

Why Heavenly Father Wanted Me to Get an Education

By Gloria Cornelio

No matter what
your righteous
desires are,
Heavenly Father
will provide a
way for you to
achieve them.

Since I was little, I always wanted to make my Heavenly Father and my present and future family proud. I wanted to get all the education I could to improve myself and my life.

In my country, Peru, quality education is very expensive and, in some areas, totally inaccessible. My family didn't have all the resources to support my education either. But my parents taught me that working hard, being diligent, and asking Heavenly Father for help can help make our righteous desires come true. And I planned to work hard.

In elementary and high school, I was diligent in my studies to be able to improve myself each year. After high school, I was admitted to Peru's top-ranked university and received a good scholarship. While there, I worked with several organizations, including an internship with a global organization, and had opportunities to lead many different types of projects.

During that internship, I felt like it would be a great opportunity for me to gain an education in English. So I decided to transfer to Brigham Young University–Idaho. It felt daunting, but I knew that Heavenly Father would help me to achieve this goal—I just needed to trust Him and do my part.





I was the first international student to receive a bachelor's degree through BYU-Pathway Worldwide.

A Change of Plans

I was set to go to BYU–Idaho, but during the application process, I felt a strong prompting that I should serve a mission before transferring there. So I followed Heavenly Father's will and was called to serve in Trujillo, Peru. When I returned home, I planned to go back to the university in Peru because I felt like I could get a degree there quickly. However, I found out that my scholarships there were revoked because I had left my studies for more than a year to serve my mission.

I was devastated and lost. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know why I had felt prompted to serve a mission if it meant losing my opportunity to get a college degree.

But one day, I remembered my mission president telling us about BYU-Pathway Worldwide. He had invited us to improve our English and to pursue this opportunity when we came back home—and I did!

My Journey with BYU-Pathway Worldwide

I knew that my mission president telling me about BYU-Pathway was not a coincidence. When I began the Pathway program, it required me to travel almost three hours each week to meet with my group. I sacrificed a lot, but I knew that getting an education was both important to me and to the Lord. And those sacrifices led to many blessings.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide was the window of opportunity I was looking for. It gave me access to education at an affordable cost, allowed me time to hold a job, and helped me get an education in English. And through it all, I found great friends who encouraged me to be brave and continue working toward my goals. I feel spiritually stronger and have become a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

Eventually, I was the first international student to receive a bachelor's degree through BYU-Pathway Worldwide. Education has opened amazing opportunities for me. I am now a welfare and self-reliance specialist for the South America Northwest Area of the Church, and I'm also a volunteer missionary for BYU-Pathway

in Peru. I see so much light in each student, and I encourage them to move forward just as I was encouraged by my friends during school. Through this journey, I've realized that Heavenly Father has been with me every step of the way.

Heavenly Father Wants Us to Succeed

My journey has strengthened my testimony of education. And I still plan to keep growing and learning as much as I can each day. We are on earth to progress, to be tested, to grow, to prove our obedience, and to rely on the Savior to become worthy to return to our Heavenly Father. Unto God, "all things . . . are spiritual"—including education (see Doctrine and Covenants 29:34). All the experiences we have and the knowledge we gain on earth will help us to be more like our Savior and will prepare us to make better decisions, to serve better in the world, and to be better instruments in His hands.

Education provides a way to gain knowledge and then to act, to stand for truth and right, and to live a life that our Heavenly Father wants for us—a life full of joy.

I know our Heavenly Father blesses our efforts, especially when our heart's desire is to progress and to serve Him and His children. I know that when He gives His children direction, "he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). He wants us to succeed!

Each of us should take advantage of each opportunity for education and growth that the Lord puts in our path, whether it's through BYU-Pathway or any other educational opportunity. He loves us and will always guide us. He wants us to learn all we can here on the earth. And I know we can experience great miracles as we work joyfully and diligently and trust in His guidance. I know I have. ■



Gloria Cornelio is from Lima, Peru. She is passionate about making the impossible possible, serving others and improving lives, teaching, and always learning as much as she can, especially about other cultures.

To find out more about BYU-Pathway Worldwide, go to byupathway.org.



EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Young adults share how getting an education has been the key to feeling more hopeful about the future:

"I was born and raised in Honduras—a country full of opportunities but challenging in lifestyle. I grew up listening to stories about how my ancestors were always looking for opportunities to help make the next generation better.

"Thanks to my parents' sacrifices, my brother and I got the best education possible. I came to learn that education is not limited to a college degree. Education is linked to heaven.

"If we prepare, we will not fear. Education is a commandment from Heavenly Father, and He has given us the promise that inasmuch as we will keep His commandments we will prosper in the land (see 2 Nephi 1:20). Education has helped me create, grow, and prepare to be the strongest link of my generations, and it is allowing me to help others do the same."

—Sara M. Barlow, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

"Education has helped me recognize and unravel my role and place in the human family, and that brings me a lot of joy."

—Keriata Kurene, Canterbury, New Zealand

"Education makes me feel that with my future job, I can be a light in this world and preach the gospel."

—Claudio Acuña Thomas, Antofagasta, Chile