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EMPTY-HANDED BUT FULL OF FAITH

After serving in the Philippines Cagayan de Oro Mission, I was determined to follow the counsel of the prophet and apostles to marry in the temple. Most of my nonmember relatives and friends, and even some members, said I should earn a college degree first or have a great job before thinking about marriage. I had neither when I became engaged.

I was nervous, but I remembered a story about President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) when he received a mission call to England. He was preparing to leave in the midst of economic pressures and concerns that troubled him. Just before he left, his father handed him a card with five written words: “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36). I also remembered the words of my bishop: “Have faith. God will provide.” These

words gave me courage and strength to move forward.

Though empty-handed, I married my lovely fiancée in the Manila Philippines Temple. Shortly thereafter I started to work for a company that required me to work on Sundays. I wanted to keep the Sabbath day holy, so this job didn’t last long. Many wondered why I had quit my job, but I pressed forward, repeating to myself the words “Have faith. God will provide.”

I began driving a jeepney and working as a sales agent to provide for our basic needs and prepare for the arrival of our first baby. My wife noticed I was exhausted trying to provide for our family. She told me I needed to go back to school, but I thought it would be hard to work, serve in the Church, and be a student.

I was right; it *was* hard. But we did our best to keep the commandments. Often our finances fell short, but with help from the Church’s Perpetual Education Fund, I was able to finish my education before our second child was born. I found a job as a high school teacher and eventually became a seminary and institute coordinator.

Following the counsel of the prophet and other Church leaders helped me realize that marriage provides great opportunities for spiritual growth and maturity. I have been blessed because of my marriage and the gospel.

We don’t need to be afraid, even in the most difficult circumstances. We just need to do our best and remember these words: “Have faith. God will provide.” ■

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