



Discovering God

BY MARY WEENIG

When I was almost 18, I flew to a small town called Soldotna, Alaska, to work for the summer. This was my first experience living away from home. My parents had arranged for me to work for and live with their good friends the Wrights, who owned the local grocery store. I hoped to earn enough money for college. I also hoped to return home with an answer to a question that repeatedly entered my mind: Is there really a God?

I needed to obtain an answer for myself. So I resolved to pray every night and ask God if He was real. Somehow I felt that if God existed, He would answer my prayer. If I never received an answer, then I would know He didn't exist. Simple, I thought.

At the Wrights' home, I shared a bedroom with their daughter Lisa. She was home from Brigham Young University for the summer and worked at the grocery store with me. I admired Lisa from the start. She was beautiful, intelligent, confident, and enthusiastic about life. That summer we spent nearly every hour of every day together.

I loved listening to Lisa tell me about college life. Her life sounded fun and very independent. Lisa had her life organized and balanced, with the right priorities firmly in place.

My admiration for Lisa grew as I observed her reading the scriptures daily and praying each morning and night. I wanted to ask Lisa how she had obtained her faith in God but felt ashamed of my lack of faith. I remember lying in bed, wondering what Lisa talked to God about in her prayers.

Every night I knelt by my bed and said a quick prayer, asking God if He was there. Yet I didn't feel anything

special or spiritual. I did not hear a voice. I felt the same after my prayers as I did before them. This nightly routine went on for two months. Discouraged, I found my doubts in God increasing.

One night, when I was feeling deeply homesick, tears welled in my eyes. I desperately wanted to be near my family, friends, and familiar surroundings. Aching to talk to someone who knew and loved me, I knelt in prayer. "God, I really need You right now," I began. For the next several minutes, I released my true feelings to my Father in Heaven. I told Him everything. I talked with Him as though I believed He was there.

A warmth wrapped around me. I began to feel as though Heavenly Father had come down and taken me in His arms. I was no longer alone. Love and peace embraced me. I knew there was a God.

I wondered why receiving an answer to my prayer took more than two months. Jeremiah 29:13 gave me the answer: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

I finally received an answer to my prayer after I dug deep into my heart. I placed faith in God's existence. I searched high into the heavens with my words and tears.

My life has changed because of that one night. I served a mission and married in the temple. My faith in God's existence continues to increase.

I often think back to that summer in Alaska. Without Lisa's example, I might not have persevered through those months of praying. I might have quit and never discovered the love of my Heavenly Father. I will forever be grateful to Lisa and her example. She helped me come to know God and feel His love for me. ■