



Growing a Testimony



From an interview with Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy; by Kimberly Reid

Ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and ye also know that it hath sprouted up, that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened (Alma 32:34).

When I was in third grade, my best friend's name was Dave. He lived next door to me and was a member of the Church.

One day I was playing in Dave's yard with our friend Doug when my mother called out from next door that it was time for me to go to Primary. This was in the days when Primary was on a weekday.

Doug was not a member of the Church. He asked, "What's Primary?"

I told him that this was something we did in our church and that it was kind of like a class.

"Well, we do something like that in our church too," Doug said.

I whispered to Dave, "But our church is the true Church."

Doug asked me, "What did you say?"

I didn't respond at first. He asked me again, and I said, "I told Dave that our church is the true Church."

Then Doug said something I had never before imagined in my eight-year-old mind. He said, "Well, I think that *my* church is the true church."

I was stunned. I thought, "He thinks his

church is the true church. What makes me right and him wrong? Or, what makes him right and me wrong?"

I walked across Dave's yard and down his driveway. I turned left and walked along the street because we didn't have sidewalks in our neighborhood. I watched the gravel between my feet as I walked—my head was down. I crossed the front of our fence and turned left. I remember every detail of that slow walk home. The whole time I was saying to myself, "He thinks his church is true. How do I know that my church is true?" I got to my front porch, sat down, and put my head in my hands. As I sat there thinking about my question, my thoughts turned into a prayer.

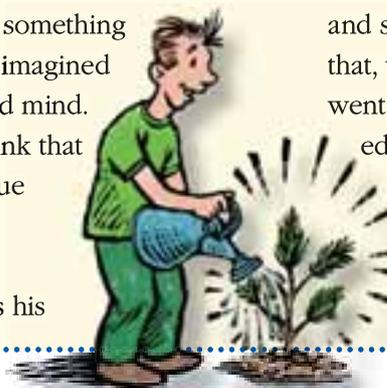
A voice came into my mind. It was a kind voice. It said, "Now, Marc, you know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, don't you?"

I silently responded, "Yes." I felt that I knew that to be true.

"Well you know the Church is true then, don't you?" the voice whispered to my mind. I had never heard anyone tell me that before. It was like the clouds parted and suddenly I realized that I did know that, yes, the Church is true. I got up and went to Primary, comfortable in the knowledge that I had a testimony.

When we have a genuine question with sincere desire to know—and to act on what we learn—Heavenly Father will answer.

Elder Nash in the third grade





Sometimes young people tell me, “I don’t really know if I have a testimony.” They are looking for a great, grand, glorious experience that’s like a lightning bolt. I ask them, “Have you ever seen a giant redwood tree?” It’s a magnificent tree. Redwoods are thousands of years old. They are gigantic. They are large enough that someone could carve a tunnel in one and drive a car through it. Some young people believe that their testimony is not a testimony at all if it isn’t like that giant redwood tree.

On the other hand, I also ask them, “Have you seen a baby tree, a little sapling, only five inches tall?” It’s a tree too. Some testimonies are big like a giant redwood; some are small like a sapling. But big or small, they are both testimonies. If you are wondering if you have a testimony, I would ask you—Do you believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet? Do you pray? Do you feel peace when you do? Do you believe the Book of Mormon is true? Do you believe you have a Father in Heaven? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If you say yes to any of these questions, then you have received a witness of the truth. You have a testimony. Just nurture it!

Our testimonies are nurtured and grown in simple ways. When you get out of bed in the morning, pray on your knees to your Father in Heaven, and listen. When you get up off your knees, go about the events of the day trying to live the gospel and be good to others. When the day ends, have another word of prayer, express love to Heavenly Father, thank Him, and ask for His help. Sometime between those two prayers, take time each day to read and think about the scriptures. Be sure to fast on fast Sunday and attend church every week.

If you’ll just live like that, in time your testimony will grow from a little sapling to an eight-foot-tall tree to a giant redwood. That is how a testimony is nurtured and grown. ●

