

Remember who you are

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NAME WITHHELD

It was around my 14th birthday when my mother started talking in code. Just as I would be running out the door for some new adventure with my friends, she would call out, "Remember who you are!"

I wasn't quite sure what she meant by that, but I would feign understanding and yell over my shoulder, "OK, Mom. Bye!" At times I would mull over her coded message. What was she trying to say? I knew who I was: Traci, sixth child in my family; big deal.

I decided my mother's message was the result of her occupation. She had been a registered nurse for about 25 years, so maybe she had seen children who had been left with amnesia after some horrible accident. Yes, I decided, she wants to make sure that if I am ever hurt, I will remember my name and other vital information. That must be the reason for her emphatic message.

As I was growing up, life with my family was not always pleasant, despite the fact that we were members of the Church. After one particularly bad night, I remember staring at myself in the mirror, hardly recognizing the reflection staring back at me because my face was red from my father's repeated slaps. I started crying, not knowing what to do or think. Thoughts of running away crossed my mind. Even worse, ideas of ending my unhappy life wormed their way into my confused thought process.

At no other time before or since have I felt so alone. I felt worn out, almost willing to let the surrounding



darkness take over. I looked into the mirror once more. The words “I don’t even know myself” tumbled from my lips. That was when I heard my mother’s phrase repeated clearly and distinctly in my mind: “Remember who you are! Remember who you are!”

I can describe that moment only as enlightening. For the first time, I realized what my mother’s message meant: it was her plea for me to remember my divine heritage. A phrase from the Primary song echoed in my mind: “I am a child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301). That sudden reminder helped me fight Satan’s temptation to take drastic action. The knowledge that my nature was divine would help me endure to the end; my mother understood that, and I know she hoped that someday I would as well.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example of one who understood His divine heritage. The scriptures tell us that in His youth He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). The more His understanding grew, the better prepared He was to fulfill His role as the Savior of the world.

We will not be called upon to suffer as Christ did, but to help us combat our trials, Heavenly Father has given us tools for increasing our understanding of our divine heritage. We have the scriptures, which show us how others have recognized their roles as sons and daughters of God and have acted accordingly. We have the prophets, who teach us about our divine nature and potential. We have the priesthood, which enables us to receive inspired blessings that affirm our relationship to Heavenly Father. We have temples, where we may participate in instructive and sacred ordinances. We also have the means for direct communication with Heavenly Father—prayer—which can help us during those times when we forget who we are.

The years following the night I figured out my mother’s code were still difficult. But my insight into my divine nature helped me come to view my challenges with an eternal perspective. My knowledge of my divine heritage has influenced the path I have chosen, leading me to marry in the temple and, with my husband, work to rear a family firmly grounded in the gospel.

I still think often about my mother’s words. At times I have imagined a final interaction with Heavenly Father before I departed for earth, and I like to picture Him embracing me and urging me on with one last morsel of advice: “Remember who you are!” ■