

MORE THAN

When my friend questioned my
if there was something



By Kelsee Mortensen

“I want to be a veterinarian when I get older. What do you want to be, Kelsee?”

“I want to be a stay-at-home mom and an author,” I proudly said. To me, there was no better job than mom, but clearly my friend didn’t agree.

“You want to be a stay-at-home mom? You’re going to make your husband support you?” My friend wasn’t a member of the Church and didn’t understand the importance of a mother’s role.

“Well, I’m going to write as well. And even if I don’t become an author, I want to marry a man who believes what I believe, someone who wants to support our family,” I said.

“Writing doesn’t get you anywhere. You’ll be poor.”

I was getting irritated. Couldn’t she just be OK with my choice and move on?

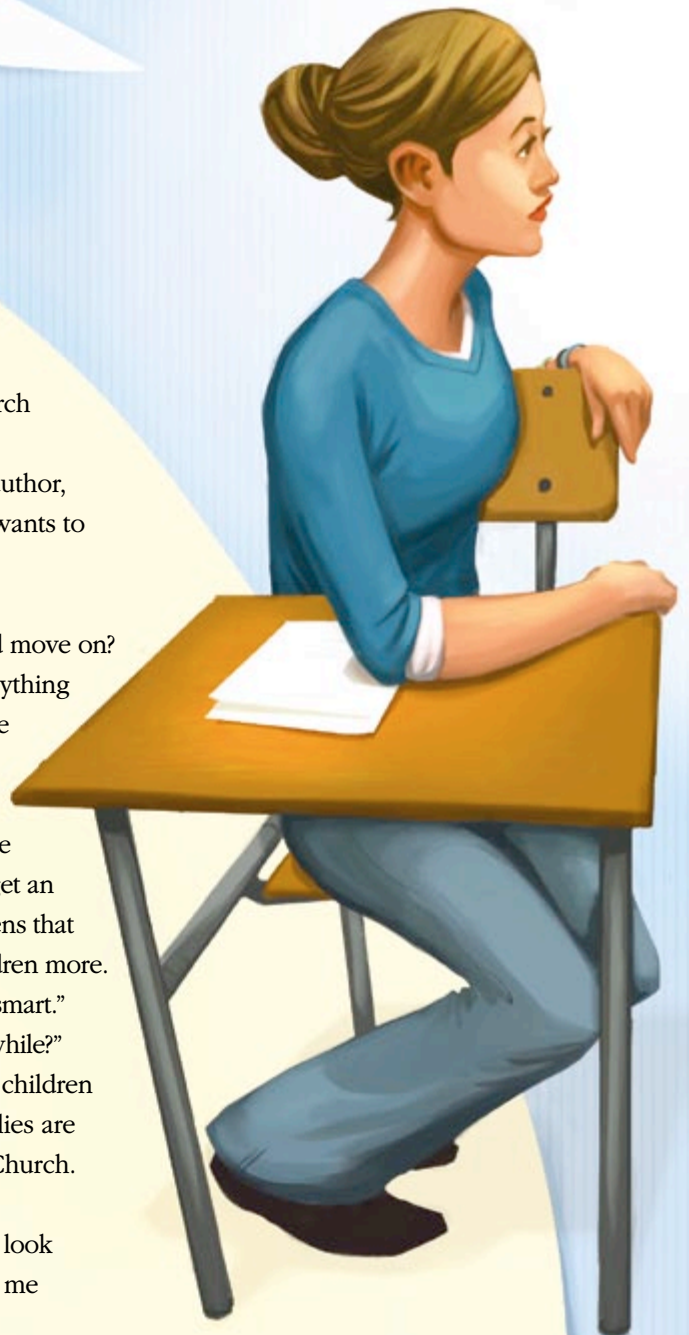
“Why do you work so hard in school if you’re not going to do anything with your life? Are you going to go to college? You’re too smart to be a stay-at-home mom.”

This hurt me a lot, but I tried to explain: “I work hard in school because I know how important education is. In my Church, we believe that we’ll take all of our knowledge with us to the next life.¹ And I’ll get an education just in case I’m not able to get married or something happens that doesn’t allow my husband to work. Plus, I’ll be able to teach my children more. Just because someone’s a stay-at-home mom doesn’t mean she’s not smart.”

“Do you think your kids will get tired of being around you after awhile?”

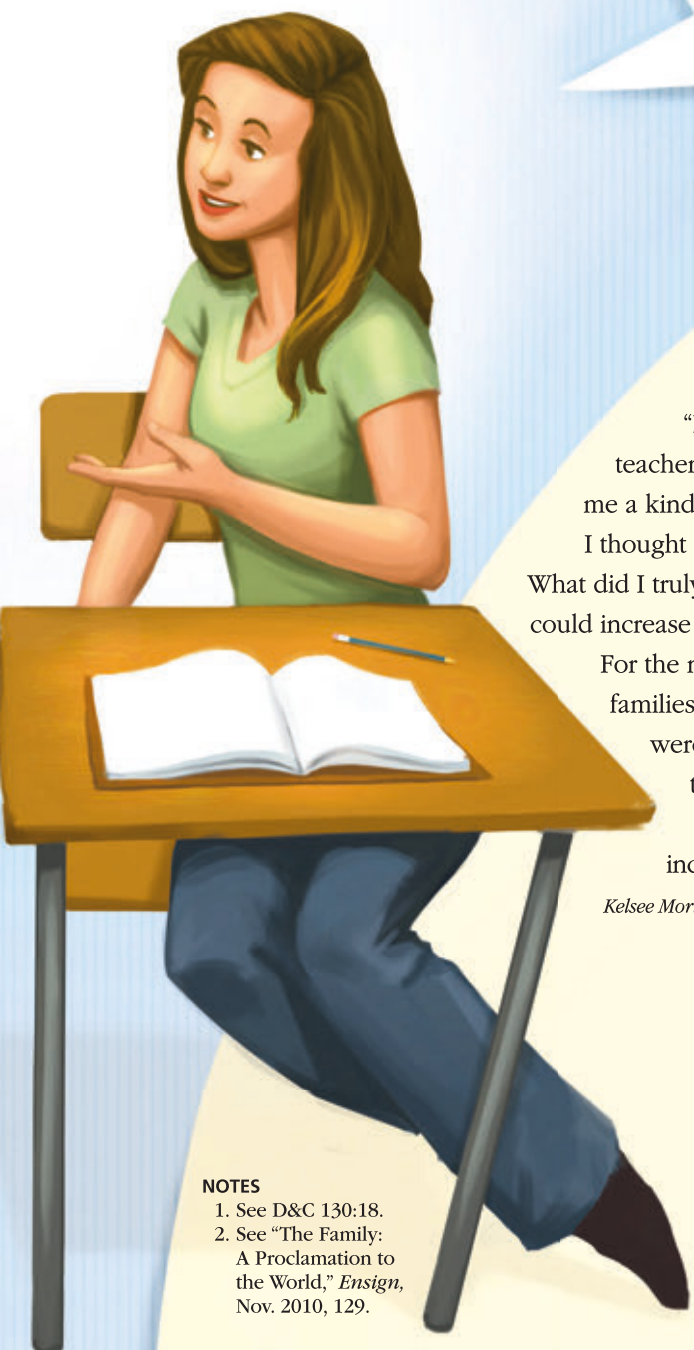
“When I’m a mom, I’ll be responsible for taking good care of my children and nurturing them,”² I said. My friend still didn’t understand. “Families are important,” I said. “They’re essential to the lives of members of my Church. And they should be to everyone else too.”

The school bell rang, and my friend turned away angrily. A pained look came over my face. My teacher must have seen it, because she called me



"JUST A MOM"

career choice, I began to wonder more important for me.



over to her desk.

"Is she mad at you because of your choice?" she asked. "Yes," I said. My teacher called out and motioned to my friend, who was heading out the door. My friend came back with a look of anger on her face. "Why are you so upset?" my teacher asked. "Because she could do so much more—be a doctor, something!" "If Kelsee would be happy being a mom, then she should do it," my teacher said. "And besides, the world needs good mothers." My teacher gave me a kind smile, and my friend hurried out. I was grateful for my teacher's words. I thought about this experience for a long time. It had given me a sense of doubt. What did I truly believe? Did I really think families were important? I prayed that I could increase my testimony of the importance of families.

For the next two Sundays, my Young Women leaders prepared lessons about families—without knowing what I was thinking about. I felt that these lessons were Heavenly Father's way of showing me that what I'd told my friend is true—families and motherhood really are important.

I will be eternally grateful for this experience and the lessons that increased my testimony. Families are important, and I love mine deeply. **NE**

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MOTHERHOOD AS A CAREER

"Some view homemaking with outright contempt, arguing it demeans women. . . . They ridicule what they call 'the mommy track' as a career. This is not fair or right. We do not diminish the value of what women or men achieve in any worthy endeavor or career . . . but we still recognize there is not a higher good than motherhood and fatherhood in marriage. There is no superior career. . . . Whatever else a woman may accomplish, her moral influence is no more optimally employed than here."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Moral Force of Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 30–31.

NOTES

1. See D&C 130:18.
2. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.