

# They SHOULD CHANGE

*When I was baptized, my family rejected the Church. Now I had to figure out how to respond when their lifestyle conflicted with gospel principles.*

**By Francisco Javier Lara Hernández**

**W**hen I was baptized, I was the only member of my family who accepted the gospel. I was 19 years old, and I was happy about my baptism. I was welcomed by the brothers and sisters of the Panuco First Branch in Veracruz, Mexico. In addition, I began preparing to serve a full-time mission as soon as I had been a member of the Church for one year. It was wonderful to know the true Church, and I wanted to share the gospel with others.

My father, my stepmother (my mom died when I was 12 years old), and my three brothers rejected the Church when I was baptized. Unfortunately, I didn't respond well. I was disrespectful to them. I didn't consider my father or his opinions. When I told him I would serve a mission soon, he was not happy since I would stop working and especially since I might go far away. It bothered me every time my family's lifestyle conflicted with my principles, such as when they watched TV or listened to music

programs that I felt were inappropriate for Sundays or when my father would invite me to have lunch on fast Sunday.

I justified my negative attitude toward my family by telling myself that I wasn't doing anything wrong—as a member of the Church, I should live gospel principles even when my family members bothered me. I told myself *they* were the ones who should change. Due to this reasoning, my relationship with my father was not good. It got worse because of my attitude and pride. I continued this way—not concerning myself with his spiritual welfare.

One day while I was studying for my institute class, I came to 1 Nephi 16, where Nephi breaks his steel bow, making it difficult to get food. Everybody began to murmur—Laman and Lemuel, as was their custom, together with their father, the prophet Lehi. Nephi responded by making a bow and arrow out of wood and asking his father where he should go to obtain food. His father prayed for guidance and was reprimanded by the Lord for having murmured. Lehi reacted favorably and retook his role as leader of his family and as a prophet of the Lord. Nephi did not judge his father in his weakened state, nor did he think that he shouldn't be prophet anymore, even when Nephi had spoken with the Lord and had received visions.

When I read and understood this account, immediately I thought of how badly I had behaved toward my family. I was embarrassed by my attitude—feeling that I was better than they were—and felt especially bad for not treating my father with respect. I was sad for not making it a priority to share the gospel with them.

I had not seen my family as they could become. I had



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focused only on their weaknesses. From that day on, my attitude and behavior changed gradually. I strived to always respect my father's opinions, despite the many times I did not agree with him. If he invited me to lunch when I was fasting, I said I was sorry for not being able to share the meal with him. I no longer felt bothered by the programs or music they watched or listened to on Sundays, remembering that they still hadn't made covenants with our Heavenly Father, as I had.

One morning while I was helping my father with a meal, I told him how much I loved him and how sorry I was for my rude behavior. I told him I was proud that he was my father and that I wanted to have a peaceful relationship with him.

Everything began to change. The arguments lessened and disappeared. Although I thought it would be a long time before my family joined the Church, their attitude toward the Church improved. None of these changes would have happened had I not changed first.

After I had been a member of the Church for one year, I served as a full-time missionary in the Mexico Tijuana Mission. Three months before returning, I received a letter saying that my family had accepted the gospel and would be baptized. When I returned, they already belonged to the Church.

In my 15 years as a member of the Church, one of my greatest lessons came from my study of the Book of Mormon and with the children of God I had closest to me: my family. ■