



This seminary year of home study in the Cambridge Ward in England was going to be different, I thought to myself. The weekly lessons on Tuesday nights were fun because of the close friendships the class had. The previous year my friend Helena and I tried to make the work easier on ourselves. I took the odd-numbered sections of the manual, and Helena

A SHIELD OF PROTECTION

"I know the power that comes from associations in the seminary and institute programs. It has enriched my life, and I know it will do the same for you. It will put a shield of protection around you to keep you free from the temptations and trials of the world. There is a great blessing in having a knowledge of the gospel. And I know of no better place for the young people of the Church to gain a special knowledge of sacred things than in the institute and seminary programs of the Church."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "What a Way to Grow," *New Era*, Aug. 1998, 7.

on Daily Seminary Study

took the evens. We each completed the work for those sections and then swapped answers. I have to confess: this was a step up from the year before when I had spent a day at her house copying all her work.

I resolved that this year was going to be different. I was going to take the initiative to learn all my scripture mastery scriptures (not just crumple and smooth out every page in my triple combination with a scripture mastery item to make it easier to turn to) and keep up to date with the home-study manual, if not get ahead. I imagined myself as the shining example to all my classmates. I went to the first class of the new term with my manual, pencil, and newly sharpened red scripture marker in hand and smugly told Helena that I would no longer be needing her help. I would, for a change, be doing the work myself. Or at least that was the plan.

A month later I knew I was already over my head and would need to slog it out for a whole weekend to catch up. A few weeks later I still hadn't done as much as open the manual, and I tentatively asked Helena how she was doing in her home-study manual, in the hope we could come to an arrangement.

"Oh, when you said you were going to get ahead in the manual, I followed your example and I'm now a whole month-and-a-half ahead in the book. Thanks. You were right," Helena said smugly, knowing I had reverted to my old ways. I was stuck and had lost my partner in crime.

I decided that I needed a daily reminder to read my scriptures and fill out my manual. It would be hard, and

wading through at least three sections of the manual in a short amount of time did not sound appealing. I tried several techniques to remind me to do at least an hour of seminary work every day.

I tried reasoning that after my favorite TV show I would do an hour every evening, but favorite shows were followed by favorite shows, and even when the evening news came on, I was still not motivated. The prayer rock placed on my pillow or where I would tread on it to remind me soon ended up in the back garden after countless bruises on my forehead and stubbed toes. Willpower was not working, and I needed a way to be a bit more diligent in my seminary study.

I decided to pray to Heavenly Father to forgive me of my laziness and asked if He would help me to get down to work. I started putting up bright yellow sticky notes on my bunk bed and desk where I would see them and be reminded to read and study. For the most part they worked. I just had to back them up with constant prayer so that I wouldn't become complacent.

A week before we had to have all our work turned in, I still had a few sections left to complete. I ended up at Helena's home again, but this time we completed the remaining work together, reading through the scriptures and answering the questions. Even though I had left a lot of the work till late and had struggled to catch up, seminary turned out to be enjoyable and rewarding as I learned and retained more knowledge than any previous year of seminary. All thanks to Heavenly Father and a few well-placed sticky notes. **NE**