



*High school was great, but life was full of worries.
How was I supposed to look toward a brighter future?*

By Bethany Bartholomew

It was near the end of my freshman year of high school, and I was exhausted! Homework, worries, hanging out with friends, worries, musical practice, worries—it never seemed to end! High school had been fun and much better than I'd expected, but I still felt weighed down and tired, not to mention cranky. It was affecting my relationship with my mom. And my older sister—my usual confidante—was leaving for college in just two months! What was I going to do?

I was sitting watching general conference, worrying once again about life and its struggles, when President Thomas S. Monson stood up to speak. He began his talk by acknowledging that there were many concerns in the world around us. Inwardly, I agreed. The economy had me worried; I didn't know much about economics, but I knew things weren't great. Natural disasters had me worried; I was used to bad storms because we lived in Georgia, USA, but what if I needed to learn what to do in an earthquake or some other disaster? Even the little things had me worried; I had friends, but I was worried about being popular enough and about getting ready to date. And let's not even mention worrying about preparing for college!

But then President Monson said, "It would be easy to become discouraged and cynical about the future—or even fearful of what might come—if we allowed ourselves to dwell only on that which is wrong in the world and in our lives. Today, however, I'd like us to turn our thoughts and our attitudes away from the troubles around us and to focus instead on our blessings as members of the Church. The Apostle Paul declared, 'God hath

not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind' [2 Timothy 1:7]."¹

Wow. That was just what I needed to hear. Don't fear? Don't worry? That seemed to be all I could do lately! I kept listening as President Monson continued:

"How might we have joy in our lives, despite all that we may face? Again from the scriptures: 'Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you' [D&C 68:6]."²

At that moment, I realized that I was spending too much of my time worrying and fearing and not letting my heart be filled instead with faith. Of course life was going to be scary and difficult sometimes, but the Lord is on our side. He won't let us fail. President Monson closed his talk with words of comfort and light: "My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The

future is as bright as your faith."³

It was time for me to change my attitude.

I started turning to the Lord more. When I got worried, I would pray in my head, or out loud if I was alone. I started trying to be more cheerful. I made a goal to be optimistic and happy in my sophomore year, and I ended up becoming best friends with other girls who seemed to have similar goals. Together, we made high school a happy and fun experience. I also started talking to my mom about good things that happened at school. I felt lighter, happier—and I became best friends with my mom. Learning to be cheerful had changed my whole perspective, and life became a joy again. **NE**

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NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," *Ensign*, May 2009, 89.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," 89.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," 92.

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