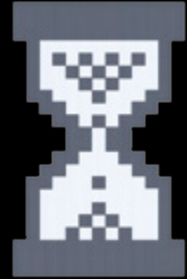


Trusting in the Lord's Timing



By Shannon Volmar

I was a recently returned missionary, struggling to find the next step in my life. I had graduated from college before my mission, and I returned home with confidence and a determination to pursue righteous goals.

Those first several months following my return proved much more difficult than I had anticipated, and my optimism dwindled. I attempted several different pathways that I thought were good and right, none of which came to fruition.

As each disappointment mounted, I felt confused and sad. Despite my efforts, my righteous desires seemed to go unfulfilled. Meanwhile, many of my peers already seemed to be acquiring the blessings I desired and was working for. I prayed earnestly for understanding and guidance.

The answer to my prayer came in a simple but powerful manner. I

felt impressed to search through a box of family photographs, where I happened upon an old envelope containing pictures of my sixth-grade graduation. As I stared at them for a minute, a memory of that ceremony suddenly flooded my mind.

It was nearing the conclusion of the awards presentation, and the teachers announced the distribution of certificates for students they felt earned a spot on the “honor roll.” I had worked hard to excel in school, so I anticipated being on that list. As the names were called, I got ready to stand to retrieve my award.

Then suddenly the reading was finished. I looked around in surprise at those students sitting near me. One of them, holding her award, looked at me in confusion and said, “Why didn’t *you* get one?” The only response I could muster was, “I don’t know . . .”

I sat in silent disappointment.

As a recently returned missionary, I felt confused and sad when the blessings I longed for seemed to go unfulfilled.

What happened next had a profound impact on my 11-year-old life. My teacher stood and announced that there were two students who she felt had gone above and beyond her expectations, and they would therefore be given the “Student of the Year” award instead of an honor roll certificate. One of the awards was presented to another student in my class.

The other was given to me.

Though I had long forgotten this

episode, the Spirit helped me realize how surprisingly similar my current situation was to that of my elementary school graduation. I had been comparing my circumstances with those of others, wondering if I had been forgotten. In that moment, a wave of peace washed over me. I could picture a loving, merciful God listening to my doubts and wanting me to have the patience and faith to see that He hadn't forgotten me. Yes, I was doing my best to achieve righteous goals, and someday the Lord would bless me. I just had to trust in His timing. Blessings don't always come when *we* think they will—sometimes not even in this life—but they do come.

Not even a month passed after I had this experience when I met an amazing young man who soon became my best friend and eternal companion. We had a beautiful courtship and were sealed together in the temple. We have been blessed in many ways, and I find

that my goals have become clearer and that my path is far better than the one I originally anticipated as a struggling returned missionary.

This and other righteous desires were fulfilled in the Lord's timing. If the course of events had happened in the way *I* had wanted them to, I wouldn't have learned to rely not only on the Lord's plan for me but also on His timing. I also think it would have been much harder for the Lord to bless me in the ways He knew would ultimately make me the most happy. And those blessings have always been something significantly better than what I thought I wanted—just like a “Student of the Year” award instead of an honor roll certificate.

Even returned missionaries need reminders about the principle of faith. I know I did, and I was reminded of it in a powerful and comforting way when I found myself in an old photograph. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



ACCORDING TO HIS TIMING

“God’s promises are not always fulfilled as quickly as or in the way we might hope; they come according to His timing and in His ways. . . . The promises of the Lord, if perhaps not always swift, are always certain.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Continue in Patience,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 58.