

Where's



Tessa?

By Candice A. Grover

(Based on a true story)

Pray, he is there; speak, he is list'ning
(*Children's Songbook*, 12–13).

Payton opened the pickup truck door and stepped out into the snow. Snowflakes fluttered through the air. Payton and her family had just gotten home from visiting Grandpa and Grandma.

Dad looked into the back of the truck. “Where’s Tessa?” Their six-month-old black lab wasn’t on her blanket. “She must have jumped out. No one will know who she belongs to because the tags fell off her collar last week.” Dad climbed back into the truck. “I’ll go look for her.”

Payton imagined Tessa alone in the cold night, and tears spilled down her cheeks. “Mom, what will happen to Tessa?”

Mom hugged Payton. “Don’t worry. Dad will find her.”

Even when Payton put on her warm pajamas, she felt cold inside. The wind blew outside, and a branch scraped against her window.

Payton knelt down and asked Heavenly Father to help her puppy. The knot in her stomach loosened, and she felt warm and calm.

“How are you doing?” Mom asked when she came to tuck Payton in.

“I feel better. I know Tessa is OK.”

“How do you know?”

“I prayed, and then I wasn’t scared anymore.”

“I’m glad you chose to pray and listen,” Mom said as she kissed Payton goodnight.

Payton’s prayer helped her testimony grow.



Find more ways to build your testimony on page 11.



Tessa was still missing, but Payton kept praying.

The next morning, Payton jumped out of bed and went to find Tessa, certain her prayer had been answered.

“Where is she?” Payton asked.

“I don’t know,” Dad said. “I looked for hours, but there were no tracks in the snow.”

“But I said a prayer. Why can’t it be answered now?”

“It doesn’t always work that way,” Dad said.

“Heavenly Father answers our prayers, but not always the way we want them answered. We have to be patient.”

“Being patient is hard,” Payton said.

“Yes, it is,” Dad said. Then he smiled. “Why don’t we make some signs with Tessa’s picture and our phone number?”

“That’s a great idea!” Payton said.

Dad and Payton made the signs, and they posted them on the roads between Grandpa’s house and their own.

A week went by. Payton and her family prayed for Tessa every day. Whenever they went out, Payton watched for a black puppy with a red collar. When Payton was sad, she thought of the feelings she’d had when she first prayed for Tessa.

Then one afternoon, the phone rang. It was someone saying they had found a black lab puppy with a red collar.

“Let’s go get her!” Payton exclaimed.

“Slow down,” Dad said. “We’re not sure it’s Tessa yet.”

The short drive seemed to take forever. Finally they drove down a long driveway to a red farmhouse. When Dad opened the front gate, a black streak bounded through the snow and knocked Payton off her feet. She giggled as Tessa licked her face.

“It’s definitely Tessa,” Mom said.

On the way home Dad told Payton, “Now we know why there were no tracks in the snow. That family was behind us when Tessa jumped out of our truck. They put her in their car and tried to follow us, but we were too far ahead.”

Mom smiled at Payton. “You were right. Your prayer was answered. Someone was taking care of Tessa the whole time.”

Warmth spread through Payton. She pressed her cheek against Tessa’s fur.

“Heavenly Father was taking care of her, just like He took care of me.” ♦

