

# DO I EVEN HAVE A *Testimony?*

*One experience during a testimony meeting gave me a lot to think about.*

By Hugh Cole

**D**uring a recent fast and testimony meeting, I sat on a cushioned folding chair in our little branch building and tried to convince myself to go up and bear my testimony. I don't necessarily get stage fright, but I don't enjoy talking in front of everybody either. Part of me wanted to get up there, and the other part made up excuses not to. The words "I don't even have a testimony" popped into my mind.

I quickly took those words back, if you can do that with thoughts, because I knew it wasn't true. "Of course I have a testimony," I said to myself. "It may not be an extremely great or strong testimony of every gospel topic, but I have a strong belief in some gospel principles."

I started listing them in my mind. "I know that Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost love all of us. I believe that families are extremely important and that through the plan of salvation, families can live together forever."

I had recently turned 14, and my mom told me with a smile, "Joseph Smith was 14 when he had the First Vision." I knew this, but that simple sentence strengthened my testimony of Joseph Smith. I know that he was a true prophet called of God and that he translated the Book of Mormon and restored the gospel.

Not all of this came to mind right then, but in the days that followed I thought a lot about that Sunday. As with my testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith, my belief and testimony of other things didn't grow just because of what I learned or heard but also through things that happened to me.

For example, last October my grandpa passed away. He had been sick with diabetes for a long time. His was the first funeral of a family member I'd been to, and it was a very sad time for my family and me. Being among all of my relatives during the funeral and knowing we would see Grandpa again strengthened my testimony that families are extremely important and play a key part in Heavenly Father's plan. I know that because my mom and dad were sealed in the temple, our family can live together forever. I am so thankful for their choice.

This week my dad taught us a lesson about the Holy Ghost during family home evening. He listed several things we can do to bring the Holy Ghost into our hearts. Among them is bearing our testimonies. He said that it takes courage to bear testimony but that the Lord will bless you with the Holy Ghost for your bravery. This week is a fast Sunday, and I look forward to sharing my testimony with my branch. **NE**



## TESTIMONY COMES BY GROWTH

"A testimony is not thrust upon you; it grows. And a testimony is a testimony, and it should be respected, whether it is small or large. We become taller in our testimony like we grow in physical stature and hardly know it is happening, because it comes by growth."

President Boyd K. Packer,  
President of the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles,  
"How Does the Spirit  
Speak to Us?" *New  
Era*, Feb. 2010, 3.

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**"I KNOW  
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