

## Change of Heart, Change of Friends

**A**s a teenager, I had a rebellious streak a mile wide, and I acted in ways that were contrary to how I was raised. I began drinking alcohol when I was 13, and by my senior year of high school, I drank every weekend.

I attended church on occasion to reduce confrontations with my parents, but I would sleep through sacrament meeting and then head to the beach before Sunday School. To say my parents were unhappy with my behavior would be an understatement. To their credit, they respected my agency while continuing to encourage me to live the gospel. Still, I had no intention of staying active in the Church, and I certainly didn't see a mission in my future.

After high school, I attended a community college and continued my rebellious ways. But late one night,

I remember lying on my couch wondering about my future. What type of girl would I marry? If I turned my back on the Lord, would I ever find my way back? As important as these decisions were, I wasn't motivated to change.

A short time later, I attended a friend's backyard party with alcohol and a blazing bonfire. After joking around with my buddies for a while, I stepped away for a moment and closed my eyes.

When I opened my eyes again, I had a moment of clarity. I watched my friends acting foolishly and no longer saw myself belonging to that group. I left and decided to stop drinking and going to parties. That meant I would need to change my group of friends, which was not easy. But I did it.

Those decisions have blessed my life. I eventually served a mission and

have fulfilled many callings. Most importantly, I married a wonderful woman in the temple. This has led to the choicest blessings of my life.

I recently read about the conversion of Alma and the sons of Mosiah (see Mosiah 27) and how they experienced a mighty change of heart (see Alma 5:12–14), brought about in part by the faithful prayers of Alma's father. Then I thought of my parents and realized, over 30 years later, that my sobering experience at that party was a direct result of their prayers.

Now, as a parent of a struggling child, I find myself in a similar place as Alma's father and my parents. But likening the scriptures unto myself, I have faith and hope that one day my child will also experience a change of heart. ■

**Name withheld, California, USA**

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