

# To CHEAT *or* NOT



By Shery Ann de la Cruz

**A**s a 17-year-old nursing student, I found my second year of college a challenging one. (In the Philippines we finish high school at age 16.) I found the endless quizzes, research projects, and reading assignments to be exhausting. I felt as though I always had dark circles under my eyes, since I normally got little sleep. Despite the heavy workload, I always tried to remember that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

# to CHEAT

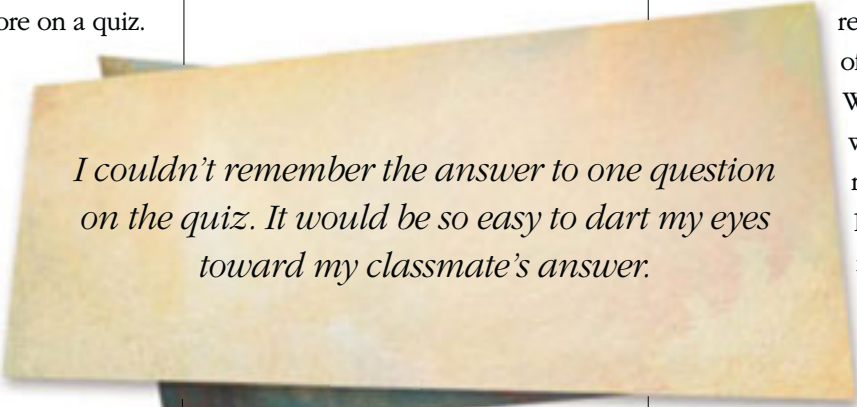
I knew that if I worked hard, I would have a better future. Whenever I wanted to give up and go to bed without studying, I imagined how sad and defeated I would feel the next day if I did poorly on a quiz or assignment. This was enough motivation to keep me awake so I could study.

Many of my classmates were upset when they got a low score on a quiz. However, they did not want to work and study hard. As a result, students would often “help” one another by sharing answers during quizzes or tests, allowing others to look at their papers when the professor wasn’t watching. I was often tempted to do the same, but I never dared. I have read countless times in Church magazines that members of the Church should have high standards, which means no cheating. So I studied hard and resisted the temptation, even though this sometimes meant getting lower grades than my classmates, since they had each other’s help.

On one particular day I had classes from 7:00 in the morning until 7:00 in the evening, and I had a quiz scheduled in each class. I studied 10 pages for my first quiz alone. “How will I get through all this?” I wondered. Thankfully, I did well on my first quiz. During lunch I studied for my next one. When I went to class and started

the quiz, I realized that I knew the answers to every question but one. “How can this be?” I thought. “I’ve studied hard for this quiz. I should know this answer!”

As I tapped my pen furiously on my chair, it occurred to me that it would take just a moment to turn my head, give my hair a flip, and dart my



*I couldn't remember the answer to one question on the quiz. It would be so easy to dart my eyes toward my classmate's answer.*

eyes toward my classmate’s answer. “I could do this just once,” I thought, “and I’ll ace the quiz. Just once won’t hurt. Besides, it’s so unfair for me. I study hard, yet I get lower grades than my classmates because I don’t cheat!” Still, I felt uncomfortable. I fidgeted in my chair, trying to make a choice: to cheat or not to cheat.

Then a voice inside me said, “No, Shery! Cheating is wrong, and you know it!” Suddenly I realized that even if I got a perfect score on the quiz, I wouldn’t feel good about my score if I cheated. My Heavenly Father was counting on me to make the right choice—this choice was the real test.

Just then a scripture I’d learned in Sunday School came to my mind:

“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). I knew that Heavenly Father had helped me through countless challenges, including many quizzes and school assignments. How could I forget all He had done for me and choose to sin?

To this day I can’t remember the result of that particular quiz. Whether I came up with the answer or not, I can’t recall. But I have always remembered that I felt good for making the right choice.

Now as a junior I still face the same mountain of schoolwork and the same temptations; however, choosing not to cheat isn’t difficult because I’ve made that choice already, at a time when the temptation was hard to resist. I’ve learned that the joy and satisfaction of getting high grades is greater when I work hard and earn it. Wickedness, indeed, never was happiness (see Alma 41:10). True happiness is found in keeping the commandments and following the counsel of our prophet and other Church leaders. I truly believe the words “Keep the commandments. In this there is safety and peace.”<sup>2</sup> **NE**

#### NOTES

1. “Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.
2. “Keep the Commandments,” *Hymns*, no. 303.