



By Elder Larry R. Lawrence
Of the Seventy

EXAMPLES MADE THE DIFFERENCE

I was introduced to the Church through the examples of Latter-day Saint students at my high school in Tucson, Arizona. They were a small minority, only 4 members out of my class of 400, but I noticed how different they were—and that impressed me.

The Latter-day Saint youth I knew were normal teens in many ways: they played sports and were involved in student government, music, and other activities. But to me, the thing that set them apart from everyone else was their quiet confidence. They seemed to know where they were going and what they wanted out of life. They used clean language and didn't drink. I didn't swear, drink, or smoke either, but I felt like I lacked the direction and confidence they had.

I was also impressed by their dedication. I was amazed that not only did LDS youth attend church every Sunday, but they also attended early-morning seminary every weekday before school. They dressed modestly and were respectful. One of my friends often talked about serving a mission. I was impressed that he wanted to give up two years of his life to do something so unselfish.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR EXAMPLE

One day I was talking to an LDS young woman I knew, and I asked her about her plans for the weekend. She really surprised me when she said, "I'm going to be speaking at my church on Sunday, so I'll spend some of the weekend preparing my talk."

You can't imagine how surprised I was that a 15-year-old could speak at church! I only attended church twice a year, and members of our congregation were never asked to participate. I learned from my friend that no one had given her a script; she would be writing down her own thoughts, and then she would practice delivering them.

To me, nothing could be more frightening than speaking in public, but my friend didn't seem nervous. It was part of that quiet confidence that the Mormons radiated. In fact, when I was chosen to speak at high-school graduation a year later, I really longed for some of that "Mormon confidence." Little did I know that over 40 years later, I would be speaking at general conference!

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member friends that when high school ended, I thought to myself: "Someday I want to find out more about the Mormon faith."

As I attended college and then medical school, I was continually drawn to Latter-day Saints. I watched them closely, and they rarely disappointed me. Finally, after several years, I decided that I was going to learn for myself what made them so different. I went to the public library and checked out every book I could find about the Mormons.

I found a copy of the Book of Mormon and began to read it. As soon as I read just a few chapters, I had the feeling that this was something special. After about six months of reading and studying, I realized that I needed to make some changes in my life. A voice inside me whispered that real faith requires action. If I wanted to experience what my LDS friends had, I knew I would have to act.

So I decided to be baptized. As soon as I made the decision, I felt the assurance of the Spirit. It was

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the best decision I ever made!

After I was baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, I finally understood the source of that “Mormon confidence.” It comes from the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

As I watched my LDS friends in high school, I noticed how they took an interest in other people. They were always kind and helpful. Now I realize that their interest in others was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

PEOPLE NOTICE YOU

My friends were not aware of the impact their example had on me. They were very surprised to hear that I joined the Church five years after our high-school graduation.

Because of my own experience, I want to encourage you, the youth of the Church, to be aware that you are being watched. Others are making mental notes and storing them away. So be an example of the believers—in word, in thought, and in action (see 1 Timothy 4:12). You never know the impact you may have. **NE**



BE READY TO SHARE

As people are influenced by your example, their hearts may be prepared to learn about the gospel. Take time to listen to the Spirit’s promptings about whom you can share the gospel with.