



BY ANDY JORGENSEN

I CHANGED MY LIFE

Could a prophet's promise give me the happiness I sought?

Much like the feeling of braces on my teeth, I could feel my 15-year-old life pulling and tightening me in painful directions. And I wasn't sure I liked the way life was lining up.

My family was strong in the Church. We got along fine. And I had no problem handling my schoolwork. The pain came from outside home and school. Although I had many acquaintances, I had no real friends. Some of my friends from younger years went to different junior high schools. Those who came to mine acted differently now. Or maybe I was different. Add to that the need to be cool, strong, and athletic, to be a part of the guys' group, to have girls like me, and to live the gospel all at the same time—and I had a case of the emotional and spiritual orthodontic blues.

I often dreaded falling asleep at night because I knew the next morning I would have to face another long day of being scowled at and teased and walking alone down hostile hallways. I was unhappy.

One gray and rainy day, I stared at my desk in seminary instead of 2 Thessalonians, and I slipped into a daydream of self-pity. I thought about how I always said my prayers. I never skipped seminary. I went to church and tried to magnify my calling as an Aaronic Priesthood holder. I stayed away from sins that the prophet had warned us about. I was doing everything I was supposed to do. So why wasn't I happy? I didn't expect to feel superior, but I saw others who didn't do the right things, and it seemed to me that they were happy and had friends.

in Just 30 Minutes a Day

I prayed every night to make friends or to be able to be happy without having anyone to talk to or have fun with, but I kept waking up to see another day of circles of friends that didn't quite encircle me.

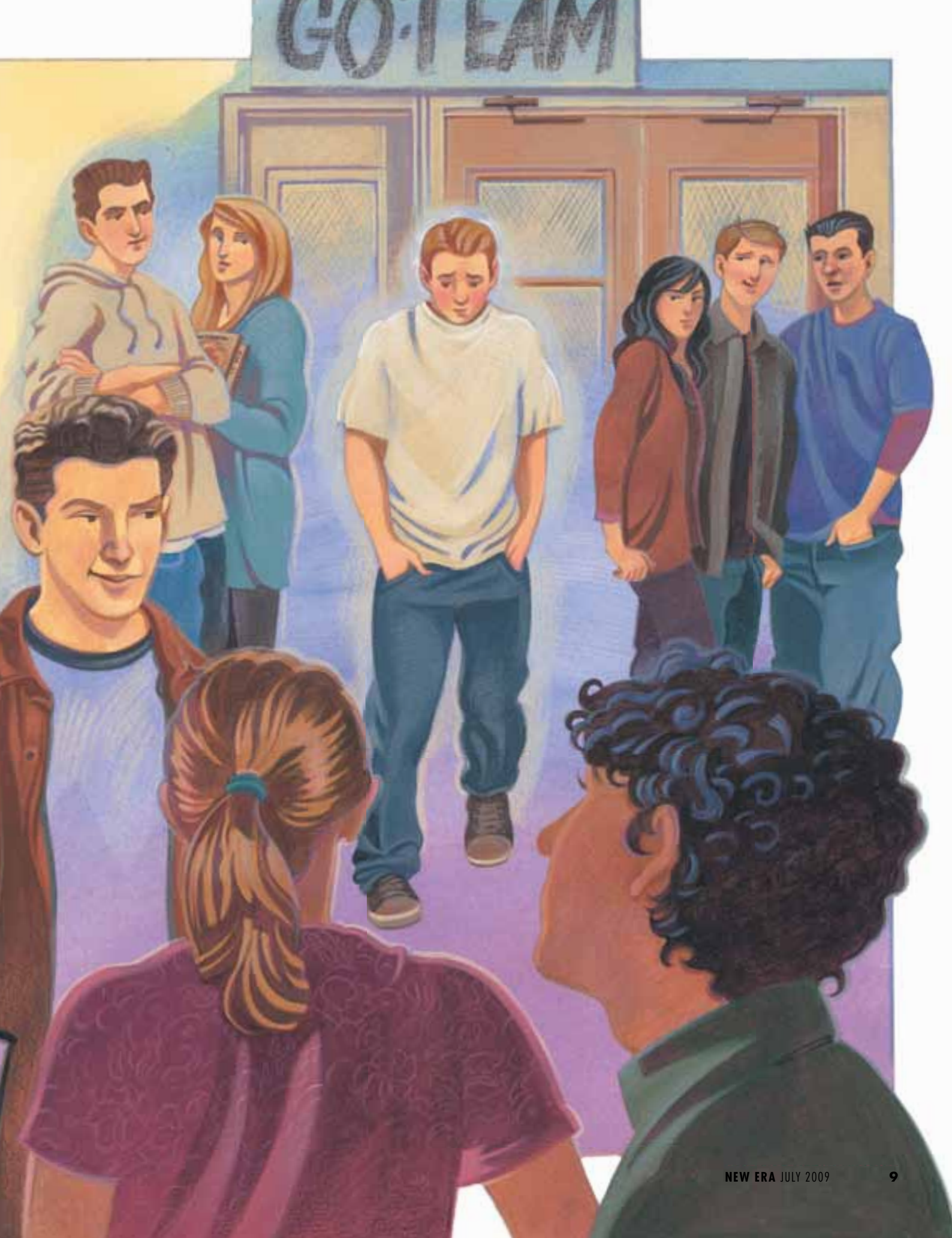
That's what I thought that day in seminary, being exactly where I was supposed to be, feeling as bad as ever. Then my seminary teacher said something that jolted me from my sorry-for-myself daydream. I'm not sure why it grabbed my attention, but an energy and an urge to sit up, watch, and listen leaped into my spirit.

He said, "I know we are focusing on the New Testament this semester, but I also encourage you to read the Book of Mormon every day." Then he shared a quote that seemed to illuminate the room as well as my mind:

"It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You



GO TEAM



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will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

I had heard the words of the modern prophets before, and I had felt the Holy Ghost’s confirmation that they were true, but I had never experienced this sensation. It was like a warm hug and a slap in the face at the same time.

In the next two weeks I read about lone Abinadi courageously teaching of the Savior’s Atonement and calling the wicked King Noah and his priests to repentance (see Mosiah 11–17). I read and felt the powerful message of Alma to the people at the waters of Mormon. They humbled themselves and covenanted to be loving and loyal to the name of Christ and to each other (see Mosiah 18). I read about Alma the Younger, who was “racked with eternal torment” before his “soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was [his] pain” (Alma 36:12, 20). I read of the love that compelled the sons of Mosiah to share the word of God for 14 years among hostile strangers (see Alma 17:1–5).

I changed a portion of my day—just half an hour—and it changed my entire life. I found that President Benson was right; there is something more to the Book of Mormon. I woke in the morning and cheerfully greeted my Heavenly Father in prayer and my family at the breakfast table. I walked the same halls where I had before walked alone. No new friends appeared at my side all of a sudden, but thanks to Book of Mormon study, I felt companionship. The presence of ancient prophets and heroes and the Son of God that I had felt from scripture study the evening before stayed with me. The Holy Ghost was with me. The power of which President Benson spoke was with me, and I was finding life in greater abundance. I was happy. **NE**

For more on scripture study, read Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Getting Where You Want to Go” (*New Era*, May 2003, 4).

