



It hadn't worked well the first time, but we were blessed with a second chance.

DO-OVER

BY DEVON BLACK

It was a hot summer day in Japan. I was 10 months into my mission and had finished packing my luggage and getting ready to transfer to another area. Now I was leaving the apartment to catch a train to a new city.

More than anything, I remember the look my companion and I gave each other then. Usually farewells like these are marked by words of thanks and well-wishing. But I remember my companion's simply glancing down the hall at me with no hint of friendliness. I did the same to him and then walked out the door.

The previous five weeks of my mission had been bitter and contentious. I had been in the city for several months when this companion had arrived. From day one we started fighting. We found we had different attitudes and ideas. When we had disagreements, instead of cooperating, we blamed each other and insisted that the other one change.

Some nights we came home frustrated and barely talked to each other. Most mornings we almost dreaded having to leave the apartment. The work in the area suffered as contention and selfishness drove away the Spirit.

When I transferred, I moved on to new places and experiences, but I often found myself thinking back on the unpleasant memories of those five weeks. As I gained maturity and experience, I felt regret. I began to recognize the good things my companion had done and realized how foolish our arguments had been. Sometimes I would hear other missionaries say complimentary things about him. Deep down, I felt guilty that I had nothing good to say.

Months later, I was reading back through my journal entries from that month. As I thought back on my

mistakes and the way I had left, I resolved to do something. I knew I might never see him again, but I followed an impression I had and wrote him a long letter, apologizing and expressing my desire to reconcile.

Three weeks later my zone leader called. I was being transferred to another new city. To my surprise, he told me that I had been assigned to work again with that same missionary.

Having the same companion twice was very rare in my mission, and I knew it wasn't happening by chance. The day we met again, he thanked me for sending the letter, and we spent a long time that night talking and making amends.

Our second time together was the opposite of the first. This time we put aside our arguments and turned to cooperation and respect. As the days flew by, we became close friends and would come home at night talking and laughing about how the day had gone. We were always eager to go out again the next morning. We had the Spirit with us as we worked and taught, and we had much more success as a result.

After a few weeks my companion was transferred. The day he left, we gave each other a warm embrace. This time, I experienced the bittersweet feeling of saying good-bye to a friend.

A few years have passed, but I still remember the valuable lessons I learned about friendship, forgiveness, and second chances. We don't always get another chance the way my companion and I did, and I learned that it's best to make amends before it's too late. **NE**



COMPANIONS