



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

Re: Mom June 13, 2011

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 20, 2011 at 11:55 AM

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Hi, my Dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

I love the occasional personal email, just to me. Thank you!

You described missing home, and how the feeling comes in waves. I know that feeling, though for me, it's missing Stanford, especially. Sometimes things are fine and I think about him a lot, and sometimes the missing comes in waves. I miss you, too, but it helps a lot to hear from you every week! I know more about what you're doing than about what Stanford is doing, on a day-to-day basis. Anyway, I do know the feeling. And you're right, keeping busy helps, being responsible for important things. And for you, it lots of responsibility.

I also didn't know that Jacob and Christine are living in Korea now. So, thank you for that information! Mike is still in NH, taking an EMT course, and is planning (according to the missionaries who came to dinner on Saturday) to go back on his mission in about December. However, it will be a new call, so he may well have a new assignment, possibly not in Peru at all. It is so wonderful to know that the Lord is in charge, and knows what we need! Now we just need to accept His will, like for Mike, to be fine with wherever he goes on his mission.

Rachel spent the day with us yesterday, and it was fun. She said she was planning to write to you last night, so you should be getting an email from her today. She (and Heather and Julia) bought a 5-year diary at Barnes & Noble. Each page has a few lines for the day, for each of five years. So you can see what you were doing on that day the year before and the year before that. Rachel said that since she has been keeping that, she has things to write to you about, things to tell you. I continue to find it very challenging to write in my journal. I always leave it to the end of the day, then I'm too tired to write. So I think I will write first thing in the morning, then I get distracted by the newspaper, or making my list of plans for the day, or talking to Dad or something. I need to make it more a matter of prayer, I think. Because writing makes a difference. It helps to clarify your thinking, and it helps you to notice spiritual blessings from the day because you are thinking about it and what to write. Pondering your day. (And by "you", I mean "me", well anyone actually.)

I think the McFaddens are moving in August. Bishop McFadden is gone a lot already, though he was in church yesterday. You're right that things will have changed a lot. We have a very good and strong new family in the ward, the Theobalds, whom I think you will like. Bro. Theobald spoke yesterday in Sacrament Meeting, a very good talk. Sis. Theobald spoke last week, but I missed her talk because I was in Lowell and Heritage Park for their Ward Conferences. What you said about the book, *Preparation Precedes Power*, is a good thing to know about, good to remember. It's not just that you are pausing your regular life for your mission, but your regular life is being dissolved. You, yourself, are changing, turning into a more spiritual person, who is more in tune with the Lord. I guess that's how the Lord makes us into the kind of people He knows we can be. Like that story about the bush that was being pruned by the gardener, who wondered how he could ever be anything when the gardener cuts him back so far, and cuts off the beautiful branches he was growing. But the gardener knows best, and knows what the bush can become. Lots of life lessons in everyday things.

I will be happy to email Andrew and let him know you want to hear from him. Which makes me think, who have you heard from lately? Who wrote the letters you got last week? Has the package we sent come yet? And the other little padded envelope with the memory stick? I bought some gel insoles to send to you, and will plan to do another package as I gather up things. Hopefully you have gotten the package we sent, or you'll get it soon.

About friendships from your mission, those can be friends for life. I met up today with Krista Linford, from the Merrimack Ward. She teaches Seminary, and her class is going clear to the end of school, so for this whole week still. She wanted to borrow the DVD Jeana Lopez-Carasco used in Seminary, which we watched last week for FHE. So I met her in the church parking lot after I went to the gym. We had a nice talk for about 20 minutes or so. I really like her. Her son is serving a mission right now in California. Her son is Matthew Linford. Do you know him? Anyway, we were comparing mission notes on our sons, and I told her how you were living with three Brazilian Elders. She said that for eight years their family was a host family for various study-abroad kids, and she said that the ones from Brazil were the most friendly. She said that when you are friends with them, you are friends for life. She said that Americans are often viewed by other cultures as somewhat cold and reserved. Also, that we don't keep in touch with people the way those from other countries do. I also mentioned to her about what some of the missionaries had said to you about the way you walk (Her son is having some challenges with his companion and she asked if you had any challenges like that, and I couldn't think of any, really, except for that comment they made.). She said that the way we walk may be a cultural thing, too. I had not thought of that. She said that because we are really very safe in America, so we walk tall and confidently, and in other countries they walk more pulled in, with their center of gravity in a different place, because they are using a

defensive posture. It's really very interesting how much we are a product of our environment, how much our outlooks are because of our country and culture, as well as our family and such. And hopefully the gospel can transcend all of this, so we can all be one, all part of the Family of God. That is why you are devoting two years of your life to teaching people the gospel. It's so amazing! And it's wonderful!

Someone from Taylor Bentall's mission posted on his FB some pictures from the last few days. And there were comments in Portuguese, and I understood a bit of it! It's very neat to be able to do that. I still could not tell for sure if I could recognize Portuguese being spoken in passing, I don't think. I still do not recognize it the way I would like to. It sounds like Spanish, and sort of like French, too. But as I hear more words, I will understand it more. I know how to order beer now :). And how to ask where the bathroom is! I saw Sis. Heiner in the Temple Distribution Center on Saturday. She asked how you were doing, and I told her you are doing very well. (Muito bem!) We got to talking about her son, Michael, who served in Brazil, very close to where you are, maybe the next mission over. I asked if he still kept up with his Portuguese, and she said yes, he uses it all the time. When he first came back he would go to the Brazilian BBQ on Canal Street that we went to, and made friends, and taught them some English. Then he was working as a prison guard and as a cop, and he was called to translate all over Concord and all over NH. Now he is selling shoes while he goes to law school, and uses it in his job, plus they have some Portuguese speaking people in the Nashua 2nd Ward.

Last night I took Rachel home around 9:30pm, then came back. When I walked in the door, Dad and Bradford and the girls were clustered around the laptop looking at the pictures in the face-recognition program Bradford put on the computer. I had just taken Rachel home, so there was one less person than there had been, but I thought for a moment that there was someone else in the living room or down the hallway. Anyway, someone was missing. I had to do a quick inventory to see who was there, and realized they were all around the computer. But it was a strange feeling, and I sometimes wonder when I feel like that if Stanford is around, just checking in. It has happened more than once like that. I thought for a moment that maybe I was expecting you, in my subconscious mind. But I know where you are, and it didn't feel like you. I don't know if that makes sense or not. Anyway, it was an interesting experience, and only lasted for a moment or two. Dad said that there was one farewell testimony meeting that he attended that we did not, where a senior couple spoke. They told of their daughter who had died a number of years before, and how much they missed her. And how her brothers, each of them on their missions, could feel her spirit, could feel her. So I thought maybe you might be able to feel Stanford sometime on your mission. He might check in. And try to notice it and recognize it for the spiritual gift that it is. And if something like that happens, write it down, and maybe, if you feel like it would be all right, please share it with me!

When we had the missionaries to dinner on Saturday they talked to us about member-missionary work. I've been thinking about my friend, Lucy Beato, whose husband died shortly after Tony Eberhard died. She is the one from Brazil. So I think I will call her, and Rachel suggested I invite her to a Relief Society event. There will be one on the 6th of July. I'll give it a try. I don't know why it would be scary to invite someone to something! Anyway, I'll let you know how it goes.

How did the move go? Are you all settled into your new house? Have you taken pictures? I hope so!

Well, I know I was thinking of things throughout the week to talk about, and if I think of anything else before your email, I'll do Part 2 of this email. But for now, keep up the good work! I'm very proud of you, very pleased at how you're growing and at the things you are doing. I love you, Phillip! Have a really good week.

Love,
Mom

On Mon, Jun 13, 2011 at 3:34 PM, Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net> wrote:

Dear Mom,

I have been missing home quite a bit recently, it comes in waves, but having all the responsibilities now has helped me as well. I really appreciated all the letters that I got from ward members, I didn't know that Jacob and Christine are living in Korea right now. Is Mike in Utah right now or still in New Hampshire? Sister Scott said that Sam and him are taking a class together. I haven't heard from Sam for a while.

You had mentioned Rachel in your email so that means she is still doing good, however, I haven't heard anything from her recently either.

When are the Mcfadden's moving? That is awesome news about Julia, she is a strong person, and is accomplishing a lot! It'll be cool seeing how much people have grown when I get back, however I have also been thinking about how much stuff will have changed as well.

In that book Preparation Precedes Power, it talks about how the life that you have before the mission dissolves when leave, and that is very true. The ward will be very different, I haven't had contact with a lot of friends which has been hard for me too, but I am persevering.

Could you maybe shoot andrew an email or something? I am going to mail a letter

tomorrow when we're in centro Teresina, but I really would like to hear from him sometime soon.

I am trying to do what you said and enjoy the friendships that I have here too. It is important.

Thank you so much for your patience with me, and for the help you give me with my problems even though we are a continent away.

I love you mom, have a great week!

Love,

Elder Phillip Larsen

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