





Learning from Personal Progress

By Marissa Jensen

One little book helped lead me to joy and guide me through trials.

I remember my first Mutual activity. I went as a guest or investigator a couple of days after my 12th birthday, before I was even a member.

To be honest, I really didn't want to be there. My excuse was that I didn't know anyone who claimed they went to this Church. At the time, I was attending a different Christian program that was just mainly fun. I really liked my friends there and the competitive games provided by the youth directors. So technically I was comparing the two church programs to see which one I liked best, and I was sure that I already knew which one I preferred and didn't need to prove it by going to Mutual.

Or so I thought.

After my mom pleaded and begged, I found myself the following Wednesday night dragging up the concrete steps and opening the door for the first time.

I was instantly welcomed by many girls my age and even some older. "Strange," I thought. "They don't even know me and yet, they're going out of their way to be extra nice." There was this warm, sweet peace enfolding me as I timidly sat down in a chair in the room where the Beehives were meeting. I don't really remember much from my real first encounter with the Church, but I do remember one thing—how I felt.

I do recall the Beehive activity was being read out of a cute periwinkle-colored book. I participated to the best of my ability and passed off my first value experience. I didn't know at the time that this little Personal Progress

book, and what it guided me to learn, would reach the depths of my heart and only four months later help me want to enter the waters of baptism.

Now, almost four years later, I have gained a humble testimony of my Savior through the teachings and powerful messages located right in that same cute little book I was introduced to years ago. This book helped me understand and live the gospel by studying and heeding the scriptures and words of modern prophets.

I am so grateful that I followed the counsel of Jesus Christ and came unto Him. I shudder to think of where I might have been drifting if I had stayed with what I thought was just a fun church program so long ago.

I came unto Christ because of these words in the Book of Mormon: "And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing" (Moroni 10:30).

He continues and strongly states in verse 32: "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God."

A short time ago, my world came to a drastic halt when my beloved friend became very ill. At first I just assumed it was just a very bad cold, and he would

recover. But to my saddened heart, the news soon came to me that my dear companion was dying slowly of a rare sickness.

I am talking of my horse, which I rode in various competitions around the United States. We had the honor of riding to our first national champion title at the 2007 Canadian National Arabian horse show.

He was everything I could ever hope for as a faithful mount and friend. Now he was dying of liver and kidney failure. He taught me a lot through the nearly four years I had been graciously given to know and adore him.

I now know that this was all part of God's plan and that this would be a trial for me to overcome in my life. I would have to lean on the principles I was taught in the scriptures, by prophets, and in Personal Progress, as my faith was tested. After many weeks of struggling,

I realized I had forgotten to go first to the Lord for comfort.

I know that I am a daughter of a Heavenly Father who loves me and I love Him. I know that all the Personal Progress values reflect the Redeemer, even Christ himself. And as we strive to become perfect just like Him, we can go to those values and study them thoughtfully and prepare ourselves for any obstacles in our daily lives.

I hope that Young Women everywhere will learn of the unique importance of Personal Progress and work diligently to fulfill all of its requirements. **NE**



Going to *Mutual activities and working on Personal Progress values changed my life and taught me how to overcome obstacles.*