

PRAYER: A MOTHER'S GIFT

Name withheld

In spite of my son's rebellion, I never stopped praying for him.

I never prayed so much as when one of my sons reached the age of 17. He started having some doubts about the gospel, and at times he was rebellious and didn't want to listen. My husband and I always tried to insist that he attend church, but many times he refused. We held our family home evenings, read the scriptures, and prayed as a family, but he often chose not to participate. I can't remember how many times I knelt down to ask our Heavenly Father to touch his heart and help him continue along the right path.

Over the next two years, he had many ups and downs. Church leaders supported me and they spoke with him, but nothing seemed to be of use. Eventually he left home.

All that time I never stopped praying for him. At times my husband, tired of it, said to me, "Leave him. He has his moral agency." But my reply was always the same: "No. I will not lose hope."

After a time, our son came to our home. He asked my forgiveness and told me, "Mama, I want to come home." My husband and I were wary, but after discussing it, we yielded. After he returned home, we saw his firm determination to change. He became active in the

Church and participated in activities. He was later called to serve as a Primary teacher, an experience that was quite special for him.

One day I hung up a Poster from the *Liahona* that said, "Don't let worries or doubts keep you from serving a full-time mission."¹ It hung in his

HELPING YOUR CHILD

Children who stray have their agency, and they might not respond to spiritual promptings, but the gospel gives you many ways to help such a child:

- Counsel together with your spouse and other children.
- Strengthen yourself spiritually so that you can act out of faith and love, not fear.
- Be worthy of and seek personal revelation on how to help your child.
- Be a living example of a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Express love to your child in words and actions.
- Invite him or her to participate in gospel learning at home and in family activities like vacations, holidays, and projects.
- Never give up.



THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

“Parents who honor temple covenants are in a position to exert great spiritual influence over time on their children. Faithful members of the Church can find comfort in knowing that they can lay claim to the promises of divine guidance and power, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of the priesthood, in their efforts to help family members receive the blessings of salvation and exaltation.

“ . . . Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Faithful Parents and Wayward Children: Sustaining Hope While Overcoming Misunderstanding,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2014, 31; *Liahona*, Mar. 2014, 19.

bedroom for a couple of months, when suddenly one day he said to me, “Mama, I want to go on a mission at the end of the year.” It was marvelous. My husband and I cried and cried, and of course we supported him as he prepared to go to the temple and serve a mission. I continued praying all the time, now thanking Heavenly Father for having touched the heart of my son.

After some time on his mission, in one of his letters he said to me, “Mama, I have a great testimony of prayer, thanks to you. I know that you were praying the whole time

for me, and now I am on a mission because the Lord touched my heart, not because I am all that good. Thanks, Mama. Share with the sisters this principle that changed my life.”

Now my son has served a faithful mission and participated in a marvelous work. I am very thankful to Heavenly Father for listening to my prayers all these years and for touching the heart of my son, which caused him to return to the right path. ■

The author lives in Guatemala.

NOTE

1. “Take the Next Step,” *New Era*, June 2009, 27; *Liahona*, June 2009, 31.