

Being Honest

with Myself—and with God

By Faith Sutherlin Blackhurst

About halfway through my mission, my companion and I were struggling to work well with our ward mission leader. There had been various disagreements, so we decided to talk to the bishop to see what we should do. Deep down, I hoped that the bishop would just have a talk with him and fix our problems for us.

But instead, the bishop had told me that I was being prideful and overly critical of others. I went stomping home feeling misunderstood and frustrated—how could he say that about me? Did he even care about our struggles to share the gospel?

As we walked, I vented my feelings to my companion. But suddenly a phrase came into my head: “The guilty taketh the truth to be hard” (1 Nephi 16:2). It stopped me in my tracks. It was obvious to me that the thought came from the Spirit. My pride may have prevented me from accepting the bishop’s

chastisement as truth—but could I really argue with the Holy Ghost?

I was guilty, and God was letting me know it.

Stomping Out Self-Justification

At that time, it was very tempting to ignore the things I was doing wrong. “None of us likes to admit when we are drifting off the right course,” agrees Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “. . . Consequently, when we do examine our lives, we look through the filter of biases, excuses, and stories we tell ourselves in order to justify unworthy thoughts and actions.”¹

In my case, I had convinced myself that I was complaining for the good of the missionary work in our area. And rather than accepting our ward mission leader’s faithful service—imperfect as it seemed to me—I suddenly saw that I was being ungrateful, impatient, and frankly, unkind. Because of the Spirit’s

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prompting, I could see my actions for what they truly were.

A Spiritual Reality Check

Receiving such direct chastisement from the Spirit was painful, but in the best way. It made me realize that I had to be honest with myself about my flaws.

I knew firsthand that the Spirit could be my greatest ally in the



weaknesses in humility, God can help me turn them into strengths through His grace (see Ether 12:27, 1 Peter 5:5).

After all, honestly acknowledging our weaknesses—or seeing ourselves as we truly are—is the first step on the path to positive change. As I continue to be honest and seek guidance from the Spirit, my Heavenly Father will help me know what needs to change in my life. And as I rely on Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and His refining power, I will see improvement in myself.

Although it was unpleasant to admit my mistakes in that moment of chastisement, I know that when I choose to be humble and honest with myself and with God, I am happier and more accepting of myself. I know that despite my flaws, I am of divine worth to my Heavenly Father—but He still wants me to improve. Through the power of His Son Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, I can become so much better than I ever dreamed I could be. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lord, Is It I?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 58.
2. Larry R. Lawrence, “What Lack I Yet?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 35.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lord, Is It I?” 58.

process. I felt that Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy spoke directly to me when he invited Church members to “humbly ask the Lord the following question: ‘What is keeping me from progressing?’ . . . If you are sincere,” he said, “the answer will soon become clear. It will be revelation intended just for you.”² I knew that I had the power to not only receive promptings

about my weaknesses but also improve them.

From Weakness to Strength

My experience taught me that “if [my] weaknesses and shortcomings remain obscured in the shadows, then the redeeming power of the Savior cannot heal them and make them strengths.”³

However, if I am brave enough to be vulnerable and admit my