

NOW I KNOW THERE IS A GOD

Several years ago I served as a temple worker in the Santiago Chile Temple. During one evening shift I began to experience difficulty breathing, so I reluctantly requested to leave early.

As I walked to the subway station, I prayed that the train I needed would be there so I could get home soon. I thought my prayer was answered when I saw the train stopped at the platform. But as I approached, I saw the train staff rushing to help a passenger who was experiencing a possible heart attack. The words of my favorite hymn pierced my mind: “Have I done any good in the world today?”¹ I immediately felt impressed to help.

I hurried to where the staff took the young man to wait for the ambulance, and they allowed me to stay. I prayed to know what to do and pled with Heavenly Father to spare the young

man’s life. I didn’t want to leave him alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm. I assured him that he had a long life ahead and that God had a purpose for him. I found out his family’s phone number, called them, and let them know their son was on his way to the hospital and was not alone.

When the paramedics arrived, I followed them to the ambulance. I felt I should stay with the young man until his family arrived. To my surprise, the paramedics decided I should come with them, so I held the young man’s hand all the way to the hospital.

Shortly after we arrived, they took him to the emergency room, and I went outside to watch for his family. When they came, his mother broke into tears, threw her arms around me, and said she was so glad there

are still good people on earth.

A week later I received a phone call from the young man. He told me the doctors said that remaining calm had been critical during that time before he reached the hospital.

Until that day, he did not believe in God. I was speechless when he exclaimed, “You saved my life, and I am forever grateful to you! Now I know there is a God.”

When I left the temple early that day, the Spirit led me to the right place at the right time. I feel grateful to our Heavenly Father for guiding me and giving me courage to do as the hymn says and not let the opportunity pass by, even if the only thing I could do was hold the hand of a stranger. ■
Carla Sofia Gavidia, Ontario, Canada

NOTE

1. “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.

didn’t want to leave the young man alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm.



I WAS THE NEEDY ONE

A few years ago a beat-up car appeared in our meetinghouse parking lot. It belonged to a single father of four children. He had come to ask for assistance. Our ward found them housing, and the father began bringing his family to church.

Sometimes the children's clothes were clean and sometimes they were dirty, but their hair was always messy. We never knew how snarled and tangled it would be. Each week the Primary president brought hair detangler and brushes. She and a teacher would work to fix the children's hair before Primary.

I was a counselor in the Primary presidency, and I admired the ability of these two sisters to embrace these unwashed children. I could not bring myself to touch their hair, and I wondered how these sisters did it. I eased my conscience by telling myself that I could help by watching the rest of the children while these women worked.

The youngest child in this family was three years old. She could not speak intelligibly, but she tried to make loud musical sounds when we sang. This irritated me.

Because three-year-old children have short attention spans, I began putting this little girl on my lap to help her listen. She would smile at me in appreciation, and I began to feel the joy and love that Heavenly Father had for this unwashed child—His child. Eventually, I found myself overlooking

the dirt and grabbing a brush to smooth out her tangled locks. I even decided that her attempt to sing was a joyful sound.

A few months later the children's father got up in testimony meeting and thanked us for helping his children.

The next week the family was gone.

I am grateful for the chance I had to serve those children. When they arrived, I felt they were too needy, but I found out that I was the one who needed them to help me change. ■

Diane Hatch, Arizona, USA

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MY BISHOP'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

On my birthday one Sunday morning, my husband and I were getting ready for church when the phone rang. I answered, and the bishop said, "I know today is your birthday, but could you meet with me in my office in 30 minutes? I would like to talk with you."

Curious, I hurried to church.

In his office, the bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you. The Lord is calling you to serve as Young Women president. Will you accept this calling?" I felt overwhelmed, but I accepted the calling. I was sustained and set apart that day.

When I returned home after church, I sat on my bed. The weight of responsibility hit me. I cried and felt inadequate for the work. What a responsibility to guide those young women! I was baptized when I was 22 and had never attended Young Women activities before. How could I be Young Women president?

I did the only thing I knew to do—I knelt and asked Heavenly Father for guidance in this new calling. At that moment I had an experience I will never forget. As I visualized each young woman, I understood that each was a daughter of Heavenly Father.

Each needed a president who loved her and could help her understand that God loved her. In my mind I saw the names of all the less-active young women (whom I had never met), and I understood that they were also daughters of Heavenly Father and needed my attention. I felt each one's potential.

The following months were not easy. I worked hard to get to know each young woman and to understand her needs. Together with the active young women, our presidency helped those who had been less active return to activity. I saw the hand of the Lord at work in many ways.

When I was released from my calling, I worried that perhaps I could have done more. Upon arriving home, I knelt and asked Heavenly Father if my service had been acceptable. I received a sweet feeling that He was pleased.

I thought back on that birthday when I could have turned down the calling because of all my other responsibilities. But I am the one who would have lost most by not accepting the calling. I would have lost the opportunity to learn humility, gain understanding, develop patience, and become an instrument in the Lord's hands. But mostly I would have failed the Lord in the confidence He placed in me, and I would have failed to learn that the opportunity to serve is a gift. ■

Mariana Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you."



SHE NEEDS LOVE

I was not a very impressive teenager and spent little time serving others. During this time my mother invited me to come with her to visit my great-aunt at a nursing home.

My cousin and her daughter Stephanie accompanied us on this visit. Stephanie was seven or eight years old. As we walked into the nursing home, she waved at everyone she saw. They lit up as if she were handing out sunshine and rainbows. I, on the other hand, avoided eye contact.

When we entered the room that my great-aunt shared with another elderly woman, I did my best to disappear into the background. Stephanie, however, jumped onto my aunt's bed and began to regale her with stories.

I noticed something about this room. On my aunt's side were signs of love and family. Pictures and crayon drawings hung on the wall, and flowers adorned a nightstand. The other side of the room was sterile and bare. There were no signs of any visitors; no cards or pictures hung on the wall.

My aunt's roommate sat alone in a wheelchair and did not acknowledge our presence. She was humming a tune and tapping the arms of her wheelchair, which made me uncomfortable.

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?" Stephanie's mother leaned down and whispered, "She needs love." I was not prepared

for what happened next.

Without hesitation, Stephanie ran over and jumped into the woman's lap. She then began to tell her stories and ask all kinds of questions. The woman did not answer. Instead, tears ran down her face as she embraced Stephanie. For the next several minutes, Stephanie sat in her lap, stroking her hair and kissing her cheek.

I had never witnessed this type of unselfish love before, and I tried to hide my tears. Later, as we drove away from the nursing home, I marveled at how young Stephanie could be so selfless and so full of love and compassion for a complete stranger.

Eventually I turned my life around and served a full-time mission. While I served, Stephanie wrote me cute letters that included drawings just like the ones in my aunt's room in the nursing home.

Before I returned home, I received the devastating news that an illness had claimed Stephanie's life. I still weep that her light went out so soon, but I remain grateful for her example. She taught me what service truly is.

We do not ever have to wonder how or if we should serve. If our hearts are in the right place, then service will become a part of who we are, not just what we do. ■

Jay McFarland, Utah, USA

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?"

