



From an interview with Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy; by Barbara Jean Jones

A Brother's Example

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

When I was a boy, my family wasn't very active in the Church. When my older brother, Ron, was turning 12, a man in the ward convinced him to become a deacon.

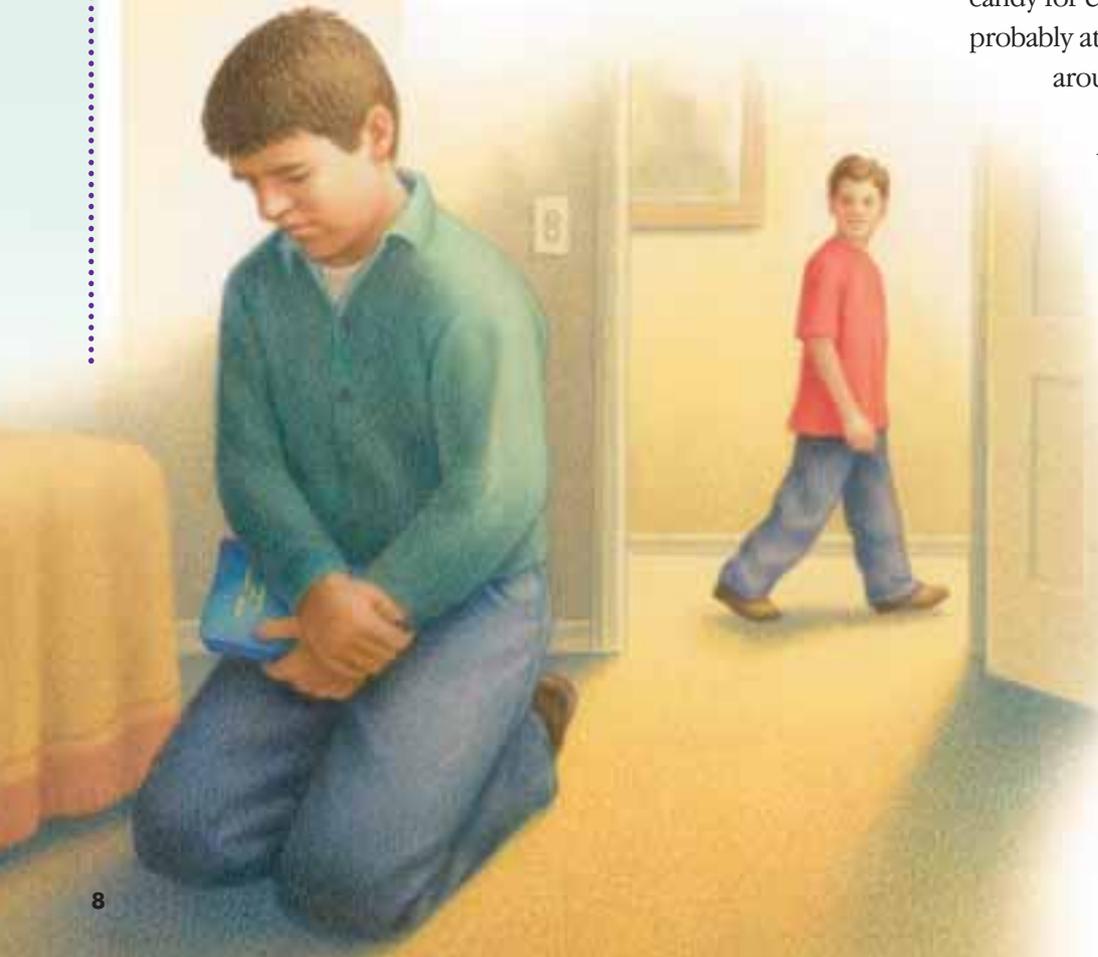
Ron started going to church. He didn't want to go alone, so he convinced me to go with him. I was only about seven, but I'd sit on the bench behind the deacons and watch Ron pass the sacrament.

At first I didn't like church too well. It was hard for me to sit still. But I kept going because Ron promised me a small bag of candy for every time I went with him. So I probably ate more candy than any boy around.

When Ron was about 17 and I was about 12, his teacher told him that he needed to gain a testimony of his own. He said to me, "I intend to find out for myself if the Church is true. I'm going to pay any price to know for myself."

Over the next few weeks, I watched him. I'd find him on his knees praying. I'd see him reading the Book of Mormon. I was amazed at how diligent he was.

One morning a few weeks later, I found Ron lying on his bed with his knees tucked up on his chest. He had



**Elder Cook
at age 14**



great pain in his lower right abdomen.

My mom called for an ambulance.

As we stood there over my brother, Ron said to my dad through gritted teeth, “Please, I need a priesthood blessing.” I didn’t know if my dad knew how to give a priesthood blessing. I’d never seen him do it. But he laid his hands on my brother’s head and pronounced a blessing of healing. About the time my dad said, “Amen,” Ron jumped off the bed and said the pain was totally gone. He was absolutely thrilled that the Lord had answered his prayer through that blessing.

My parents still took my brother to the hospital to be checked. All the doctors could say was that Ron’s symptoms sounded like he had had a ruptured appendix, but now they could find no trace of a problem.

Later that day, Ron told me, “Gene, I now know that the gift of healing is real. When Dad put his hands on my head, I felt the Spirit of the Lord go through my whole body. I know the priesthood is real.”

Then he said, “I also now know for myself that the Church is true. Not because of the healing, but because of what has been happening to me in reading the Book of Mormon. I’ve got my testimony by reading and praying over every page. I know all that we’ve been taught in the Church is correct, and I am going on a mission.”

I’d never heard Ron say that before. It was evident to me, even as a young boy, that he had really been impacted by something.

After Ron left me alone, I thought to



**On a family vacation
with his parents,
Myrl and Clarence,
and his older brother,
Ronald**

myself, “If the Lord would tell my brother, then I’ll bet the Lord would tell me.” So I did what my brother did,

reading and praying over every page of the Book of Mormon. Because I was still young, I didn’t understand a lot of the words, but it wasn’t long before I began to feel the Lord speak to me in my heart, telling me it was true. I read the whole book through and ended up with a strong testimony even at age 12. That really helped me through my youth and in preparation for a mission.

I have always been thankful for my good brother, who loved me enough to show me by example how to gain a testimony.

Ron became the first one in our family to serve a mission. And then I went, and my younger brother too. My sister served a number of stake missions. My entire family became active in good measure because of the impact of my brother. Children, I know that you too can have a great influence for good on your family. Praying every morning and night and reading the scriptures will help you develop your own testimony. That testimony will be a wonderful blessing to you and will strengthen others as you share your personal testimony with them. ●

Elder and Sister Cook with their family

