



Losing My

Father

By Chris Deaver

I had taught others about the plan of salvation, but what did I really believe?

One night while I was on my mission in the beautiful mountains of Cajamarca, Peru, my companion and I arrived home from a hard day's work, happy with the efforts we had made. The phone rang. I picked it up, and my mission president's voice cracked with emotion as he said, "Elder Deaver, your father just had a stroke. He's in critical condition and will probably die tonight."

The next thing I knew, I was sitting in front of my desk, where I had worked and studied for one and a half years, in a place where I felt I had literally given my soul to the Lord and the people. I was in shock. I simply could not believe it. These things were always supposed to happen to other people. Why me?

Fortunately, my companion, Elder Allen, was a spiritual giant. We knelt down and began to pray for understanding. We wanted to understand the will of the

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Lord. Still, in my heart, I was pained and suffering. I didn't sleep that whole night.

We went out to preach the next morning with a desire to find some listening soul. My companion, an Idaho cowboy, led the way. We arrived at the home of the Reyes family. A woman invited us in, and we sat down at the table of the dining room and started a discussion. She was confused about the purpose of life. She had seen family members die and didn't understand why. In my heart, I somehow knew that this opportunity would arise, though I still had an emotional hole in me, where it felt like my dad was missing. Even though I felt weak, I knew it was time for me to bear testimony. I had testified about the eternal nature of families during my whole mission, but did I really know *now*?

This was my test, my time to shine. I shared my part of the discussion, and the moment came when I bore testimony that families can be together forever.

The woman was touched deeply as the Spirit testified. Families are forever. That is our message. The Book of Mormon is a book about families. The plan is to save the family of Heavenly Father.

I also found comfort in other scriptures. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). This scripture means a great deal to me because of this particular experience.

My father passed on, and I managed not only to live through the ordeal, but also to grow in faith and feeling in the gospel. I came to know our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, like I never had before and even felt the presence of my father with me in the mission field.

As you become a full-time representative of the Lord, set aside all of your worldly concerns, and focus strictly on the work. And never, ever give up. As a result, you will find power in the Lord Jesus Christ, who strengthens you. **NE**

