

NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE A MORMON

By Hildo Rosillo Flores

“Whenever we fall, whenever we do less than we ought, in a very real way we forget mother,” declared President Thomas S. Monson. He added, “Men turn from evil and yield to their better natures when mother is remembered.”¹

President Monson’s message has been a strength to me, so much so that when I first read his words, they brought to mind my mother and the wise counsel she gave

me years ago, shortly after I joined the Church.

My mother was a member of another Christian church, but she was kind to the missionaries who taught me the gospel. Once I decided to become

a Latter-day

I decided to quit attending church. A week later my mother looked me straight in the eye and told me something I have always tried to remember.

Saint, she always supported me.

Everything had been going well in my new life as a member of the Church until I joined in Journalism Day observances in my home country of Peru. At a party I attended, talks and complimentary words filled the

air. Toasts then followed. As the party grew, so did the temptation to drink with my friends.

The change that converts to the Church make when they accept the gospel often means that they must make new friends. In some circumstances, as I learned, former friends can be instruments of the adversary to tempt us to break the commandments and resume our old ways.



When my co-workers offered me a glass of beer, I took it, drank it, and kept on drinking. At the end of the party, my conscience convicted me. I had fallen. What would my mother say?

When I arrived home, I entered quietly and immediately went to bed.

My mother said nothing, but I felt ashamed and decided to quit attending church.

A week later, as we sat at the table eating lunch, she looked me straight in the eye and said, "Son, never forget that you are a Mormon."

To go to and from work, I rode my bicycle by the Church meetinghouse. Every time I did so, my conscience bothered me. One evening I decided I could no longer live with my guilt. I parked my bicycle directly in front of the branch president's office, went in, and requested an interview.

I told the branch president what I had done and asked for forgiveness, after which he counseled with me. From that moment on, I have never broken the Word of Wisdom.

My mother died more than 20 years ago, but I have always tried to remember what she told me never to forget: I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

NOTE

1. "Behold Thy Mother," *Liahona*, Apr. 1998, 4; *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 2, 4.

I didn't know if our babies would live or die, but I knew if I turned to the Lord, He would help carry my burden.

TWICE BLESSED

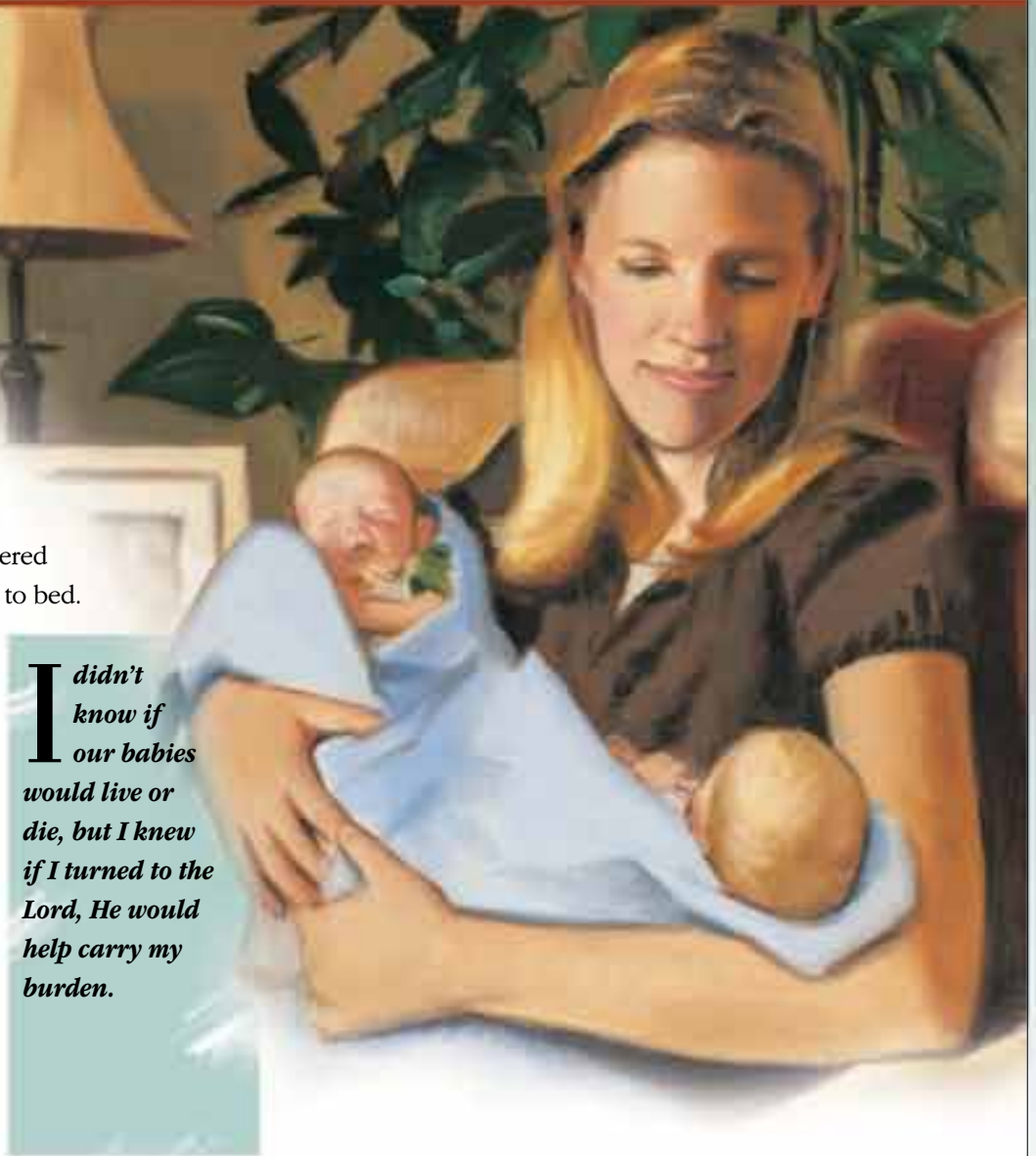
By Angela Lee

My life changed forever when my husband and I went to the doctor to check the gender and development of our unborn baby. I cried with joy when we discovered that I was expecting twins. But my tears turned to ones of despair as the doctor explained that a series of complications made it unlikely that the twins would survive until birth. The doctor suggested

terminating the pregnancy. She said proceeding would be risky and that I would have to be hospitalized at some point.

Despite the dangers, we decided to continue the pregnancy.

On the drive home I realized the severity of the situation. I wondered how I could leave my husband and our three children and stay for an extended period in the hospital. Knowing that our babies would likely be delivered prematurely—and might not live—became overwhelming for me. I wasn't sure I could endure this trial.



Only after I received a priesthood blessing from my husband and father-in-law did I feel peace. I realized that no matter what the outcome was, my family and I would be all right. I felt my Savior's love and knew that He would be with us in joy or in sorrow.

Some time later, I said good-bye to my family and entered the hospital for an indefinite stay. The babies' heart rates were monitored constantly to make sure the babies were safe. It was difficult for me to see their heart rates drop, and I wondered if they would make it to the delivery goal of 34 weeks. At 25½ weeks, one baby's heart rate dropped to a critical level, nearly stopping. The doctors decided that if his heart didn't start beating normally, both babies would be delivered by emergency cesarean section within minutes. I panicked when I heard the nurse call my husband and tell him that I was being prepared for surgery and that the neonatal team was standing by.

I knew that to get through this trial, I needed Heavenly Father's help.

I prayed silently, pleading that our baby would recover, thus allowing both twins the much-needed time to develop in utero. I also prayed for comfort. Once again I felt peace, just as I had when I received the priesthood blessing. I didn't know if our babies would live or die, but I knew that no matter what, if I turned to the Lord, He would help carry my burden. As it turned out, the baby's heartbeat returned to normal, and surgery was no longer necessary.

My stay at the hospital continued for the next two months, and there were many times we worried about our babies' fluctuating heart rates. But fortunately, neither of the twins' heart rates dropped as low as before. Our sons, John and Jacob, were born at 33 weeks. Their cords were intertwined with eight knots, and John—the son whose heart rate had dropped so low—had his cord wrapped around his neck twice. Our twins stayed in the hospital's intensive care unit so their body temperatures and breathing could be regulated. Despite the potential problems associated with premature births, John

and Jacob were able to come home after only 19 days.

Our twins are now toddlers, and they have no negative effects from being born prematurely. I am grateful that what began as a trial became one of the greatest blessings of my life. I was given two healthy sons, and my testimony of the power of priesthood blessings and prayer was strengthened. I am also grateful to be able to recall the peace and love I felt in knowing that the Lord was aware of my situation. I learned then that, with the Lord's help, we will have the strength to endure our trials. ■

COULD I LET GO OF MY PAST?

By Marcos A. Walker

A positive and happy attitude is indispensable for people working in sales, as I do. Yet several years ago I was feeling discouraged and had no desire to talk to anyone. This was especially true one afternoon.

My countenance must have betrayed my poor spirits because one of my co-workers, with whom I had talked on many occasions, inquired about my situation. I explained that after being married for six years, my wife and I had divorced. This month marked the six-year anniversary of the divorce, so I had now been divorced for the same amount of time I had been married. My mind and heart were troubled, and my soul was filled with pain and sorrow. I





knew I was missing many of my children's experiences, and that realization was constant torture. Loneliness consumed me, and I saw no solution—or even hope—on the horizon. This, I told my co-worker, was the price I had to pay for my mistakes.

My colleague, who was a member of another Christian church, then responded. "What price are you talking about?" he asked. "Jesus Christ has paid the price, if you have truly repented of your sins. Or do you not remember why He came to earth?"

I was astonished by his reply, and his words left me speechless. They resonated inside me all afternoon.

My soul was filled with pain and sorrow. This, I told my co-worker, was the price I had to pay for my mistakes.

Yes—even though I lived with the consequences of my mistakes, Jesus Christ had paid the price. Why had I not realized this? I knew the doctrine, and I knew that it was true. Recognizing that the Atonement had power in my life filled me with a feeling of peace and comfort that I still remember today.

Years have passed since this experience at work. I have learned that some consequences of our actions remain with us all of our lives. Many of them affect the lives of our loved ones. The loneliness has not been

easy, but it has helped me recognize my weaknesses and ask forgiveness of my Heavenly Father and the people who were most affected—my children and their mother.

In contrast with how I felt that afternoon, I can say that I now have peace and hope. I know that Jesus Christ has paid the price, and I have no doubt of this because I have repented. He has sustained me during these years of trials. Although my trials continue, I know that as I repent, turn to the Lord, and keep the commandments, He will continue to sustain me. ■