

I Did All That for This

*A would-be dinner, a dead car battery, yelling children—
was it all worth it?*

By Julianne Heywood

One Saturday, as part of our ward's "temple week," our family planned to go to the Mesa Arizona Temple, have a picture taken of us on the temple grounds with our five children—two boys and three girls—and spend some time at the nearby visitors' center.

That morning my husband, Scott, took our 11-year-old son, Kaden, to football practice, while I got the other four children fed, dressed, and ready to go. It took me two hours. When Scott and Kaden returned, we loaded up the family and headed to the temple. The whole way there, Brylee and Branson, our nine-year-old twins, yelled in the backseat.

It was so hot. We all sweated through the family picture. Once inside the visitors' center, the kids scattered. While looking at the Jerusalem model, my boys decided to have a shoving match.

Four-year-old Ella wanted to see "the statue," so Scott and I corralled everyone and headed to see the *Christus*. We were the only family there, and as the lights dimmed and the soothing voice representing the Savior came over the speakers, I looked down the row at my children. All their little faces were turned upward, their eyes were wide, and everyone was perfectly reverent.

I swallowed hard and thought, "I did all that for this."

On Thursday, I decided to try a new recipe. Having completed the prep work, I was about to cook it all up, when Scott called from work and said he had received free tickets to a Cardinals football game. He asked if he and the boys could go. I knew it was a great opportunity. With a

yes, I quickly got everyone into the car and delivered the boys to Scott.

When I got home, I cleaned up my would-be dinner and put Ella and baby Cali to bed so I could watch a movie with Brylee, my oldest daughter. We happily snuggled together in my bed and talked about school, shampoo, and babies. She laid her head on my stomach while I tickled her back. I told her that I loved her and that Heavenly Father did too.

We held hands as she drifted off to sleep, and I thought, "I did all that for this."

On Friday, I took Branson and the little girls to play at my mom's house. On the way there I suggested we stop for ice cream on the way home. At Mom's, Branson was chasing, teasing, and tickling Ella, who was a willing participant, alternating between full-out screams and shrieking laughter. I asked them to stop so many times that I lost count.

We loaded up the car, only to find that the battery had died. After we managed to jump-start the car, Branson asked on the way home where we were stopping for ice cream. I responded, "We're not getting ice cream because you and Ella didn't listen to me." Branson said a few less-than-kind words, so when we got home, I sent him straight to bed.

Later on, I was lying half asleep on my bed when I heard Branson say, "Mom, don't open your eyes." I felt him putting something around my wrist, and then he ran out. It was a bracelet made of duct tape with the words "I am sorry" written on it.

And I thought, "I did all that for this."

I got up Saturday morning and started chores. In the



office I pulled my camera down from the shelf and began looking at the pictures I had taken the previous Saturday. I came to the one that a sister missionary had taken for us under the *Christus*. I remembered Scott and I showing our kids the nail marks in the marble feet of the statue. We had run our fingers in the grooves, looked up at the marks in His outstretched hands, and talked about how He got the wound in His side.

While remembering our precious minutes of peace, I felt the Lord whisper to my heart, "I did all that for this."

And He did. The Savior's sacrifice is essential in the divine plan "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). His Atonement provides us with the enabling and strengthening power to return to live with Him and our Heavenly Father. Jesus did all of that so I could have all of this, so my children and husband could be mine forever, so I could repent and try again. How I love Him for "doing all that" for us! ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.