

*All my friends  
turned against me,  
and then I made  
it even worse.*



# My BIGGEST BULLY

By Ellie Earnest

**W**hen I was 12, the girls I thought were my four best friends decided they didn't want to be friends with me. They began to say horrible and hateful things about me. I felt unloved, unwanted, unneeded, and worthless. I thought I would never feel happy again.

I tried and tried, but the happiness just never came. I didn't want to do anything, and I stopped participating in school activities. After a few months of feeling like everything was falling apart, I started to hide my feelings and pretend to be happy.

I stopped praying, and I complained anytime I had to go to church or midweek activities. My former friends had constantly teased me about being a member of the Church. I told myself that if I stopped going to church and living the standards, I could get my friends back.

But after a few months, I realized that I needed to rely more on the Savior when I was feeling hurt and lonely. Jesus Christ felt all of my pain. He died on the cross for me, and I was setting aside His sacrifice and His gospel. I started complaining less and less until, finally, Sunday was my favorite day of the week.

Even after going to church, something still didn't feel right. I decided I needed to pray. I couldn't remember the last time I had prayed. Before I could think twice about it, I knelt down and started to pray. I cried to Heavenly Father about everything that had happened. I apologized for forgetting Him when He was what I needed most.

After I finished my prayer, I had a very strong impression to go look at my scriptures. I wasn't sure what to do, so I just opened up to a random page and started reading. I came across

Mosiah 26:31: "Ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses; . . . he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation."

I realized that my pain and unhappiness weren't simply caused by what those girls had said or done to me. I was unhappy because I was holding a grudge against my former best friends, and I blamed myself for letting them hurt me. By not forgiving them or myself, I became my biggest bully.

I prayed that I would be able to forgive the girls who had hurt me and that I could forgive myself. Forgiving them was so hard for me, and it took a while. Forgiving them was like letting a piece of myself fall away. But after fully forgiving them, I felt that I could move on and learn from what happened to me by helping the people around me who might be struggling.

I don't know why I let myself be sad for over a year, and I honestly have no idea why I thought being away from the Church would make me happier. Clearly, I was wrong. Even though it was still hard to feel happy and to forgive after that time, keeping an eternal perspective and focusing on Heavenly Father's plan of salvation really helped me. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ were there for me the whole time I was struggling; I had just been too stubborn to turn to Them. I'm glad I eventually did.

I am grateful for what I learned from my experience. I am a stronger, more compassionate, all-around better person because of it. I have been able to help so many people through their hard times because of my own. I have a strong belief that trials really can lead to blessings when we turn to God. **NE**  
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