her think of Mormons. I cringed because when the Church was brought up in a class, inappropriate comments usually followed.

As I braced myself for derogatory statements, the teacher asked if any Latter-day Saints were in the class. Stunned at the inquiry, I scanned the room only to find everyone else doing the same. Before I could think twice, my hand was rising from its comfortable position on the desk. I heard an eruption of whispers from across the room.

“One,” the teacher said. The word rang in my ears. After a long silence, I was asked to respond to the debate regarding whether Latter-day Saints are Christians. I was no stranger to the question and was prepared to answer.

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, [and] we preach of Christ’”

(2 Nephi 25:26), I confidently replied. “We are indeed Christian.”

The whispering ceased, but I felt everyone staring at me. I thought I would feel alone. Instead, I felt as if the Savior had sat down next to me and put His hand in mine. Nothing else mattered, for I was filled with joy that strengthened my testimony of Him. I had defended my faith.

I shared more with the class about why Latter-day Saints are Christians. Then I thought of the time President Thomas S. Monson shared the gospel on a bus ride. From this experience he encouraged members to “be

courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe.”¹ As I thought of his words, I realized I had done the thing I was most afraid to do.

I do not know whether the things I said changed anybody’s opinion of the Church, but we need not fear to stand up and share the gospel—wherever we are. Even if we do not bless anybody else, we will always strengthen our testimony and our relationship with Heavenly Father. ■

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NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 67.

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