

TRUE JOY

Whom could I share the gospel with? I had just the person in mind.

“**A**nd if it so be that you should . . . bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:15).

As my bishop read this verse, my heart jumped. I could see myself at the baptism of someone I had introduced to the gospel. My friend would be so happy, and everyone would know that my friend was going to be baptized because of me. My joy would be great.

Angela’s name instantly came to mind. She was my best friend, and she needed the gospel. I was certain that hearing the gospel and knowing she was a daughter of God would help answer her questions and build her up.

The next day I asked, “Hey, Ang, my church is having a barbecue on Saturday. Would you like to go?”

“Sure,” she responded, “that sounds like fun.”

She attended, and over the months, I continued to invite her to every Church activity I could think of. After every activity I would ask her, “So, Ang, what do you think?” This led to discussions about eternal principles. I

was happy. Any day I would be able to reap the blessings Heavenly Father had promised.

On a winter night just before Christmas, Angela and I decided to take a walk around the Washington D.C. Temple. The Holy Ghost encompassed us as we walked, and I knew she could feel something.

“So how do you feel?” I asked.

“I feel like I want to be baptized. . . . Wait,” she cautioned when she saw the excitement in my face. “I can’t be baptized now, and I can’t have the missionaries come and visit me. My parents would never allow it. But will you teach me everything you know?”

Taken back, I answered humbly, “Yes, I’ll try to teach you everything I know.”

Later that night I thought about the promise I had made. Everything I knew? But what if I didn’t know enough? Was my testimony strong enough? Did I really know the gospel was true?

I decided I would start the very next day to learn everything I could about the gospel, to gain a real testimony of its truthfulness.

With vigor I started reading the scriptures every night. My prayers became more heartfelt as I pleaded for both Angela

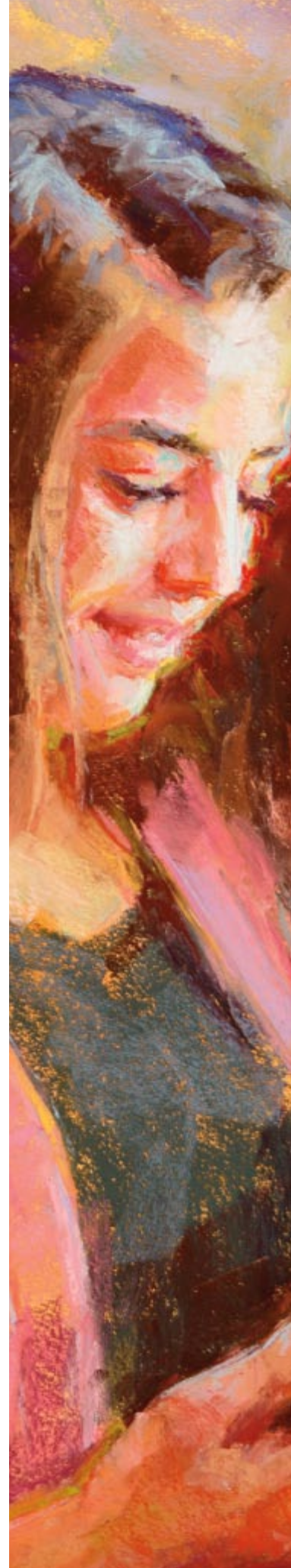


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and me to know the gospel was true.

Slowly the results came. In our discussions I was sometimes led by the Spirit to say things that I hadn't thought of until that moment. My testimony grew stronger as I bore it. The scriptures became real to me.

My parents were there to help me. They were a valuable resource, and I learned to love and appreciate them more.

Five years later Angela still isn't a member of the Church. If I judged myself according to my eighth-grade expectations, I failed. I did not sit at a baptism and receive the "joy" of everyone's praise as the one who had brought a friend to the gospel. However, my expectations have changed. I have brought my own soul closer to God. Even if Angela never joins the Church, the studying and teaching I did were not in vain. She learned more about the gospel, and sharing it with her converted me. And it helped me to be more effective in sharing it with others.

The joy promised in the Doctrine and Covenants does not mean worldly praise. My joy is great because I know my Savior better and have gained a strong testimony of His gospel. **NE**