

RECOGNIZING Gospel Light

By Yulia Phares

I would not say that I had no goals before I was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But I can say that my life had no clear direction. I sometimes felt as if I were walking in darkness, not really knowing which way to go.

Like most other 19-year-olds in Saint Petersburg, Russia, I hoped to someday get married, have children, and live happily ever after. Still, I wouldn't say that I exactly knew how to achieve this goal—especially the part about living happily ever after.

But Heavenly Father knew. He knew that before I could attain real happiness, I needed to place Him and His Son at the center of my life. I started to learn how to do this not long before my 20th birthday when the missionaries began to teach my family about how to find happiness through living the commandments.

After we met the missionaries, it didn't take long for me to know what to do. I prayed and knew that if I wanted to meet my life's goals, I needed to be baptized a member of Jesus Christ's Church.

Following my baptism, I was ostracized by some friends and family members who couldn't understand why making this choice to follow Heavenly Father's plan was so important to me. Despite this, I was happy. I knew He was comforting me by allowing me to go through these trials with peace.

By the time I turned 21, I had a strong desire to testify of the truthfulness of the gospel and share with others how resolving to live the commandments had changed my life, so I became a missionary. It felt wonderful to share with people what had happened to my life from the time I decided to put the gospel first.

My life has been full of blessings since that time. Eight years ago I was able to enter the temple and reach my goal of getting married. However, instead of only being married, I was sealed to my husband for eternity.

Over the last several years, my goal of becoming a mother has also been fulfilled. I have been blessed with three wonderful sons.

Not long ago my family and I had the opportunity to visit a temple open house. As we walked through the temple, our four-year-old son looked at me and



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said, "Mom, because you and Dad got married in the temple, our family is going to be together forever."

I feel blessed and humbled to think of the last decade of my life. I am on my way to achieving my goal for a "happily ever after," thanks to the fact that I turned my life to my Heavenly Father and to Jesus Christ. As long as I place Them at the center of my life, I know I can achieve my goals. I know that Heavenly Father and the Savior love us and want to help. ■

Would you like to share how Jesus Christ has touched your life? We welcome accounts of your gospel experiences and insights relating to the Savior's ministry and mission. Possible topics might include the Atonement, grace, healing, hope, or repentance. Please limit submissions to 500 words, label them "We Talk of Christ," and send them to ensign@ldschurch.org.