

# Our Personal Progress One-on-One

*I wanted to help my daughters discover the gospel.  
So I decided to help them with Personal Progress.*

By Alan Hills

I have three daughters, and I wanted to facilitate gospel discovery in their lives. As each of my daughters reached the age of 12, I asked to sit down with her weekly. At first, each daughter wondered if she was in trouble. I would reassure her that I just wanted to help with her Personal Progress. We talked about expectations, formed a plan, and committed to meet every week—same time, same place—for half an hour. We called it our one-on-one.

What resulted from this weekly half hour together was remarkable.

Every Sunday I would sit down with each daughter. Sometimes we'd talk about events other than Personal Progress. I'd learn about her thoughts, feelings, trials, challenges, and successes. I would listen and ask questions. Sometimes I would be inspired to share my thoughts. Mostly I listened. Then she would pull up her list of Personal Progress goals from the previous week. We would go over the goals she had made for herself. Then I'd ask questions—lots of them. "What did you learn from the scriptures you read this week?" "How did your goal of cooking dinner with Mom go?" "As you studied faith, how did you think it applies to you?" "What experience most stands out in your mind?"

I would listen not just to the answers but to the emotion behind the words. Sometimes I would be prompted to ask deeper questions. It was usually the follow-up questions



that encouraged the best conversations we've had over the years. Sometimes there were feelings of inadequacy expressed, and sometimes pure testimony was shared. This was when the Spirit was the strongest and teaching moments were revealed.

Occasionally a daughter would come unprepared. I would simply ask what got in the way of her goals for the week and what could be done during the coming week that might make a difference. With the discovery of these roadblocks, she would recommit and reschedule her goals.

Most of the time each daughter came prepared. We'd talk about what she had learned. Then we'd celebrate! We'd give high fives or fist bumps, and I would praise her diligence in accomplishing her goals. Then I would sign off her accomplishment right then and there. Over time, I learned the importance of praise and celebrating. Creating a positive and energetic atmosphere fueled the desire to do more and work harder.

We would usually spend the last 10 minutes talking about her goals for the next week. She would pull up the Personal Progress requirements online, look at what needed to be done, and pick one or two experiences to work on. Then she would pull up her calendar and schedule specific times when she would work on her goals. She was able to see what was scheduled for the week,



whether it was homework, preparing for an exam, Personal Progress, reading her scriptures, or praying.

After her calendar was filled in, I'd ask, "As you look at your week, what might get in the way of your goals?" Often my daughter would remember an after-school choir concert or significant homework assignment that would conflict with her scheduled Personal Progress activity. She would reschedule her time until she was satisfied, print out the calendar, and hang it up in her room as a constant reminder.

My daughters also reached out to their mother or grandmother, explained what they had committed to work on, and sought help and advice. They spent a lot of time working together, talking about the principles they were learning during the week, and strengthening relationships.

During the week I committed to be a resource to my daughters if they had questions or needed help. But I promised never to ask about their goals during the week. This strengthened our relationships of trust.

Now all three of my daughters have received their Young Women medallions. They did the work. They learned about goal setting, time management, accountability, worthwhile activities and skills, and commitment to self.

As a father, I'm grateful for the opportunity I've had to help and encourage my daughters. I have a testimony of Personal Progress. It is a challenging, time-intensive program to help young women gain a testimony of the gospel. But it is worth it. It's not about the award. It's about the process of discovery. I've seen incredible growth in my daughters as each of them discovered the gospel through Personal Progress. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

*This article presents one father's efforts to reach out to his daughters. Its inclusion does not suggest that everyone needs to follow a similar pattern. There are many different ways that fathers can strengthen their families, depending on each individual's time, talents, and circumstances.*