



**To
CHEAT
or**

**NOT to
CHEAT**

By Shery Ann de la Cruz

As a 17-year-old nursing student, I found my second year of college a challenging one. (In the Philippines we finish high school at age 16.) I found the endless quizzes, research projects, and reading assignments to be exhausting. I felt as though I always had dark circles under my eyes, since I normally got little sleep. Despite the heavy workload, I always tried to remember that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.”¹

I knew that if I worked hard, I would have a better future. Whenever I wanted to give up and go to bed without studying, I imagined how sad and defeated I would feel the next day if I did poorly on a quiz or assignment. This was enough motivation to keep me awake so I could study.

Many of my classmates were upset when they got a low score on a quiz. However, they did not want to work and study hard. As a result, students would often “help” one another by sharing answers during quizzes or tests, allowing others to look at their papers when the professor wasn’t watching. I was often tempted to do the same, but I never dared. I have read countless times in Church magazines that members of the Church should have high standards, which means no cheating. So I studied hard and resisted the temptation, even though this sometimes meant getting lower grades than my classmates, since they had each other’s help.

On one particular day I had classes from 7:00 in the morning until 7:00 in the evening, and I had a quiz scheduled in each class. I studied 10 pages for my first quiz alone. “How will I get through all this?” I wondered. Thankfully, I did well on my first quiz. During lunch I studied for my next one. When I went to class and started

the quiz, I realized that I knew the answers to every question but one. “How can this be?” I thought. “I’ve studied hard for this quiz. I should know this answer!”

As I tapped my pen furiously on my chair, it occurred to me that it would take just a moment to turn my head, give my hair a flip, and dart my eyes toward my classmate’s answer. “I could do this just once,” I thought,

I couldn't remember the answer to one question on the quiz. It would be so easy to dart my eyes toward my classmate's answer.

“and I’ll ace the quiz. Just once won’t hurt. Besides, it’s so unfair for me. I study hard, yet I get lower grades than my classmates because I don’t cheat!” Still, I felt uncomfortable. I fidgeted in my chair, trying to make a choice: to cheat or not to cheat.

Then a voice inside me said, “No, Shery! Cheating is wrong, and you know it!” Suddenly I realized that even if I got a perfect score on the quiz, I wouldn’t feel good about my score if I cheated. My Heavenly Father was counting on me to make the right choice—this choice was the real test.

Just then a scripture I’d learned in Sunday School came to my mind:

“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). I knew that Heavenly Father had helped me through countless challenges, including many quizzes and school assignments. How could I forget all He had done for me and choose to sin?

To this day I can’t remember the result of that particular quiz. Whether I came up with the answer or not, I can’t recall. But I have always remembered that I felt good for making the right choice.

Now as a junior I still face the same mountain of schoolwork and the same temptations; however, choosing not to cheat isn’t difficult because I’ve made that choice already, at a time when the temptation was hard to resist. I’ve learned that the joy and satisfaction of getting high grades is greater when I work hard and earn it. Wickedness, indeed, never was happiness (see Alma 41:10). True happiness is found in keeping the commandments and following the counsel of our prophet and other Church leaders. I truly believe the words “Keep the commandments. In this there is safety and peace.”² ■

NOTES

1. “Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.
2. “Keep the Commandments,” *Hymns*, no. 303.