

Preparing for a New Journey

By Karina Martins Pereira Correia de Lima

In the weeks leading up to my marriage and temple sealing, I started getting a little nervous about all the things I needed to do before I started my new family. Despite all the joy of that moment, I felt stressed about organizing our new routine, getting our finances in order, finding storage for our belongings, and all my new responsibilities as a wife. I wanted to make sure we started off our marriage the right way by making room in our activities for important things like keeping the commandments and spending time together as husband and wife in spite of our busy lives.

As the wedding day came closer, I was surprised by a series of nightmares involving all sorts of troubles that could affect a family. Because I come from a loving but afflicted family, threatened by constant and

intense arguments and broken hearts, the bad dreams affected me more than they should have. So one night, after several others like it, I woke up sweating and decided to follow the advice that Sister Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, gave in her talk “Yielding Our Hearts to God” (*Ensign* Nov. 2015, 30–32). I closed my eyes and prayed, “Dear Heavenly Father, what can I do to keep these bad things away from my family?”

The answer hit me as fast and as strongly as if someone had opened a door into my head and put the thought there. The still, small voice prompted me, “Just do what you are supposed to do. Be faithful in each step.” The Spirit whispered some specific counsel, and I felt that if I did those things, everything would be fine.

Like Nephi sailing into the unknown, I needed to exercise faith in the Lord about starting a family.

I smiled and felt my chest filled with warmth. All the worries were suddenly forgotten, because I knew it was true. I had felt the Holy Ghost before, but never as strong as I did that night. I felt the love of our Heavenly Father and our Savior surround me, and I knew that the comfort and salvation of my family was as



important for Them as it was for me.

As an added assurance, a story from the scriptures came to my memory—the moment that the Lord ordered Nephi to build a ship: “And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, *after the manner which I shall show thee*, that I may carry thy people across these waters” (1 Nephi 17:8; emphasis added).

Nephi and his family had been in the wilderness for years, enduring all sorts of tribulations. He could have felt afraid of starting a journey across the sea and let his fears become stronger than his faith. But he didn't. He accepted and obeyed the instructions of God. He had faith that His promises would be fulfilled. The Lord never told Nephi that storms wouldn't occur or that waves wouldn't hit the ship. But He told Nephi that if he followed His directions, he would be able to guide his family safely across the ocean to the promised land.

I realized that I had also traveled through a wilderness for many

years, but now I was in front of the sea, preparing for a new journey: marriage. I have been called—and I think that is the case for all Latter-day Saint families—to build a ship following God's instructions.

Once my husband and I got married, troubles did come. I got sick, and we struggled to keep our financial affairs balanced and to put into practice all the good habits we had decided to follow.

But the counsel I had received that night remained in my heart. We tried daily to learn and treasure the word of God in our hearts, to follow the good examples of our dear leaders—including Christ—and to improve our own behavior. I gained a stronger testimony of prayer and truly tasted the Father's love for us. I started to trust more and fear less. We realized that the difficulties we faced had become steps to improvement. Today our home seems like a little piece of heaven.

We are still in the beginning of our journey, but getting

married and starting a family was the best choice I have ever made. My heart is full of joy when I think about the temple ordinance we received and know that it was sealed by God's authority. The more I understand about the importance of the family in Heavenly Father's plan and the sacredness of the covenant we made, the more I want to help other families receive the same ordinance.

I learned that we don't need to worry about what is going to happen, because “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). We simply need to be obedient, follow the instructions given through the scriptures and the words of modern-day prophets, and ask in prayer for more personal instructions. If we do these things, we can cross the ocean of these last days confident that no matter what kind of trouble hits us, our loved ones will be safe. ■

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