



THE LAST DUCKLING

By Alexander Henriod

I grew up in an active, supportive family but never really believed in the things I was taught. It all just felt like something I had to check off my to-do list, like school or work.

I tried reading the scriptures and praying, but I never really had a personal witness.

Early in my teenage years I made some bad choices and started to feel frustrated with the way my life was going. When I turned to God, I felt like He was silent. I figured if there really were a God in heaven, He probably had more important things to do than worry about me.

One evening, I went to pick up my little sister from her friend's house. I texted her, but she didn't come out right away. Slightly annoyed, I entertained myself by looking around outside while I was waiting. Suddenly, a duck acting strangely caught my attention. It was making weird noises and pacing all around, so I went to investigate. The duck was flapping its wings over a large metal grate in the road, and when I looked through the grate, I saw 13 ducklings stuck in the mucky water. I promptly lifted the grate out of the way and began scooping baby ducks out of the smelly drain one by one.

With 12 out of 13 ducklings out of the sewer, I reached down for the last one, but when I went to pick him up, he bit me! I pulled my hand back and dropped him back into the water—this little guy was not having it. He had seen me grab his brothers and sisters and was determined to avoid me.

I watched as this last little duck swam into a small tunnel, far enough away that I couldn't reach him. Exasperated, I turned to leave, but glanced back at the mother duck and all the ducklings, waiting patiently for their little brother under a small tree. Concern hit me; I didn't want him to be separated from his family.

It was at that moment I noticed a manhole about 10 feet away in the middle of the street. "There's no way he could have swum that far," I thought. Expecting nothing, I lifted the grate out of the way and, to my surprise, saw the duckling directly beneath me. But it was much deeper than I could reach. Even when I tried using a tree branch, it was just too far away.

A young man happened to be driving by right at that moment, and he noticed me rummaging around the sewers. He looked concerned and asked if I was OK. I explained the

I LEARNED ABOUT GOD'S LOVE WHILE BEING LOWERED INTO A SEWER BY A STRANGER.



situation, and he agreed to hold my feet as I went headfirst into the manhole.

Reaching for the last duckling, I thought to myself how ridiculous this whole situation was. Here I am going out of my way to save this baby duck, and he stubbornly and ignorantly bites me and swims away. How could this creature be so blind to the literal saving hand that was reaching out to him?

Then, headfirst in a stinky manhole, it all hit me. I was just like that baby duck, and Heavenly Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ, was doing everything He could to save me! Finally, the duckling let me pick him up, and we managed to get both me and the duck safely out of the manhole.

My emotions whirred as I thought about all of the things Heavenly Father had done for me. He had blessed my life and my family; He had sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to perform an infinite Atonement so that I could return to Him; and He had arranged this little experience to help me understand His love and plan for me, in just the way I needed it. Heavenly Father had answered my prayers in a personal way, and at a time when I was ready for the answer. And in that moment, I knew He loved me. **NE**

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