



LESSON FROM A MILK JUG

NAME WITHHELD

*How could I carry such an awful burden?
The insight came in an unexpected way.*

Life was starting to look better. Although the last few months had involved severe illness for our newborn baby, a bout with postpartum depression for me, and a sudden layoff for my husband, it seemed that our family was going to make it through the wave of trials we had encountered.

But that soon changed when I returned home from helping an ill sister in our ward to find my husband engrossed in filth on the Internet. I had returned earlier than he had expected, and he was caught off guard. I learned that this had been going on for years and that it had been accompanied by other serious sins.

I was devastated. The man I had kept myself clean and pure for all of my life had not done the same for me. My heart was broken.

I was empty. I was hurt. I was angry. When my husband went to the bishop and the stake president to begin the repentance process, I was embarrassed.

And then I became numb.

As a matter of routine, I continued to read scriptures with my children and by myself. I continued to have family prayer and family home evening and to say my personal prayers. But they were nothing more than habitual. There was nothing left inside me.

After a while, I became tired of being numb. I wanted to feel again. I wanted to be strong for my children. I wanted to love my husband. I wanted to forgive. I just didn't know how. All the Relief Society and Sunday School lessons on forgiveness had not prepared me for this pain, and I didn't know how to overcome it. But I was determined that I would.

Time went by, and despite my desire to forgive, I was still bitter. Then the simplest thing happened.

I was unloading the car after a trip to the grocery store, and our three-year-old daughter was helping.



She was carrying in loaves of bread and cartons of eggs and was doing just fine. Then she decided that she was going to carry in a gallon of milk. After some struggle, she pulled it out of the car, and it landed with a thud on the driveway. She gripped the handle with both hands and heaved it. It barely budged. I offered to help, and she snapped at me: “No! I do it myself!” She strained and grunted but made no progress in lifting the milk. After several minutes she looked up at me with tears welling in her eyes and said, “Too heavy. Can’t do it.”

As I looked at my sweet, stubborn little girl, I saw in an instant what Heavenly Father must see in me—a well-meaning but stubborn child who wouldn’t accept His help. A scripture I had learned in seminary came to my mind:

“Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

“Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me;

“And none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost” (D&C 50:40–42).

The significance of this is obvious, but the lesson became even more profound when my daughter’s eyes brightened and she said, “Mommy, you carry me; then I carry milk.” I scooped my little messenger up in my arms. I carried her, and leaning the jug against my arm, she carried the milk. In tears, I deposited my precious cargo inside.

Later, on my knees, I admitted to the Lord that my “jug of milk” was too heavy and that I had been proud in trying to carry it on my own. I asked forgiveness for my anger, my stubbornness, and my pride. I begged the Lord to carry me. I knew I was the one who needed to forgive, but the burden was too painful and too heavy. If the Lord would carry me, though, I could do what I needed to do. I begged Him to lift me, and He did. He helped me not only carry my burden but also cast it away.

Our trials have not all ended, but with Heavenly Father’s help, we will make it. ■