



(Based on an experience of the author's family)

*If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things* (Articles of Faith 1:13).

**G**reat song!" Zach exclaimed, tossing his book-filled backpack onto his friend Adam's bedroom floor. A radio blared away in the corner.

"I'm glad you like it," Adam said. "I just bought the whole CD with my birthday money."

Zach grinned. "Cool! Let's see it."

Adam tossed the unopened CD to Zach, whose grin disappeared when he saw the cover. "How did you even buy this? It's got one of those warning labels on it for bad language and other stuff."

Adam shrugged. "I guess I was lucky. The guy at the store must not have noticed."

"Well, *you* noticed. You should take it back." A still, small voice deep inside Zach was warning him of danger.

"But I like this group," Adam protested. "The label's probably about just a few words in one song. And besides, if anything is really awful, we can skip over it."

Putting aside his uneasiness, Zach thought it over. "I guess we could," he admitted at last. "I don't remember any bad language in the song we just heard on the radio."

"Neither do I," Adam said, unwrapping the CD and

opening the case. Inside was another warning label.

This time the warning voice was too loud for Zach to ignore. "I don't think this is a good idea," he said.

"Lighten up!" Adam snapped. "A few swear words won't kill you. Just tune them out and listen to the music."

Zach had a strong feeling that he should leave, but he didn't want to hurt his friend's feelings. He sat on the

floor as Adam put the CD in the player.

"The first song is one we haven't heard," Adam announced over the pounding beat.

Zach cringed, afraid that he was going to hear something awful. He remembered his dad's warn-

ing: "If you

hear bad words all

the time, you'll get used to them. Then

it's easy for them to slip into your own conversation." The first song ended without any bad words, though. Maybe Adam was right. "Here's the one you like from the radio," Adam said.

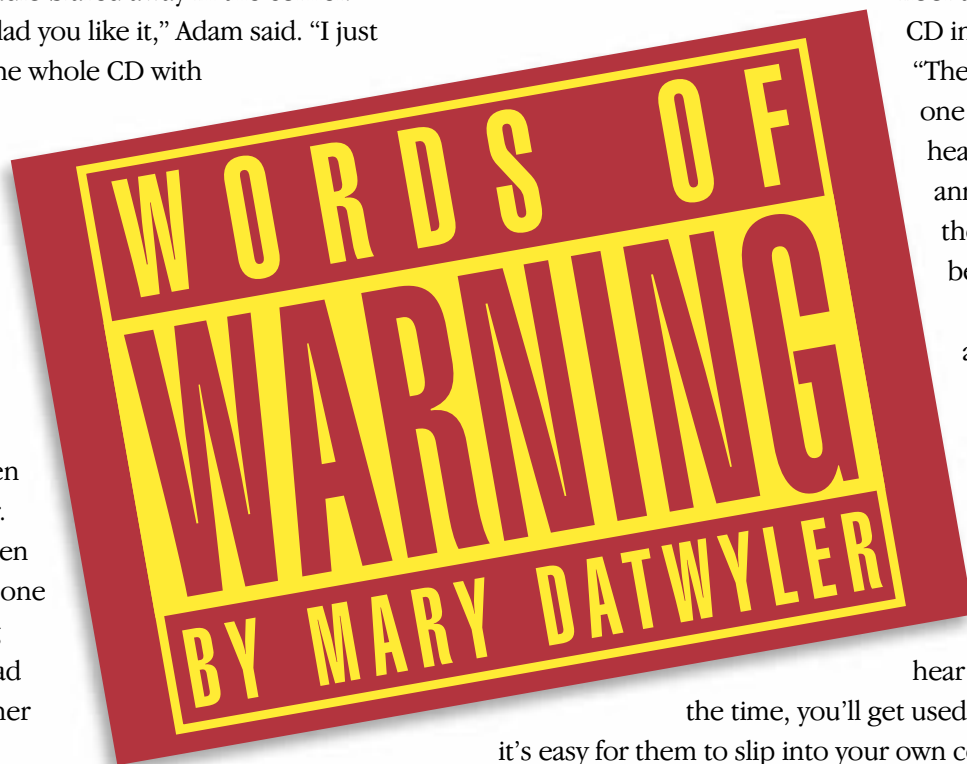
Zach gasped as a stream of dark, dirty words came pouring from the CD player. The tune was the one he had heard on the radio, but the lyrics were much worse. He tried to focus on the music and not listen to the words, but he couldn't.

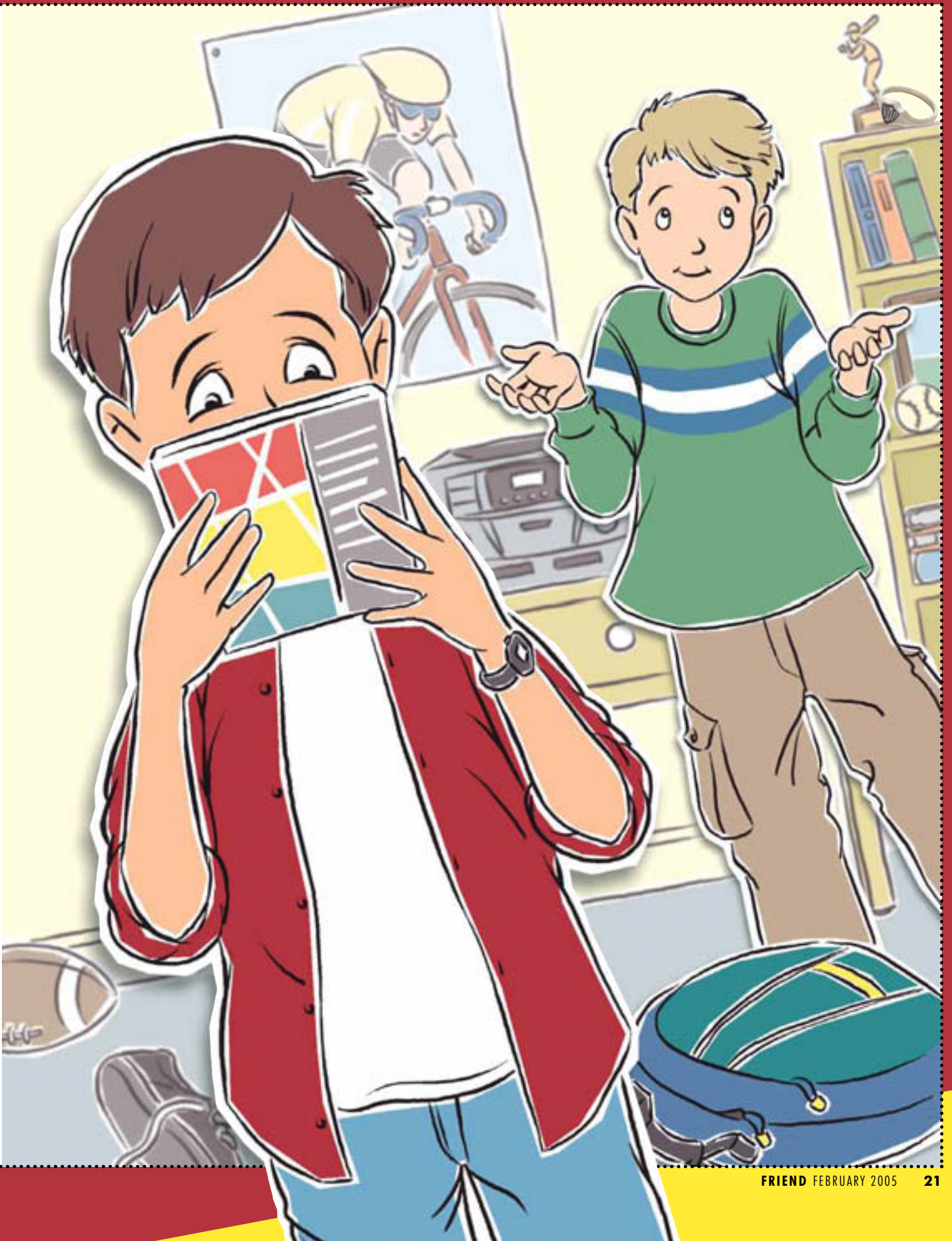
"Turn it off," he said.

Adam kept listening.

"Turn it off!" Zach insisted. "Please!"

"Cover your ears," Adam replied, turning up the volume.









Zach couldn't stand it. He scooped up his backpack and rushed out of the room. Hurrying down the hall, he heard Adam singing along to the music.

Zach ran home, his heavy backpack banging his shoulders all the way. By the time he arrived, he felt weak and sick. Dropping his backpack, he went straight to his room, closed the door, and knelt by his bed. "Heavenly Father?" he began quietly. "I need Thy help. I feel awful. I listened to music that was full of words I can't get out of my head—bad words. Adam said we could pretend they weren't there, but it didn't work. I knew better. My parents warned me, and so did the Holy Ghost. I've learned my lesson, and I'm sorry.

Please help me, Heavenly Father. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

Zach waited, straining to hear an answer. Nothing came right away, but he didn't give up. He could feel the sunlight streaming through the window, warming his skin as he kept listening. When he finally got up, he felt he had an answer.

The next day at school he walked up to Adam. "I can't listen to CDs with you anymore if you're going to play that kind of music," he said.

Adam looked sheepish. "Don't worry. My brother heard that song and told my parents. They took the CD away."

"Are you mad at your brother?"

Adam shook his head slowly. "I shouldn't have bought it in the first place. It's really not even music with all that bad language. It's just junk. I'm glad it's gone."

Zach nodded. "I couldn't get the words out of my mind."

"I'm sorry," Adam said. "Neither could I. I have some good CDs, though, without bad words. We could listen to those in about a week."

"Sounds great," Zach said. "But why a week?"

"Because by then I won't be grounded anymore."

Zach smiled. "Good music is worth waiting for." ●



"We can fill our homes with the sound of worthy music."

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," *Ensign*, May 1999, 33.**