

## Episode 6

### Stories from General Young Women Meetings

#### TRIALS

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** Welcome to Stories from the General Young Women Meetings. This collection is about enduring life's trials. Sometimes we face tasks that seem so daunting, but deep inside, we know they are for our good. We start with a short example from Sister Sharon G. Larsen given in the 2001 General Young Women Meeting.

[END MUSIC]

(Sharon G. Larsen, April 2001 General Young Women Meeting)

When our young daughter was practicing the piano, I suggested she play her piece over five more times to be prepared for her lesson.

She said, "No, Mom. Five is too many."

I said, "Then you choose how many times you need."

She said, "No. You choose—but don't choose five!"

Are we ever like that when the Spirit prompts us what to do and it isn't easy or comfortable or popular? We say, "Please tell me again. I want to be obedient, but just tell me something a little easier—and more fun." It can be dangerous trying to please ourselves.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** Even if it's hard, it's always better doing what our Heavenly Father expects of us. Next, President James E. Faust tells us about a young woman who tried very hard to live the Gospel, even though she went through tremendous trials. This story is from the 2000 General Young Women Meeting.

[END MUSIC]

(President James E. Faust, April 2000 General Young Women Meeting)

Let me tell you of one young woman who has demonstrated remarkable strength in the face of great tragedy. On April 17, 1999, a big van broadsided a car and severely injured 16-year-old Emily Jensen. Her skull was fractured, and she was in a coma for three months, and six months in the hospital. She has had to learn everything again as if from birth. It would have been easy to give up, but giving up is not in Emily's vocabulary. She works so hard at recovery that she runs the equivalent of a 26-mile marathon every day. Her faith, courage, and perseverance have strengthened and motivated many other hospital patients.

Emily is still working very hard to regain her speech. Even so, she fearlessly asks nurses, technicians, and therapists, "Are you a Mormon?" If they reply no, she tells them in her muddled sentences, "You should be. Read the Book of Mormon." Emily dictated to her mother what she wanted written in five copies of the Book of Mormon that she gave to a doctor, three therapists, and a technician before she left the hospital.

Emily dearly loved one technician who had become totally inactive in the Church. They prayed together in Emily's hospital room. In language that was difficult to understand, but with a spirit that was strong and clear, Emily told her that she needed to go back to church. That technician later wrote Emily: "I want to thank you so much for the Book of Mormon you gave me. I cried when I read what you wrote. I know someday I will love this book as much as you do."

Emily's life was recently brightened at Skyline High School in Salt Lake City. The student body picked her as this year's prom queen in recognition of her extraordinary courage. Her classmates stood and cheered as she struggled to the stage of the packed auditorium, supported on the arm of the student body president. Though she continues to go each day for therapy, Emily's life is still defined by her spiritual identity, her goodness, her kindness to others, and her strong testimony.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: What an example we can all take from Emily! We're not meant to face trials alone. In the 1997 General Young Women Meeting, President Thomas S. Monson shares a story about a group of girls who helped carry a friend through her trial.**

[END MUSIC]

(President Thomas S. Monson, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

Recently I heard from a teenaged friend, Jami Palmer, whom I have known for a number of years. When she was 12, she was diagnosed with cancer. She underwent grueling and painful treatments for many months. Today she is bright, beautiful, and looking to the future with confidence and with faith.

In one of her darkest hours, when any future appeared somewhat grim, she learned that she must undergo months of chemotherapy, followed by an 11-hour surgery to save her leg. A long-planned hike with her Young Women class up to Timpanogos Cave was out of the question--she thought. Jami told her friends they would have to undertake the hike without her. Surely there was a catch in her voice and disappointment in her heart. But then the other young women responded emphatically, "No, Jami. You are going with us!"

"But I can't walk," came the anguished reply.

"Then, Jami, we'll carry you to the top!" And they did.

The hike is now a memory, but in reality it is much more. James Barrie, the Scottish poet, declared, "God gave us memories, that we might have June roses in the December of our lives." None of those precious young women will ever forget that memorable day when, I

am confident, a loving Heavenly Father looked down with a smile of approval and was well pleased.

Today Jami is an accomplished pianist, vocalist, and athlete. She is an officer and spokesperson for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: Our Heavenly Father is always a source of strength as we face trials. He sends help in many ways. In the 2004 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Elaine S. Dalton tells about how the scriptures helped her make it through a trial in her life.**

[END MUSIC]

(Elaine S. Dalton, April 2004 General Young Women Meeting)

When I was about your age, my father became seriously ill. We thought it was just the flu, but as the days progressed, he became more and more ill. It was during that time that I really learned what it means to "pray always" (2 Nephi 32:9). I had a constant prayer in my heart, and I would seek solitary places where I would pour out my soul in prayer to my Heavenly Father to heal my father. After a few weeks of illness, my father passed away. I was shocked and frightened. What would our family do without our father whom we loved so dearly? How could we go on? I felt that Heavenly Father had not heard nor answered my fervent prayers. My faith was challenged. I went to Heavenly Father and asked the question—"Heavenly Father, are you really there?"

Over a period of many months, I prayed for help and guidance. I prayed for my family, and I prayed to understand why my father had not been healed. For a time, it seemed to me that the heavens were silent, but as a family we continued to pray for comfort and guidance. I continued to pray also. Then one day, many months later, as I was sitting in a sacrament meeting, my answer came in the form of a scripture. The speaker said: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5–6). A feeling came over me, and I felt I was the only person in the chapel. That was my answer. Heavenly Father had heard my prayers!

That experience happened many years ago, but I still remember it vividly, and I testify that He has directed my paths. I know that when we believe and trust in Him, "all things [will] work together for [our] good."

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: The early pioneers did very difficult things, such as leaving their homes and walking hundreds of miles. But they did it because they knew Heavenly Father was guiding them and it was for their good. In the 1997 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Virginia H. Pearce reminds us of the trails faced by some of the early Latter-day Saints.**

[END MUSIC]

(Virginia H. Pearce, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

"Week after week, they sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked and walked." When I think of pioneers, tragic scenes come to mind: handcarts in blizzards, sickness, frozen feet, empty stomachs, and shallow graves. However, as I learn more about that monumental trek I am convinced that along with those very real and dramatic scenes, *most* of the journey *foremost* of the people was pretty routine. Mostly they walked and walked and walked.

When the pioneers broke camp each morning, the cattle had to be fed and watered, fires built, breakfasts cooked, a cold meal for noon prepared and packed, repairs made, teams hitched, and wagons reloaded. Every single morning. Then they walked about six miles before halting to feed and water cattle, eat lunch, regroup, and walk again until about 6:00 P.M. Then the routine of unhitching and watering teams, making repairs, gathering tinder, building fires, cooking supper, a line or two in a journal before dark, sometimes a little music, prayers, and bed at 9:00 P.M.

Speed wasn't important. Because the pace was set by slow-moving oxen, no one had to run to keep up with the wagons. On a good day, on a no-problem day (is there ever such a thing?), the pioneers covered about 15 miles. Usually it was less than 10. Imagine how puny that seemed compared to their ultimate goal of 1,300 miles!

On a bronze frieze in the Winter Quarters cemetery, a detail shows a mother resting her hand inside the wagon as she walked the distance to the Salt Lake Valley. She did this because her small child wouldn't stay in the wagon unless he could see his mother's hand. Even as they walked forward, those pioneers knew how to help one another.

So what does all this have to do with us in our current world? I believe it has everything to do with us. Most of our lives are not a string of dramatic moments that call for immediate heroism and courage. Most of our lives, rather, consist of daily routines, even monotonous tasks, that wear us down and leave us vulnerable to discouragement. Sure, we know where we're going, and if it were possible we would choose to jump out of bed, work like crazy, and be there by nightfall. But our goal, our journey's end, our Zion is life in the presence of our Heavenly Father. And to get there we are expected to walk and walk and walk.

**[BEG MUSIC]**

**NARRATOR:** Today, we're not asked to leave our possessions and walk across the country...but we are asked to live the Gospel.

**In the 2001 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Susan W. Tanner tells about a young woman who, it seemed, had everything going against her.**

**[END MUSIC]**

(Susan W. Tanner, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)

My young friend whom I'll call Lindsey needed hope. She lived in a home which was devoid of the Spirit and of love. Her friends were wild, and even most of her Young Women leaders looked on her only as a "project." But deep inside she felt that the Lord loved her, despite her deplorable situation. She focused on always remembering Him. She chose not to participate with her friends when they did bad things. She tried to worship Heavenly Father in the privacy of her own bedroom because she wanted to feel His Spirit in her life. Something in her wanted to be good, to keep His commandments. Even with her limited knowledge and lack of outside help, she was trying to keep her baptismal covenants. She felt hope to carry on, and she felt love from Heavenly Father.

The Lord has promised us that He will not forget us because He has "graven [us] upon the palms of [His] hands" (Isaiah 49:16). And our promise to Him is that we will not forget Him, for we have engraven Him in our hearts.

The early Saints were taught this in their sufferings in Missouri. The Lord counseled them to wait "patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord. . . .

Like the Saints in Missouri, Lindsey knew that in spite of her deplorable conditions, Heavenly Father hadn't given up on her. His love was firm. She took comfort in the "immutable covenant" of His love—that "all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:3). As with Abraham, hers was not an easy path to walk, yet she pressed forward. As she did so, she found help. One special Church leader loved and guided her. She grew closer to Heavenly Father and eventually found a young man who loved her, taught her much about the gospel, and married her.

At last many of the blessings she had longed for earlier in life were poured out upon her. She found she could have the Spirit in her own family and raise righteous children. Where once she was isolated and neglected, she now feels enveloped by love. This has come from pressing forward while waiting patiently on the Lord. Being steadfast in Christ brought hope to Lindsey as it will to each of us as we struggle with life's challenges.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: We live in a world where Satan tries constantly to prevent us from living the Gospel. Trials are constantly placed in our way. But we are promised great rewards for enduring these trials faithfully. President Hinckley tells about a woman he met who lived her life to the fullest by staying worthy and serving in the church. This is from the 2001 General Young Women Meeting.**

[END MUSIC]

(President Gordon B. Hinckley, April 2001 General Young Women Meeting)

I was in the hospital the other day for a few hours. I became acquainted with my very cheerful and expert nurse. She is the kind of woman of whom you girls could dream.

When she was young she decided she wished to be a nurse. She received the necessary education to qualify for the highest rank in the field. She worked at her vocation and became expert at it. She decided she wanted to serve a mission and did so. She married. She has three children. She works now as little or as much as she wishes. There is such a demand for people with her skills that she can do almost anything she pleases. She serves in the Church. She has a good marriage. She has a good life. She is the kind of woman of whom you might dream as you look to the future.

For you, my dear friends, the sky is the limit. You can be excellent in every way. You can be first class. There is no need for you to be a scrub. Respect yourself. Do not feel sorry for yourself. Do not dwell on unkind things others may say about you. Particularly, pay no attention to what some boy might say to demean you. He is no better than you. In fact, he has already belittled himself by his actions. Polish and refine whatever talents the Lord has given you. Go forward in life with a twinkle in your eye and a smile on your face, but with great and strong purpose in your heart. Love life and look for its opportunities, and forever and always be loyal to the Church.

Never forget that you came to earth as a child of the divine Father, with something of divinity in your very makeup. The Lord did not send you here to fail. He did not give you life to waste it. He bestowed upon you the gift of mortality that you might gain experience—positive, wonderful, purposeful experience—that will lead to life eternal. He has given you this glorious Church, His Church, to guide you and direct you, to give you opportunity for growth and experience, to teach you and lead you and encourage you, to bless you with eternal marriage, to seal upon you a covenant between you and Him that will make of you His chosen daughter, one upon whom He may look with love and with a desire to help. May God bless you richly and abundantly, my dear young friends, His wonderful daughters.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: President Hinckley’s advice should encourage us all to be the best we can be, despite trials. From the 2003 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Julie B. Beck shares a story about a young girl who had many plans into the future, but realized she also had to be prepared today.**

[END MUSIC]

(Julie B. Beck, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)

My niece Katie was a hopeful 20-year-old university student with many talents and plans for the future. Four years ago Katie died in an auto accident. Though our family still feels much homesickness for her, we know that we will be with her again, and we are not worried about her. In Katie’s wallet was her temple recommend, given to her by her bishop so she could be baptized for her ancestors. Katie was worthy. Not long before Katie died she wrote these words: “If this were my last day on earth, this is the record I would leave. Make each day meaningful. . . . Stay close to the Lord. Gain all the knowledge you can about the scriptures, the gospel, the creations of the Lord. . . . Give of yourself . . . and *always* remember Christ for His example and His Atonement and strive

each day to be like Him.” Katie had entered in the way that leads to eternal life, and she had stayed in.

Because of Christ there is hope smiling brightly before you, and you need not worry too much about sickness, death, poverty, or other afflictions. The Lord will take care of you. Your responsibility is to keep the commandments, feast upon the words of Christ, and stay in the path to your heavenly home.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR:** **In the 1997 General Young Women Meeting Sister Virginia H. Pearce introduces a young woman who talks about her trials. Many young women can relate to the hardships this girl was facing.**

[END MUSIC]

(Virginia H. Pearce, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

I first met Carly when she was 12 years old. A new and inexperienced Beehive, there were some temporary bumps in her world. Listen to her voice as she describes some of her feelings [a short videotaped segment was shown]:

*"Change has always been real hard for me. My problems aren't that bad, but when I look at them it just seems like they are the worst in the world when I have them. Everyone was kind of worrying about themselves, you know. I was kind of alone all the time. And I didn't ever want to go to school. I just felt like Heavenly Father didn't care if I was sad. And he didn't care if I was upset or didn't have any friends. And I just felt like he wasn't there. I just felt like no one really cared."<sup>5</sup>*

This is Carly. She is now 16.

"When I hear my 12-year-old self talk, I remember how big those problems seemed then and how small they are now. I remember how much I wanted a magic solution. I now believe that there isn't just one thing that can make everything all right. The thing I *did* know when I was 12 was that I wanted to be good. That desire kept me reading my scriptures, going to church, and saying my prayers. Now, four years later, I feel so different, mostly because I kept doing those things. I now get answers from the scriptures, I am closer to the Lord through prayer, and I understand the lessons in church so much better.

"My dad has a saying on the wall: 'Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go' [William Feather]. I am so glad I hung on! I even think we need those times where we have nothing left in us. They help us build a trust and dependency on the Lord.

"Some popular songs and movies teach us to believe that nothing really matters, that we should give up because everything is temporary anyway. We know differently. We have the gospel. It isn't temporary. It is eternal. We can't quit. We can't give up. We may not

see it now, but everything we do, every day we live is for a purpose. And we have a Heavenly Father who will always be there to lift us up and cheer us on."

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: Everyone has trials. But we may not have an understanding of what others are going through.**

**Sister Susan W. Tanner shares some examples about some of the trials of others. This is from the 2003 General Young Women Meeting.**

[END MUSIC]

(Susan W. Tanner, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)

Sometimes it is hard to feel this love. A young woman I know looked like she had everything going for her. She had just won a student-body election, she had auditioned for the madrigal choir and made it, and she had been chosen as the junior prom queen. She went home from school one day and threw herself on her bed in tears. Her mother asked what was wrong, and the daughter blurted out, "I feel like a failure; nobody likes me; I don't have any talents; I can't keep up in my classes; and besides that, I'm ugly." No one would suspect that she was feeling insecure, lonely, and inadequate; but most teens feel this way at one time or another.

And some young people suffer even more obvious hardships. For example, among the young women I know, one girl has a mother who is dying of cancer. One has divorced parents. One girl stays home alone on weekends while all her friends go out drinking. One young woman was in a debilitating accident. One girl's father has been deployed for military service. One good sister worries about her wayward brother.

What can help the youth with these diverse and monumental problems? The Mutual theme this year, which is our focus tonight, provides an answer. It says, "Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men" (2 Nephi 31:20). I love this scripture. It describes *how* we should face life's challenges. When I press forward with hope and love, I also *feel* hope and love.

[BEG MUSIC]

**NARRATOR: Trials may come and go, but our constant source of help is our Father in Heaven, who will help us through the darkest circumstances. Thanks for listening to this episode of "Stories from the General Young Women Meetings" on the Mormon Channel. Today's topic was on trials. For more information go to [radio.lds.org](http://radio.lds.org). Tell your friends about this program!**

[END MUSIC]