

THE HIGHEST EDUCATION

“In a world that wonders and speculates and drifts, we can be certain who our Father is, who we are, and what our destiny is if we follow the path that has been marked for us. We can enjoy the highest of all higher education—the learning that comes, in both spiritual and temporal affairs, when our spirits and our minds respond to the light that streams from heaven to the faithful.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “What I Wish Every New Member Knew—and Every Longtime Member Remembered,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 15.

Finding

BY ASHLEY MYERS



From the outside looking in, people saw a girl who was successful and accomplished. I started on a competitive basketball team, played the violin in the state championship orchestra, graduated as the salutatorian of my class, was involved in student government, and participated in numerous other extracurricular activities. I strove to excel, to be perfect.

On the inside, however, I was a completely different person. Like many teenage girls, I unsuccessfully fought to win the battle of insecurity. I struggled with my self-image. I felt alone, as it was hard for me to develop close friendships when so few people maintained similar beliefs and

morals. I was simply unhappy.

Without my even being aware of what I was doing, I tried to find not just solace, but also happiness, in being the best in anything and everything. My motto in life became “Mediocrity is not an option!”

Through my efforts, the awards began to pile up. However, I became more discouraged because I was not finding happiness. Sure I found a sense of *pleasure* in receiving such recognition, but it was not true happiness. I continually felt that I needed just one more award and then I would feel happy, only to be disappointed when that feeling did not come. Without my realizing it, this drive for perfection had taken over and had become the center of my life.

HAPPINESS IN

Christ



I decided that I wanted to become a different person when I entered college. Again, without being fully conscious of what I was doing, I developed a new center in my life, returning to basics I had learned at home, church, and seminary.

I began having meaningful scripture study and started pouring my soul out to my Father in Heaven. I became a spiritual sponge. I never would have thought such simple adjustments could make such a huge impact on my life. I truly have never been happier.

Sure, there have been times when I have felt sad and low. The difference is that I now know whole-heartedly that God loves me and hears and answers my prayers. I

also know that my Savior understands and has felt all my pains. He not only suffered for mankind's sins, but also for our sorrows and burdens (see Alma 7:11–13).

I have recently come to the conclusion that all high school students struggle in one way or another. For some it may be minor struggles, for others major. For some it may be worrying about weight or self-esteem. For others the struggle may be with grades or bullies. It may be a sense of pressure to succeed, or it may be temptation. Whatever the reasons or how hefty the struggles, I have discovered that everyone can experience joy through centering their lives on Christ and finding happiness through Him. **NE**