

CHOOSING SIDES

BY KATHY PARRY

When I was a junior in high school, I was on the varsity cheerleading squad. Every summer we attended the NCA Cheerleading Camp at the University of Georgia. That year, as my roommate and I were unpacking, I took out my scriptures and my picture of a temple and put them on the desk in the room, something my Laurel adviser had challenged us to do.



When my roommate saw that I had taken those things out, she moaned and said that she couldn't take being around someone so religious and picked up her mattress and walked out of the room. She went into the next room and sat down with the rest of the cheerleading squad. I could hear them saying horrible things about my beliefs and me. I was shocked. I just sat there on my bed and wondered what to do. I looked at my scriptures and the temple picture and thought, "Who do I want to please? Do I want to please Heavenly Father or these girls?" I remembered that Heavenly Father would never forsake me, and I knew that I wanted to please Him.

I endured a week of being excluded and shunned. I sat alone in my room every night and listened to the other cheerleaders laughing. At mealtime, they would crowd me to the end of the table and turn their backs to me. The only time anyone would talk to me was if they needed to communicate about a cheer we were doing. I wanted so badly to go home, but I could not. I spent a lot of time that week praying for Heavenly Father to help me. I prayed for strength to make it through the week. I prayed that I would treat the other girls nicely in spite of how they were treating me. I prayed that their hearts would be softened towards me.

This situation continued until it was the last day of camp. In the morning, we practiced and prepared for the final competition that afternoon. Our squad was good, and we came in first or second place every

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

BY MEGAN MICHEL

One day at school, I was in a hurry to get to my math class, and my locker wouldn't open. I hadn't had any trouble opening my locker all year, so I was surprised I couldn't open it. Right then the hall monitor walked by and opened my locker. I got my books and realized that if I walked into my math class, I would be tardy, so I went to find the hall monitor. She gave me a back-to-class pass. Just as I turned the corner, there was a girl in the hall sobbing because some girls had pulled a mean prank. I didn't know her very well, but I gave her a hug, and she hugged back. I was amazed that the only time my locker jammed

year. That year, however, our routines were not going well. Nothing seemed to be working for us that morning. The girls felt hopeless. We sat in a circle and talked about what we could do to improve our cheer and make it come together.

One girl said, "We need help. We need to pray." A few of the girls said they didn't know how to pray. Then, in the same instant, I saw 11 heads turn in unison and look at me. "Kathy, you know how to pray. Will you pray for us?" asked one of the girls. I couldn't believe it. The Spirit touched me, and I felt so much love for them. I was excited for the opportunity to pray and so happy that I had remained faithful to Heavenly

was that one day when a girl could use a hug. I think it is amazing that the Lord puts you in certain situations to help others. **NE**

Father, even in the face of ridicule. I felt such responsibility offering that prayer. The cheer came together, but the bigger miracle was the change that took place in the hearts of the girls. From that day forward, we were friends, and they respected my beliefs and values. On top of that, before every football game, our cheerleading squad would gather together in a circle joining hands, and they would ask me to offer a prayer.

I know that it is difficult sometimes to stand for what is right, but I know that Heavenly Father is aware of our difficulties and if we remain true to Him, He will stay with us and help us overcome. I learned for myself that it is worth it to stay on the Lord's side. **NE**



MY CHANGE OF HEART

BY ALLISON JUDD

When I was three years old, my family's life changed forever. My mom gave birth to my brother, Ben, who was born with Down syndrome. I don't remember his birth, but I do remember him getting a lot of extra attention and care.

Growing up with a physically and mentally handicapped brother was difficult for me. I remember one day when Ben was in second grade. I got home

from school, and my mom told me that some boys at school had tricked him into drinking toilet water and then laughed at him for doing it. I was so angry and upset. I didn't understand why we had been given this burden.

Not long ago, I was at an activity with my family. There were people attending whom Ben knew from school. Every time he saw someone he knew, he would give them a great big hug. I saw how much Ben loved

everyone, no matter what. That day, I realized that Ben was no trial in my life but a blessing. He had made me a better person in so many ways. I am so grateful to Heavenly Father for letting Ben be such a major part of my life. **NE**

A BETTER USE OF TIME

BY CAMERON NUCKOLS

My friends and I started to play video games a little each day. Soon we were playing two hours a day. When we talked to each other during the games, things that normally wouldn't be said were said. I decided that every time my friends would play video games, I would make better use of my time by doing something else. I soon found that I was a lot happier inside. Video games can be fun, but when they're filled with vulgar language and violence, Satan can corrupt our minds. **NE**

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