



**By Elder  
Carl B. Cook**  
Of the Presidency  
of the Seventy

# WHAT IS TRUE

I recently met a remarkable young woman, 17-year-old Caylee, as she shared her heartfelt feelings in a stake conference. She declared that God is real, the Church is true, and President Russell M. Nelson is God's prophet. She also bore strong witness that the negative things some say about the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ are false.

I was impressed by Caylee's conviction and her ability to discern what is true and what isn't.

But I was even more impressed when I spoke with Caylee after the meeting and discovered that her discernment and conviction had not come easily. In fact, she had endured a serious challenge to her faith.

Here is what she shared.

## **Struggling to Find Answers**

Caylee has always been active in the Church. However, as she began to think deeply about the gospel and the Church, some serious questions arose in her mind. She felt guilty for questioning and began searching for answers.

"My problem," Caylee says, "was I searched in all the wrong places. Rather than searching scriptures or conference talks and talking to my parents, I came upon different articles online claiming they had the answers to my questions."

Initially, Caylee thought the online articles were shining light on her questions. However, she says, "As I continued investigating my questions, everything I read filled me with more and more questions and more and more doubt."



# and WHAT ISN'T?

Caylee began losing both faith and hope. “The light from my testimony was flickering,” she remembers, “and I gradually stopped doing things I had been taught—reading the scriptures, praying, and attending seminary.”

She eventually became overwhelmed by the darkness and confusion she felt. She says, “I couldn’t determine what was from God and what was a crazy idea twisted and created by someone to throw me off. I could no longer discern what was truth and what was deception. It was tearing me apart.”

Caylee compares her situation to Joseph Smith’s when he said, “At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to ‘ask of God’ [James 1:5], concluding that if he gave

wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture” (Joseph Smith—History 1:13).

## **Talking to People She Trusts**

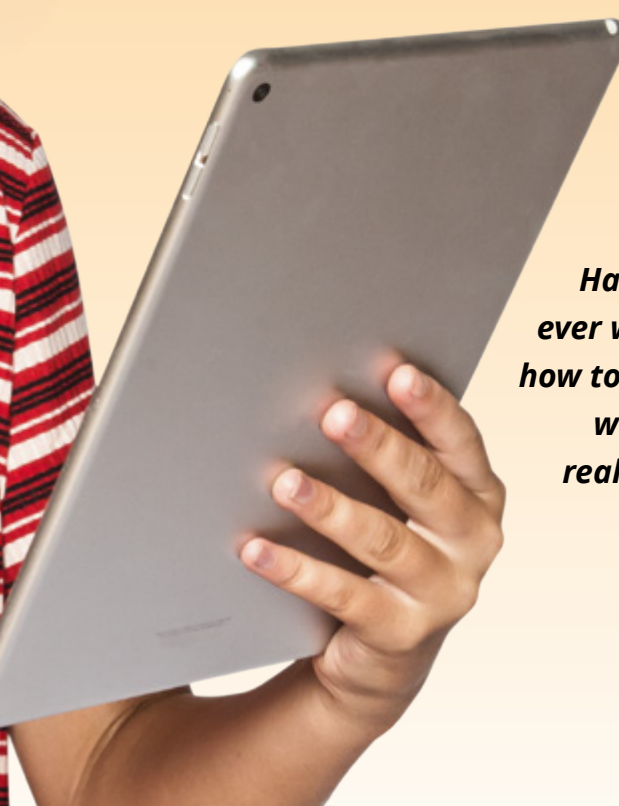
At this critical point, Caylee reached out to her seminary teacher, her grandmother, and her mother. Her seminary teacher assured her that her feelings weren’t wrong and that she wasn’t the only person with questions. Her teacher shared her testimony and recommended reading material that could help Caylee in her search.

Caylee’s grandmother didn’t preach. She simply urged her to consider which sources of information uplifted her—the online information or Church doctrine? Caylee began comparing: “Which one uplifted me? Which one brought joy and peace to my soul? Which one taught me that I would be with my family forever in a state of never-ending happiness if I followed God’s commandments? Which one put nagging voices in my head?”

## **Seeking God through Prayer and Scriptures**

Caylee’s mother encouraged her to pray. Eventually, Caylee went to her room and poured out her soul to God. She explains: “Nothing happened. No angels came down. My heart didn’t fill up with peace and gratitude. I went back to my mom. We prayed together, and she encouraged me to read the Book of Mormon for 10 minutes. As I read, I felt a promise in my heart that if I continued to do this, I would see blessings. I would be able to see clearly and know which teachings were from God and which were not.”

Caylee began to pray every day and read the Book of Mormon. She stayed away from Twitter and the websites that started her



***Have you  
ever wondered  
how to figure out  
what is  
really true?***

doubts in the first place. She went to seminary with the intent to learn, not to look for negative things about the Church.

### Discerning What Is True

After about two weeks of consistent effort, she felt the negative voices get quieter. School went better. Work was more enjoyable, and she had a better relationship with her parents. She was happier.

Because of that happiness, she says, “I finally saw my answer. I was able to discern what was from God and what was not because I saw firsthand what He was doing for me when I did what He asks.”

“That,” she concludes, “is the only way you can truly discern what is truth from God and what is not. We can study and ponder and question all we want, but until we do as James directs and what Joseph Smith did—ask and act—only then can we truly know what is true and what isn’t.”

So what do we learn from Caylee’s experience? Here are a few ideas:

- We shouldn’t feel bad if we have questions.
- We should never cease praying as we search for answers.
- We should study and ponder the Book of Mormon.
- By carefully choosing what we read and listen to, we can turn off loud voices of technology and media that draw us away from truth and intend to destroy.
- We should counsel with people we know, love, and respect—rather than seeking help from strangers.
- God will eventually answer our questions in His own way and in His own time. He loves us.
- Answers will come as we do what our Heavenly Father asks—not when we do what the world suggests.

I am inspired by Caylee and you young women and young men God has prepared for this time. She, like so many of you, exemplifies the kind of person President Russell M. Nelson envisioned: “We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous.”<sup>1</sup>

You are truth seekers, covenant keepers, and kingdom builders. With God’s help and through the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, you can receive the gift of discernment and know, live, and share what is true. ■

#### NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson (quoting Boyd K. Packer), “A Plea to My Sisters,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.

