

WHEN THINGS SEEMED WRONG

I was trying to live the gospel. So why did my life take a turn for the worse?

By Lin Si-Chia



It started when I lost the Book of Mormon “my” missionary, Sister High, had given me more than five years earlier. I knew I could obtain another one, but my copy was full of my own markings and cross-references. Tucked between its pages were cherished quotes, a heartwarming note from a friend, and a copy of my patriarchal blessing. Although I looked and looked, the book was nowhere to be found. I couldn’t believe I had been so careless.

Shortly after this incident, I was let go from one of my jobs. My income was now cut in half. I had promised my parents I would pay my own way through college. How was I going to afford to keep going to school?

I had been keeping the commandments to the best of my ability; why were things going so badly? Friends at school didn’t pass on the chance to rub it in. One said, “You should cut back on how often you attend church. You can save bus fare.” Another said, “Why don’t you take a break from church for a month or two? You might find out that you don’t notice much of a difference.”

For a moment, their comments made sense. I started to wonder if my life *would* be better without the Church.

I went back to my dorm room, where I saw a picture of my family taken during Chinese New Year. I thought about how much I love them and how happy they make me. And I thought about my Heavenly Father, whom I love and who loves me. I realized maybe I

needed to focus on what I had rather than what I lacked. Still, I wondered how I was going to get through these trials.

A short time later, I confided my feelings to my institute teacher, Sister Ou, who said, “Many members have experienced a phase when the ‘all is well’ period of being a new convert ends and you begin to face the trials of faith. The scriptures say, ‘Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith’ (Mosiah 23:21).”

“So what should I do?” I asked.

“Study the scriptures even more diligently, and pray even more earnestly,” she said. “True faith comes when you have trials and pain. Your faith will grow, you will progress, and your testimony will be strengthened.”

I decided to follow her advice and put my faith in God. I tried to do as Alma 38:5 teaches: “As much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.”

As it turned out, I found another job—one that was better than my previous one. Better yet, I found my copy of the Book of Mormon.

I learned that our disappointments, sorrows, and dark hours are to help us grow. They can lead us to much joy if, as Sister Ou taught me, we put our faith and trust in a loving Heavenly Father. How grateful I am to have a reaffirmed testimony that the Church and gospel are true. ■



The newness of being a member of the Church had worn off, and I found myself facing a trial of faith. Fortunately, my institute teacher helped me see the joy that lay ahead.

WHY PAY FAST OFFERINGS?

Rebecca Alison Titz, a young adult from Germany who now attends the Winterthur Ward in Switzerland, has a testimony of fasting and of the blessings that come from paying a generous fast offering. Rebecca grew up seeing her parents pay fast offerings, and when she started to earn her own salary, she began contributing on her own.



She says, “There have been times when I could pay a generous fast offering.” And in those times she says, “I was never hungry in body or spirit.” She explains that feelings of hunger from fasting pass quickly, but the blessings of spiritual nourishment that come from helping others are long lasting—even eternal.

Rebecca has always tried to contribute a fast offering freely. “I’ve never had a problem giving it,” she says. “I have never thought, ‘I could use this money somewhere else.’ I have always

thought, ‘This is helping people who need it.’”



One of Rebecca’s friends, Jessica Schwabe of the Halberstadt Branch in Hannover, Germany, adds:

“Paying fast offerings gives fasting more meaning; it makes it all come together. Fast offerings are a part of fasting not for ourselves but for others, for people in need.” ■