

## CHECKING FOR MESSAGES

**S**hortly after waking up, I turn my computer on to check my e-mail. My morning continues, and just like putting on my watch, I slip my cell phone into my pocket to keep it handy all day in case someone calls or sends me a text message. Later, while eating my lunch, I check my e-mail again and spend time checking blogs and other Internet sites that help keep me in touch with friends and family. Throughout the day, when I have time, I check my e-mail and send and text messages to friends and family. Just before going to sleep, I check my e-mail one last time. Each day this pattern continues. I spend countless hours checking for messages.

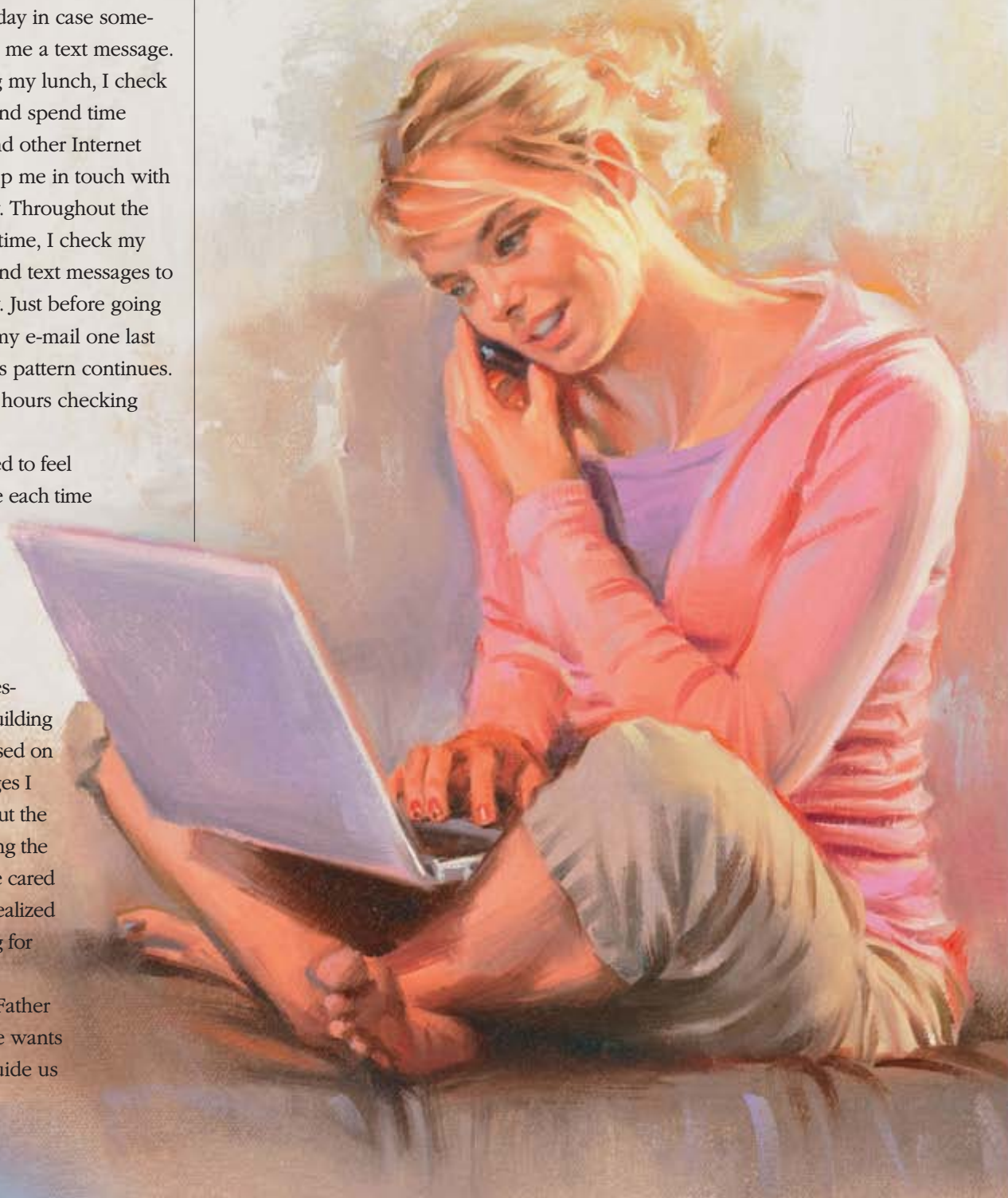
One day I started to feel depressed because each time I checked for messages, there was nothing. I realized that I had started to not only crave receiving messages, but I was building my self-esteem based on how many messages I received throughout the day. I began fighting the feeling that no one cared about me. I then realized I was not checking for the right message.

Our Heavenly Father cares about us. He wants to teach us and guide us

throughout this life so that we might live worthy to return to live with Him someday. To help us make it back home to Him, we have the Holy Ghost to lead and guide us. Through the Holy Ghost we receive guidance and direction from our loving Father. But how often do we check for those types of messages? Do we spend as

much time in sincere prayer as we do checking our e-mail? Do we read the scriptures more than we read blogs? How often throughout the day do we allow our hearts to cry out to our Father in Heaven? Surely each time we turn our hearts to Him it is much more worthwhile than any text message.

Just like any form of messaging, it



is not only about sending messages; it is also about receiving them. Are we checking for messages from our Father? We have been blessed with so many ways of receiving messages from Him. Prayer, scripture study, and quiet pondering are simple yet powerful ways that we can receive these messages.

I realized that I should spend more time checking for messages from my Father in Heaven. Each day He is waiting for a chance to remind me that I am His daughter and He loves me. He will help and guide me throughout my life, and He will never leave me alone. Those are messages truly worth receiving again and again.

*Julie Ann B., Utah, USA*

## AVOIDING MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITIES

**W**hen I was 14 years old, my sisters and I were the only members of the Church

to attend our school in England. People began to discover that I was a Mormon, and it was not uncommon to have jokes or weird looks directed at me. While I did get questions, they were limited to rumor and gossip, and I soon grew tired of the negative attention. A lot of students simply avoided me. One girl in particular seemed quite wary of me. One day I bumped into her in the hall and felt that I should talk to her, but she would not talk, and without saying anything, she rushed away. This gave me the false resolve that church and school

## IF YOU COULD CHOOSE

I live in Oklahoma, where there are many missionary opportunities. One such experience happened recently with my friend and my English teacher. Our English teacher assigns different journal topics every Monday, and we can choose to read them aloud on Friday.

One week, my teacher chose the topic "If you could have someone famous or well-known raise you, who would it be?" My friend chose Brigham Young, and I chose Thomas S. Monson. We are the only Mormons in our grade, so nobody else knew who we were talking about. My friend read hers aloud, but I had no intention of reading mine. Then, I felt the Spirit prompt me that I needed to read mine.

After we both read our journal entries, our teacher started asking us questions about our Church. We talked

were two different worlds and should never meet.

A year later an American family moved into my ward, and their children attended my school. One of them, Annie, was in my year and soon became quite popular. I started seeing students from my school appearing at ward youth activities. One evening at a joint Young Men and Young Women activity, I saw the girl who had always avoided me. She was a friend of Annie's, and she sheepishly came over to me. It turned out the reason she had avoided me was she had been



about our beliefs for about 20 minutes. Normally I would have been nervous, but I felt the Spirit so strongly. My teacher seemed interested.

The next week, I gave my teacher a copy of the Book of Mormon. I put a copy of the Articles of Faith inside, along with a brief summary of the Book of Mormon. She said that she felt ignorant because most kids can say what they believe, but they only know because their parents told them. "But you know what you believe," she said, "and you know why."

I felt the Spirit confirm that because I had listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, I had had a missionary experience that I would not have had otherwise.

*Natalee T., Oklahoma, USA*

told some outrageous stories about the Church, so she was afraid of talking to me. She ended up coming to seminary and taking the missionary discussions.

I realised that I had been wrong in keeping my two lives separate. Annie was the example that made me understand that I had missed so many opportunities for missionary work. I felt ashamed. If I had been more diligent, maybe I could have been a better example to those who might have been looking for the truth only the Church could provide.

*Loran C., England*

# A MOMENT OF CHOICE

**O**ne cold winter morning in Wisconsin, as I was running late to early morning seminary, I came across a car that was stopped in the middle of the road. In a rush, I waited impatiently for the car to move. With the car only a few yards from the stop sign, I assumed that the driver had stopped prematurely. When the car continued not to move I passed the car and went on to the church building a few blocks away.

As I drove I wondered why the car stopped in such a strange place. I thought that perhaps the person was lost, but that didn't feel right. It occurred to me that maybe they were having car troubles. I was running late and rationalized that someone else would surely help them. To this day I could not tell you why I was so

anxious not to be late, but I can tell you, that in the moment I felt so rushed, I failed to recognize the promptings of the Spirit to stop and help that driver. It was small, nothing more than a brief thought. Seminary was a good place to be going. However, there was a choice that would have been better.

On my way home from seminary I once again was confronted by the same car sitting exactly where I had left it. This time I stopped. I got out of my car, and I looked at the driver. I was shocked and disappointed in myself for not listening to inspiration. In the driver's seat of that car was an elderly woman. My heart ached like it never had before as I realized the severity of that one missed moment. I could have offered to help her push her car to the side, helped her find a tow truck, or offered to let her sit in the warmth of the church building while we figured out what to do with her car. In the end someone else had already helped her find a tow truck that

was due to be there any moment.

There are often times I reflect on the moment that I was too rushed to recognize that opportunity to help one of my fellow sisters. The lesson was clear and as vivid today as it was on that early winter morning.

There are times in all of our lives when we fail to listen to the promptings of the Spirit. Sometimes we find ourselves distracted by things of the world, and sometimes we choose a good choice instead of the better choice. We cannot change the choices we have made in the past. What we can do is change what we do in our next moment of decision. The promptings of the Spirit are not always as forceful as the sound of thunder, they are not always as clear as the scriptures we read or the counsel of the prophets, but often these promptings come as small whispers of encouragement or seemingly inconsequential thoughts. There is nothing more disappointing than the knowledge that our selfish choice has cost us an opportunity to help one of our Heavenly Father's children. It was a lesson that was painful and one I will not forget.

*Anna T., Illinois, USA*

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