

The

MIRACLE



I had a severe case of scoliosis—extreme curvature of the spine. I asked to have the faith I needed for a miracle to take place in my life.

I Needed

By Nicole Levi

*I kept hoping and pleading for a miracle.
But my prayers weren't answered in the way
I expected.*

A couple of months before my sophomore year in high school, my mom took me shopping for school clothes. While I was trying on a shirt that was probably a couple of sizes too small for me, I decided to model it for my mom and act like I wanted it. When I opened the dressing room door, my mom's reaction was not what I had imagined.

"What's that hump on your back?"

"What hump? It's just a shirt."

My mom studied my back then immediately called and scheduled an appointment for me to see a specialist. The look of concern on her face scared me.

Days later, in the specialist's office, we learned that I had a severe case of scoliosis, extreme curvature of the spine. There are four levels of scoliosis, and mine was a level three. If I could decrease the curve to level two, then I wouldn't need surgery. We began doing everything we could, but the curve of my spine was increasing. The next step was to try a back brace. My first day of school was the day I was fitted.

The brace was very uncomfortable. I had to wear a layer underneath, or the brace would leave a nasty rash. I also wore a layer over the brace so it wouldn't rub holes in my nice school shirts. Wearing that many layers in Arizona wasn't the easiest thing to do. There were days I left school early because of heat exhaustion. Other days I came home feeling hideous and gross. At times I would lie on the floor for hours because it hurt to move. I tried to be brave, but I often cried myself to sleep. It all seemed

too much for me to handle.

Classes were hard. I remember days I would pray the seminary hymn was one I knew, since I was unable to reach the hymnbook from under my desk. In traffic safety class, my brace kept me from driving in reverse because I couldn't turn around. I dropped my pencil during tests and couldn't pick it up. Dance used to be my favorite class, but it became my hardest. My mom helped me dress every morning. She even tied my shoes for me.

Through all this I persisted in studying my scriptures. Every night I prayed with a fervent heart for a miracle. In my journal I described days where the pain was unbearable, but I always, on every page, reminded myself of my Savior. "I know He'll help me get through this," I would write. "Someday He'll give me my miracle."

Halfway through the year, things began looking up. I was preparing to receive my patriarchal blessing, and I had a strong feeling that somehow this blessing could be my miracle. I attentively listened as the patriarch said, "Remember, Nicole, faith works miracles." An overwhelming sensation burned inside of me. I had been praying for a miracle since day one. I thought for sure my miracle was coming.

For once, I couldn't wait for my next doctor's appointment. I just knew that the X-rays would be good. But when the day arrived and the doctor walked in and posted my X-rays, I felt complete shock. The curvature of my spine was worse than ever. I didn't understand. I was praying, reading my scriptures, keeping a journal, and fasting. I was doing everything to keep my faith and my testimony strong. What was I doing wrong?

That night I knelt by my bed and poured out all my thoughts and feelings to my Father in Heaven. I told Him



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of the pain I was in and how confused I was. I asked to have the faith I needed for a miracle to take place in my life.

After many prayers, we found a different doctor. The X-rays in his office were, unfortunately, the same. His first words to me were, "So, I bet you were expecting a miracle."

I just nodded my head.

The doctor began explaining his procedure for surgery, then he said exactly what I needed to hear. "Surgery," he said, "is the miracle." That overwhelming sensation began to burn inside me once more.

I accepted the option of surgery. Of course, there were still challenges, but I recovered faster than any of my doctor's other patients. I knew my Father in Heaven blessed me and answered my prayers. Surgery may not have been the miracle I was expecting, or even hoping for, but it was the one I needed. It was the one I learned the most from.

Words can't explain in full detail all this experience brought me. Words can't describe the pain, the heartache, or the daily challenges. Most of all, words can't describe the closeness I felt to my Savior.

It doesn't matter how many things you're doing right; adversity will still come. Just think of everything our Savior went through, and He was absolutely perfect. Thinking of my Savior is what got me through my hardship. It was the most painful time in my life, but because of Him, I was happy. **NE**