

Experimenting on the Music

By Marcel Hall

I always thought that I was one of the lucky exceptions to some gospel standards. So I did my own thing, deciding which standards were important and which weren't. One of the standards I saw as optional was not listening to profane and vulgar music (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 22). I didn't think that the music I listened to made a difference in how I acted and how I felt about the gospel. I still had a strong testimony of Jesus Christ, and I did my best to serve others and attend my Church meetings. I told myself that it was unfortunate that those musicians didn't live virtuous lives, but I was OK listening to their music—after all, it didn't keep me from living a gospel-oriented life.

As I prepared to serve a mission, I didn't think twice about how the music I listened to was

stifling my spiritual progression.

However, within hours of opening my mission call, the scripture Alma 32:27 came into my head: "But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words."

And then I thought of that one word: *experiment*. If I wanted to receive the blessings I was missing out on, I had to experiment. So for the next three weeks, I went without my inappropriate music. It was hard at first, and I had many relapses. But after a few days, the peaceful feelings I began having every day were enough to get me through. On top of that, as a college student, I began to do better in my

If I wanted to deepen my testimony and progress spiritually, I had to stop making excuses for my behavior.

classes. I could focus more, and I was more in tune with the Spirit in a time of my life where heavenly guidance was especially important.

I found that even my desires changed. I wanted to have every blessing that Heavenly Father is waiting to give me. My experience in changing my music habits helped me realize that





ALIGNING OUR WILLS

“Only by aligning our wills with God’s is full happiness to be found. Anything less results in a lesser portion (see Alma 12:10–11). . . .

“So many of us are kept from eventual consecration because we mistakenly think that, somehow, by letting our will be swallowed up in the will of God, we lose our individuality (see Mosiah 15:7). What we are really worried about, of course, is not giving up self, but selfish things—like our roles, our time, our preeminence, and our possessions. No wonder we are instructed by the Savior to lose ourselves (see Luke 9:24). He is only asking us to lose the old self in order to find the new self. It is not a question of one’s losing identity but of finding his true identity!”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 23.

there are no optional standards and that every commandment we are given is designed to deepen our relationship with our Heavenly Father and make us more like Him. Skipping out on ones we don’t like will only deny us His promised blessings.

Following gospel standards and keeping the commandments set us apart as true disciples of Christ. When we make that step to go from good to even better, we truly please our Father

in Heaven. We cannot be fence-sitters in this gospel. We are either moving forward or falling back, and the idea of “I’m doing well enough right now” will inevitably cause us to fall back. But if we rely on Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement to improve at least a little bit each day, then we can live with His peace and know that we are becoming the kind of people He knows we can be. ■

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