



A Promised Blessing for Attending the Temple

*I had wanted to attend the
temple more—little did I know how much
it was going to bless my family.*

By Cheri Evans

A few years ago, President Oldroyd, a member of the stake presidency, visited my ward and said something I will never forget: “I promise you that if you attend the temple, *every* part of your life will be blessed.”

As I thought about it, I couldn’t imagine how attending the temple could touch every part of my life. But after church, I decided I would take his challenge anyway and attend the temple on a more regular basis. I wanted to test his promise. My husband had wanted to go to the temple more often, but I was reluctant because we had young children. We would have to drive an hour and a half to the temple in San Antonio, Texas, USA, complete an endowment session, and then drive home. It didn’t work to ask someone to watch our kids for seven or eight hours.

The Beginning of a Blessing

At first we tried trading babysitting with another family, but someone inevitably got sick or had something come up. We decided that we just needed to set the dates for the entire year and go! We then came up with the “pizza and play” method. We would drive to the temple together. One parent would go to a temple session while the other would take the kids to get pizza. Then we would

switch: the second parent would do temple work while the other parent walked the temple grounds with the kids. This worked well. Our kids knew the temple was important to us—they knew all the other things we could have been doing on a Saturday—and we got to spend time as a family.

Little did I know how much going to the temple was going to bless my family. After we had been going more

often for over a year, I was sitting in a session when I noticed a quadriplegic man. I thought it was amazing that he was there. On the way out of the temple, I saw him sitting near the parking lot, so my husband and I thought we would say hi.

The man asked my husband, Chad, and I if we could help him make a phone call. We agreed to help, and the man told Chad where his phone was. Chad dialed the number for him and then handed him the phone. The man could not reach out for it, though he smiled kindly. Chad looked down at the man’s arms, which were strapped to his wheelchair, and quickly realized he needed to hold the phone up to his ear. The city bus service that was supposed to pick the man up was late. We stayed with him and talked until his bus came. We were amazed that, despite his challenges, he was at the temple. He had such a great attitude. He had a bright smile. Before he left, we exchanged contact information and learned that his name was Max Para.

If Brother Para could get himself to the temple, we could get ourselves to the temple—no excuses!

Brother Para’s Example

We decided to visit him the next month as part of our visit to the temple. We called ahead, and he said we could come in when we got to his home. We drove into San Antonio and found Brother Para’s small home.





Gonzales, he again saw Brother Para at the temple waiting for a van to come get him. Brother Para had been waiting for a long time. Chad and Brother Gonzales decided to take Brother Para home themselves. Brother Gonzales had a big black truck. Just then, a carload of priests from our stake pulled up, and they helped put the heavy wheelchair in the back of the truck. Then they carried Brother Para into the truck, buckled him up, and held on to him so he would not fall over. I bet that day was awesome for Brother Para—how could he even imagine that he would be riding home from the temple in his dream truck!

He was lying on his bed with a white sheet covering his body up to his chin. He moved his head to the side and talked with us, his smile still beaming. He told us how he became quadriplegic after falling off a roof when he was in his 30s. He shared his struggle and his testimony.

A one-time visit to Brother Para turned into years of visits. He became a special part of our lives. We didn't know what to do for him—his challenges were huge. What we did know is that we could be his friends. We could bring him small gifts: a picture of the Savior, a Book of Mormon CD in Spanish, a picture of the temple, a bag of fresh oranges. We could visit him, sing Primary songs, and listen to him. What an incredible experience this

was—you cannot give a crumb to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return.¹

He taught us gratitude, which changed *every* part of our lives. We learned to have gratitude for our knowledge of the gospel, for our relationship with God; for our knowledge of the plan of salvation; for our home, cars, food, and clothing; for our ability to use our bodies; for the chance to do good for our community; and for good people around us. Brother Para changed our definition of the words *hard* and *trial*. We had reason to rejoice in our many blessings and used those blessings to uplift others.

Learning to Serve

Once when Chad was at the temple with one of our friends, Brother

Blessed in Every Way

On our last visit to the San Antonio Temple before we moved, we were able to visit Brother Para. On this special last visit, Brother Para had our whole family over for dinner.

I am very grateful that I put President Oldroyd's promise to the test. My family would never have met Brother Para if we had not attended the temple. I am a different person—I am becoming who the Lord wants me to be. As we put the Lord first and attended the temple, our lives were blessed in *every way*. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See Melvin J. Ballard, in Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 93.