



GOD SAW MY SADNESS

One Sunday at church I realized that my time with the Young Women program was almost over and I would soon be with the young single adults. I was sad because I knew that things would never be the same. After Sunday School, I tried to cheer up, but I just couldn't do it. I tried to tell myself that Heavenly Father did not want me to feel sadness but rather joy (see 2 Nephi 2:25).

I was just about to cry on my friend's shoulder in the hallway when the ward clerk came up to me and said, "Sister Danelys, here's the mail!" He handed me a white envelope with

only my name on it. I was curious to know what it was, so I asked the clerk who had sent it. As he walked away, he told me it was from the patriarch and that it was a copy of my patriarchal blessing. I did cry, but my tears were tears of joy because I knew God had seen my sadness and had provided a way for me to find joy in my sadness. My patriarchal blessing had finally arrived in writing, at the precise moment when I needed it most.

When I got home and read it, I cried again and prayed and thanked God for it and for helping me to remember how fortunate I am to be His daughter and to have the light of

the everlasting gospel in my life.

When sad times come, even though I may not understand them at the time, I know that God can help me find happiness. I learned this through the love that God offers me in my life. He offers this love to each one of us, and it is within us to accept this marvelous feeling. We can overcome trials with God's guidance. We can smile and be happy.

Danelys R., Dominican Republic

MORMONS ARE CHRISTIANS

In discussing religion with my friends, I've often heard criticisms that Mormons aren't Christians. It's baffled me that anyone could make a claim that a church bearing the name "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" isn't a Christian religion. Growing up, I was always told that our religion was based on Jesus Christ, so it seemed natural to consider myself a Christian. But because of the discussions with my friends, I've realized more fully what it truly means to be a Christian; it's more than just a self-proclamation. I've needed to gain knowledge of the reality of the Savior before I could sincerely explain to my friends how I know that I truly am a Christian.

The Book of Mormon has been critical in helping me realize that Christ is the foundation of our doctrine. It is filled with prophecies of Christ and the necessity for His Atonement. As the keystone of our religion, the Book of Mormon helps me explain why I believe in Christ and helps me define what it means to be a Christian as I follow Christ.

Through this journey, I've come to a knowledge that Jesus Christ is my Savior and that everything we do as members of the LDS Church directs us to Him. Jesus Christ is our gospel, and we are Christians.

Joseph P., California, USA

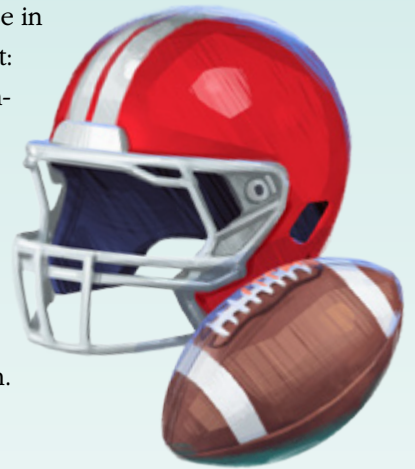
PASSING ON FOOTBALL

I was born in a tiny peninsula on an island south of India called Sri Lanka. Growing up there, I was fascinated with American football. I was five when I got my first football and learned how to play with the plushy ball. But my parents were not able to put me on a football team due to financial problems.

Years later, my family moved to New York, USA. Going into high school, I finally had a chance to get into an official team for free. There was one specific requirement: I had to go to football camp for a month, which meant no church for a month. On top of that, I had games on Sundays.

I was very upset and had no idea what to do. I prayed every day for an answer. One evening, I read a talk from President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) where he said, "We must put God in the forefront of everything else in our lives" ("The Great Commandment: Love the Lord," Apr. 1988 general conference). This struck me so hard that as soon as I read that, I knelt down and thanked the Lord for giving me an answer. I told my parents that I wasn't going to play football. They supported me through everything. I still am grateful I made that decision.

Dilán F., New York, USA



CHOOSING THE RIGHT SONG

One day I bought a song I'd heard on the radio. After it downloaded, I realized it was an explicit version. I was so disappointed because I'd wanted to listen to the radio's clean version. I deleted the song from my library, sad that I'd wasted my money on a bad song.

I decided to email the people at the music store, saying that I was unable to listen to the song I bought because it was against my standards. Surprisingly, the next day I got an

email with an apology and a free song credit.

I didn't end up buying that song at all, because I realized I didn't even feel good about the clean version. It helped me realize that I need to focus on the music I listen to and that I can correct my mistakes, even something as simple as buying the wrong song. I also realized how much the prophet's guidance really does help.

Rachel Z., Ohio, USA