

**John Larsen** <theclaw56@gmail.com>

To My Missionary

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

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To: phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net

Cc: john@larsen-family.us

Hello, My Dear Elder Larsen,

It's amazing to me how quickly the p-days come around. I love looking forward to your emails! I have printed out all of the past ones and put them in a binder. I tell people you are writing a book! I remember someone telling me the thing they missed about when their missionary came home is that they got no more weekly letters or emails. It is really nice to hear details about your life, and about your testimony. We are blessed to have you be the kind of son who talks a lot and shares things with us, and always has. Not like Jeremy in the Zits comic, who says one-word answers to his parents.

Dad is out shoveling the latest snow. Julia has a 90-minutes delay, so I'll have to get her to school. Then I was going to meet with a guy named Travis at Best Fitness at 8:30, then I emailed him when I heard about the storm, to reschedule our meeting, but never heard back. Now the snow is better cleaned up and stopped sooner than I thought so I can meet with him after all, but I don't know if he still has the slot open. So I'll go and see, and at least get a bit of a workout. I still feel like I don't know what I'm doing there. Now I can't remember if I told you that I joined the gym and have been a couple of times with Dad, and a couple of times by myself. So if I haven't told you before, I'm telling you now :).

Ok, now I'm back, I took Julia to school for two of her finals, I met with Travis at the gym, and I did 20 minutes on the treadmill. I signed up for six times to meet with a girl named Jennifer, who will help me with exercises and developing a routine. Travis said a person's body will change in six months of working out, so you need to change things as you go along. I fully expect that after six sessions (once a month), I'll know better what I'm doing at the gym. Then I can go from there by myself.

I've had a couple of questions about your daily life in the mission: do you have mostly dinner appointments with the members, or do you make dinners yourself a lot? Are there any recipes you would like from me, that we've made here at home? How is the laundry going, and where do you do it? When you are transferred, how does it work? Do you get driven to your next place, or take a train or bus or what? I'm sure many of these things will be different when you get to Brazil. I just think of Bro. Wilson and his

one transfer when he got lost, and ended up spending a night in a jail and he was missing for three days before finally finding the new apartment.

I loved the email you sent last week to just me and Dad. Do you ever sense Stanford close to you, as you are both serving your missions? I love hearing about your testimony, and seeing it grow, even week to week!

Pres. Coopridge asks about Elder Larsen when he and I meet. He is glad to hear you are doing well, and when I told him Pres. Robison said you were a blessing to the mission, he said, "I'm sure he is." When we had the Elders to dinner last Saturday they showed us some of the new passalong cards. They are very neat, sort of like business cards. And with a place on the back to write a note to someone, or a favorite scripture, or whatever. I'll have to explore more on mormon.org to find out about all of the things there.

The ladies at my knitting class ask about you all the time. It's very cool! I told them about Bob the Builder, and they asked if he was a builder in his previous life (before the assisted living facility). I don't know, so I told them that. They ask about what you are doing, and it's so nice to have the stories and adventures to tell them. And I hope they get a sense of testimony, too.

Oh, please be sure to take pictures of you and your companion with each transfer. I don't know if you've sent a pictures yet of you and Elder Miller. The last letter included Elder Olvera, but none of the others you work with. And take pictures of your apartments, too! I love the pictures you send, and I would love to be able to picture you there in Hobbs (and hopefully soon in Brasil!).

We've had amazing snow so far this year. I had thought it would be a warmish winter, because of our hot summer and long and warm autumn. But we've had our share of snow, that's for sure! I visited the cemetery on Sunday and thought of what a blessing it was to have a mild winter when Stanford was sick and for the funeral, so people could come without problems with the snow, and so Stanford's treatment could be as easy as it could be. I thought of the people who are going through that this year, and what a challenge it would be. There was even one obituary in the paper a week or so ago where it said the funeral was put off a day because of the snow. We've been having a big storm every week, and my friend, Diana, who teaches me yoga, said she heard we are in a storm pattern for it to do this every few days. I guess that's winter for you, in New England.

Every day I have five goals I write in my little planner that I bought for writing my daily lists for the year. I have: Basics (laundry, dishes, make the bed, shower, and pick up clutter), Scriptures, Journal, Practice, and Walk (which has turned into exercise because sometimes it's the gym and sometimes it's yoga and it was walks but now I

think it's too dangerous with the snowbanks piled high and less room for cars and people). Then the other things in my day get added in, like Visiting Teaching, grocery shopping, any appointments, projects at home, and such. I had thought the other day that I should make those five things the first things I do, rather than trying to fit them in around the other things that come up. I have really struggled with journal writing. Exercise is going better because I do that as soon as Julia is at school. And the basics of housework seem to happen. I read scriptures at night before bed, but I would like a longer study time that can be more in-depth. Piano practice is another thing I struggle with. Anyway, I guess my thought on these goals is to do the essential things first, or at least schedule them in first (like, I could plan to practice every afternoon while Julia is doing homework, or something like that). And to do that it's important to view them as essential, rather than something to just fit in when I can.

Time to get ready for my visiting teachers, and to wait for your weekly email! I love you, Phillip. I'm proud of you and the work you're doing and thrilled at how you're learning so many things and how your testimony is growing.

Love,
Mom