

One Sunday WAS THE DIFFERENCE

NAME WITHHELD

A lesson I had heard many times before suddenly changed my life.

As a child I believed what my parents and Primary teachers taught me about the gospel. I was excited to be baptized and go to church. But as I grew older, things began to change.

My dad was in the Air Force, and so we moved every three years. Usually, there were only a few members of the Church; often I was the only one. When we moved to Pennsylvania, there was only one other member of the Church my age at my new school. It seemed like everyone used bad language, smoked, and drank. I was different, and I didn't know how I could get them to accept me as a Mormon.

A group of girls eventually did accept me. Although they drank, smoked, and did drugs, they didn't pressure me to join in, so I figured it was OK. But just by being with them, I started developing bad habits. I went behind my parents' backs to do things I knew I shouldn't, like watching inappropriate movies, dating earlier than I was allowed, and using bad language.

My mom, realizing what was happening, tried to get me to stop hanging out with these people. But instead of seeing her love and concern, I resented her for it. I became disrespectful and defied her and the Church at every turn, putting down gospel teachings and being rude to the girls in my branch. I told myself I didn't care that I was unhappy. But I did care.

I thought I couldn't change, and I began to lose hope. Then one Sunday, a new Young Women leader gave her first lesson. As a complete stranger was teaching me things so many had taught before, something made me listen. She spoke about the importance of temple marriage and eternal families, and her lesson gave me a reason to

change. That Sunday I realized why the Church should be important in my life.

I had burned a lot of bridges, and although I had been a member of the Church my whole life, there was still much I didn't know. But that Sunday my conversion began. While the road ahead of me was hard and sometimes discouraging, with the love and guidance of those around me, I made progress. I learned that I am a child of God and that He loves me and wants me to return to Him.

The temple meant a lot to me during this process and showed me the path I needed to follow. When a sister in my branch asked me if I could do a family baptism for her, I could tell how much it meant to her. I knew that I could not take this temple trip for granted, and I wanted to be worthy.

Although it was difficult, I severed ties with friends who brought me down. I needed friends who would uphold my standards. I got rid of music that contained foul language and stopped using that language myself. I had scripture study and personal prayer daily. Until it became a part of my life, I never knew how much the gospel could help me. Now I find my days less hectic, and I am able to live in a more Christlike manner.

As I sat in the temple, waiting to do the work for that sister's ancestor, I knew why I was there and how important it all was. I now look forward to temple trips, and I am not ashamed to tell my friends about them.

I regret so many past mistakes, but now I know that I am on the right track. I'm not perfect, and I know I still have a lot to learn. But the gospel has brought happiness into my life once again, and even though it was delayed for a while, I am truly converted. **NE**



If we will turn to the Lord and believe on His name, we can change. He will give us the power to change our lives. . . . We can be taken from 'the darkest abyss' to 'behold the marvelous light of God' (Mosiah 27:29). We can be forgiven. We can find peace."

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Power to Change," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 123.