

I felt a darkness settle over my life. And then I realized I needed to talk with my bishop.

The **First Step** **Toward** Repentance

By Aurilas Peterson

I remember setting my baptism date with the missionaries. They asked me if I was ready to make this covenant with our Heavenly Father. Without even thinking about it and with a heart full of joy, I said, “Yes!” I wanted to accept the special gift my loving Father had given me, and I knew that I wouldn’t be as happy without the Savior in my life. But I really wasn’t sure what the future held for me.

Finally, the big day came. It was unforgettable, and I was so happy.

Dark Days

After my baptism and confirmation, days suddenly seemed dark. I was dealing with family issues, and I was struggling to obey all of God’s laws. I didn’t know what to do, and I wanted to give up on everything. It seemed like nobody understood me.

I had always loved reading the Book of Mormon, but during that time I set it aside. One day, as I was home alone, I felt the sweetness of

the Spirit prompting me to read the Book of Mormon. I prayed beforehand, wanting to find an answer that could bring solace to my suffering. I opened directly to Alma chapter 5. Verse 27 reads: “Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?”

Finally, I felt touched by these words. I knew that I needed to repent, so I made an appointment to see my bishop. I was undeniably scared, but I forced myself to go and visit with him.

Understanding God’s Promise

When I arrived at the bishop’s office, I felt so guilty that I wanted to just turn back around. But I prayed to have the courage to say everything I needed to. The bishop welcomed me into his office, and then he said

a prayer to receive God's help. He spoke to me as if I were his son and showed his love for me through his words. He gave me advice and asked me to do certain things in order to receive God's forgiveness and then to come back to meet with him.

I was so glad for this opportunity. I followed his advice and eventually came to understand God's promise of forgiveness to Alma: "If he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of

his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also" (Mosiah 26:29). After sincerely repenting, I knew that God had forgiven me. I finally was able to feel Heavenly Father's love in my heart, and the darkness lifted. I was happy and proud of myself.

The Bishop Is There to Help

The bishop is the Lord's representative for the ward. Know that he is there to help you find the true happiness that God has in store for you.

Trust him. If you have problems or need to repent, go and find him. He will help you.

I know it is not an easy thing to go see him sometimes. But as President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) explained about our Heavenly Father's eternal plan: "I daresay that in the [premortal] spirit world, when it was proposed to us to . . . pass through the experience that we are now receiving, it was not altogether pleasant and agreeable. . . . Yet there is no doubt that we saw and understood clearly there that, in order to accomplish our exaltation and glory, this was a necessary experience." He went on to say, "We were willing to conform to the will of God, and consequently we are here" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* [2012], 110).

Repentance is part of conforming to God's will. So rather than being scared of the bishop, make him your friend. He was chosen by God, and he can help you repent and heal your soul through coming unto Jesus Christ. The Lord wants to help us, but we need to take that first step toward repentance. That way we can see the promise in Isaiah 1:18 fulfilled: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." And for that, the bishop is there to help.

I testify that God lives and that Jesus Christ is our Savior. They both love us very much! ■

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