

Water Polo and PRAYER

BY PRESTON JOHNSON

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A few years ago I attended a summer swim camp at Brigham Young University in Provo. Growing up in Tennessee, I didn't have many LDS friends. I was so excited to fly west to meet other kids who shared my faith and passion for swimming. Little did I know that my decision to go to this camp would change my life.

Everyone attending the camp was given a dorm room and a roommate. My roommate, Sam, was on the water polo and swim teams at his high school in Southern California.

He also just happened to be one of the coolest guys I've ever met. Within five minutes of talking, I felt like we were best friends.

Sam talked to everyone. He radiated confidence and people were drawn to him. He made more friends in a few hours than I had made in my entire life!

That night, Sam and I were in our dorm room getting ready for bed. I was about to turn the lights off when Sam quietly knelt down beside his bed and offered a silent prayer. I was blown away! How could someone so popular and so good at sports be humble enough to get on his knees and pray at night? I turned the lights off and lay in bed thinking about what I had just witnessed.

The next day, I saw my friend in a whole new light. I wondered why he continued to kneel and pray at night when his parents weren't there to make him. I started to have my own personal prayers. At first, I just prayed while lying in bed. Then I built up the courage to pray kneeling. I would turn the lights off, kneel, pray, and jump into bed in one fluid motion.

As I started to gain confidence in myself, my prayers grew longer and more sincere. My spiritual strength increased with every prayer. I realized what Sam had was spiritual strength. He radiated that strength with love toward other people.

By his example, Sam inspired me to pursue water polo, and I later had the wonderful opportunity to play for the University of Tennessee. But more importantly, through his simple example of praying each night, he inspired me to continually strengthen myself spiritually through prayer. (See Alma 37:6-7.)

Serving as a missionary in the Idaho Pocatello Mission, I pray more than ever before. Every time I kneel in prayer I remember my friend Sam, who taught me by example to "set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer" His strength and comfort (Daniel 9:3). This is one way that I can achieve the divine potential that God sees in me. **NE**



