

A Father's Embrace

I lost my father when I was seven. The resulting doubts almost kept me from trusting my Heavenly Father.

By Luiz Fernando Maykot

My family was about to leave the party, but I still wanted to go Rollerblading. My father embraced me and asked if I wanted to stay so he could take me Rollerblading.

“No!” I said angrily.

“You can trust me,” he said.

Others wanted to leave, so we got in the car. Ten minutes later we were in a car accident. Miraculously, I survived, but my father was killed. That “no!” was the last thing I said to him, and he was the last person I would embrace for many years.

For the next 11 years, my life was on a downward spiral. I lost confidence in myself and began to distrust everyone. My life was so unhappy that one day when I was 18, I found myself struggling beneath torrential hopelessness, imploring God to show me the way to a happy life.

A week later two missionaries approached me. They showed me a book and told me I should pray for a witness of its truthfulness. What they asked seemed small, but the wounds left by the death of my father

were deep, and I considered my meeting the missionaries a mere coincidence and not an answer from a God who loved me.

Still, I did read the Book of Mormon and prayed to receive an answer—though not with real intent. After all, that would mean I would have to trust God, to embrace Him and His answer. It was easier to accept the readily available criticisms of the Church. And I had also discovered that

so many of the great historical figures I had been introduced to in school were flawed. What if Joseph Smith was just like them?

In the end, however, I was baptized and confirmed. I knew I needed some direction in my life, and I liked the Church and the members. But I now realize that I joined without a true testimony, one that burns in the heart. The belief I did have resulted from my realization that the arguments made by

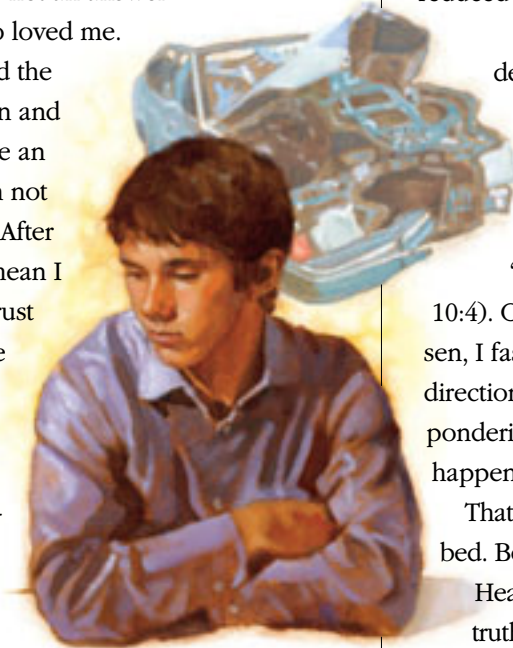
detractors of the Church were superficial. But still distrusting, I reached the point where maintaining that belief felt overwhelming. My introduction to the Church had begun because of my lack of trust and my unhappiness, and I was being reduced to the same state again.

So I made a crucial decision: I will pray, but this time I'll do it just as Moroni exhorted, with “faith in Christ,” “real intent,” and a “sincere heart” (Moroni

10:4). On the day I had chosen, I fasted and prayed for direction. I spent the day pondering everything that had happened.

That night I knelt at my bed. Bowing my head, I asked Heavenly Father about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. My mind began to remember all my doubts. I closed my eyes, clutched my hands tighter, and asked again—with sincerity, with intent, with faith in our Savior.

The world seemed to stop. I felt warm and enveloped in light. For 11 long years I had yearned for this, and finally I was embraced again by a father—a Heavenly Father. Finally I had found someone to trust. “Yes,” I said, with tears on my face, “I trust Thee.” ■



My angry response was the last thing I said to my father, and he was the last person I would embrace for many years.