

Live Worthy to Return Home

Thou shalt live together in love. . . . And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death (D&C 42:45–46).

I was born and raised on my father’s cattle ranch in Roy, Utah, with very few neighbors nearby. I was the youngest of six children, and as a boy I was shy around people who were not in my family. On my first day at school, my brother Lowell, just two years older than I, took me to my first-grade classroom. Surrounded by children I did not know, I felt lonesome and the day seemed long until I could return home with my brother.

Soon I made friends at school and looked forward to seeing them each day. One friend, Larry Dawson, lived about a mile from my home. Larry invited me to his house for a birthday party. I had never been to a birthday party before. It was so much fun! I still remember some of the special toys Larry received—especially his new toy fire engine.

Larry and I rode the bus to school because we lived too far from school to walk. Larry got off the bus at the bus stop on the main highway just before I got off. He then had to cross the highway and walk half a mile (about 1 km) to his home. At that time cars did not stop when a school bus was loading or unloading students.

One day as we were returning home from school, a car speeding by the bus hit and killed my friend. I felt very



From an interview with Elder Wayne S. Peterson of the Seventy, currently serving in the Europe West Area Presidency; by Hilary Hendricks

sad. I missed being with Larry at school and on the bus. My mother and father comforted me by explaining that even though I wouldn’t see Larry anymore in this life, his spirit continued to live in the spirit world. Larry was so kind and good that I knew he would be worthy to live with our Heavenly Father. As I grew, I learned more about our Father’s plan for His children.

My brother Darrell, who was five years older than I, was a special friend to me. Darrell let me ride on his bike with him from our home on the ranch to the barn where he often worked. I rode the bike back to the house, then returned to the barn at the end of the day to accompany him on his ride home. I loved Darrell very much.

One day Darrell was coming home in our family car from driving my sister to her piano lesson. He stopped at the railroad tracks to wait while a long freight train passed. He did not see another train coming from the other direction. When Darrell started over the tracks, the train struck the car and my brother was killed. I was sweeping our driveway when my father pulled up in his pickup truck shortly after it happened, and I still remember the sadness we felt when he told my mother and our family of the accident.

President David O. McKay and Elder Spencer W. Kimball came to speak at my brother’s funeral. President McKay, then President of the Church, was related to my

1



2



1. With his parents and siblings at age 7 (center front)

2. At age 11 at a livestock show

3. With his wife, Joan

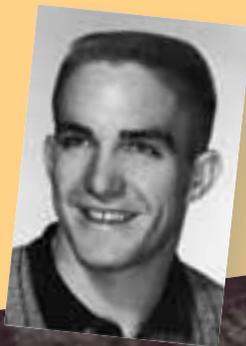
4. As a freshman at Utah State University

5. Elder and Sister Peterson with their children and grandchildren

3



4



5

father. Elder Kimball, who later became President of the Church, had recently visited our stake conference and had stayed in our home because my father was the stake president. President McKay and Elder Kimball taught us about our Heavenly Father's plan and said that we would be together again as a family. They said that we should not be afraid of death, and they taught us about the resurrection. They promised that my brother would live again and that our family could live together for the one thousand years of peace called the Millennium.

I was grateful to know that my friend Larry and my brother Darrell had kept the commandments so they could enjoy every blessing from our Heavenly Father. We do not know when we are going to die, so we should live every day so we will not be sorry if our time comes to return home. We need to speak in kind ways to our brothers and sisters and friends. We should not argue or treat others unkindly. We should follow the example of Jesus Christ. One of my favorite Primary songs reminds me of the things we need to do.

I'm trying to be like Jesus; I'm following in his ways.

I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say.

*At times I am tempted to make a wrong choice,
But I try to listen as the still small voice whispers,*

*"Love one another as Jesus loves you.
Try to show kindness in all that you do.
Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,
For these are the things Jesus taught."
(Children's Songbook, 78-79)*

When we keep all of our Heavenly Father's commandments, we will be happy now and in the life to come. It also takes away our fear of dying because we know that if we are good, we will one day go home to live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ forever. ●

