

The Power of the Book of Mormon in Conversion

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After reviewing the report from a recent physical examination, I learned that I needed to make some lifestyle adjustments. To help me, my doctor prescribed a nutrition and exercise plan, which, if I chose to follow it, would transform me into a healthier person.

If we each underwent a spiritual examination, what would we learn about ourselves? What adjustments would our spiritual physician prescribe? For us to become who we need to be, it is essential that we know what to do and do what we know.

Jesus Christ is the Master Physician.¹ Through His Atonement, He binds up our wounds, takes upon Himself our infirmities, and heals our broken hearts.² Through His grace our weakness can become strong.³ He invites us to follow Him⁴ by learning of Him, listening to His words, and walking in the meekness of His Spirit.⁵ He has promised to help us⁶ in this lifelong process of conversion, which transforms us and brings everlasting joy.⁷

The Savior has given us the Book of Mormon as a powerful tool to aid in conversion. The Book of Mormon provides spiritual nutrition, prescribes a plan of action, and connects us with the Holy Spirit. Written for us,⁸ it contains the word of God in plainness⁹ and tells us of our identity, purpose, and destiny.¹⁰ With the Bible, the Book of Mormon testifies of Jesus Christ¹¹ and teaches how we can know truth and become like Him.

Brother Saw Polo was 58 years old when he was introduced to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. When I met him, he had been serving as a branch president for several years, but I learned that he had never read the Book of Mormon because it was not yet available in his native Burmese. When I asked him how he knew that the book was true without having read it, he replied that he had studied the *Book of Mormon Stories* picture book every day by looking at the illustrations, using a dictionary to translate the English words, and taking careful notes of what he learned. He explained, “Every time I studied, I would pray about what I learned, and I would feel peace and joy, my mind would be clear, and my heart would be soft. I felt the Holy Ghost testifying to me that it was true. I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.”

Like Brother Saw Polo, each of us can study the Book of Mormon according to our circumstances. As we desire to believe and ponder its teachings in our hearts, we can ask God in faith if the teachings are true.¹² If we are sincere in our desire to know and have real intent to act, He will answer us in our hearts through the Holy Ghost. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that we will know the truth of all things.¹³ When we obtain a divine witness of the Book of Mormon, we will also know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His prophet, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His restored Church.¹⁴

As a young man beginning my missionary service, I boarded an airplane headed to Australia. Feeling very alone, anxious, and inadequate but having committed to serve, I desperately needed reassurance that what I believed in was true. I prayed and read my scriptures earnestly, but as the flight progressed, my self-doubt intensified and my physical condition deteriorated. After I had been struggling for several hours, a flight attendant walked down the aisle and stopped next to my seat. He took the Book of Mormon I was reading from my hands. He looked at the cover and said, “That’s a great book!” then handed the book back to me and kept walking. I never saw him again.

While his words echoed in my ears, I distinctly heard and felt in my heart, “I am here, and I know where you are. Just do your best, for I will take care of the rest.” On that airplane above the Pacific Ocean, I received a personal witness through my study of the Book of Mormon and the promptings of the Holy Spirit that my Savior knew who I was and that the gospel was true.

Elder David A. Bednar taught: “Knowing that the gospel is true is the essence of a testimony. Consistently being true to the gospel is the essence of conversion.”¹⁵ Conversion requires us to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only.”¹⁶ The Lord’s action plan for us—the doctrine of Christ—is taught most clearly in the Book of Mormon.¹⁷ It includes:

- First, *exercising* faith in Jesus Christ by *trusting* Him, *keeping* His commandments, and *knowing* that He will help us.¹⁸
- Second, *repenting* daily of our shortcomings and *experiencing* joy and peace when He forgives us.¹⁹ Repentance requires us to *forgive* others²⁰ and helps us to move forward. The Savior has promised to forgive us as often as we repent.²¹
- Third, *making and keeping* covenants with God through ordinances such as baptism. This will keep us on the covenant path that leads to Him.²²
- Fourth, *receiving* the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift allows us the constant companionship of one who sanctifies, comforts, and guides us.²³
- And fifth, *enduring* to the end by *pressing forward* steadfastly while *feasting* daily upon the word of Christ.²⁴ By feasting from the Book of Mormon and holding fast to its teachings, we can overcome temptations and receive guidance and protection throughout our lives.²⁵

By consistently applying the doctrine of Christ in our lives, we will overcome inertia that impedes change and fear that foils action. We will receive personal revelation, for the Holy Ghost “will *show* unto you all things what ye should do,”²⁶ and “the words of Christ will *tell* you all things what ye should do.”²⁷

For 20 years, Brother Huang Juncong struggled with alcohol, cigarettes, and compulsive gambling. When introduced to Jesus Christ and His restored gospel, Brother Huang desired to change for the sake of his young family. His greatest challenge was smoking. A heavy chain-smoker, he had tried to quit many times unsuccessfully. One day these words from the Book of Mormon lodged in his mind: “with a sincere heart, with real intent.”²⁸ Though previous attempts had failed, he felt perhaps he could change with help from Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The full-time missionaries united their faith with his and provided an action plan of practical interventions, along with heavy doses of prayer and studying the word of God. With sincerity and real intent, Brother Huang acted with faithful determination and found that as he focused more on the new habits he wished to develop, such as studying the Book of Mormon, he focused less on the habits he wanted to lose.

Recalling his experience from 15 years ago, he remarked, “I don’t remember when exactly I quit smoking, but as I tried hard every day to do the things I knew I needed to do to invite the Spirit of the Lord into my life and kept doing them, I was no longer attracted to cigarettes and have not been since.” Through applying the teachings of the Book of Mormon, Brother Huang’s life has been transformed, and he has become a better husband and father.

President Russell M. Nelson has promised: “As you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon *every day*, you will make better decisions—*every day*. I promise that as you ponder what you study, the windows of heaven will open, and you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life. I promise that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day, even the gripping plague of pornography and other mind-numbing addictions.”²⁹

Dear friends, the Book of Mormon is the word of God, and we will draw nearer to Him if we study it.³⁰ As we experiment upon its words, we will obtain a witness of its truthfulness.³¹ As we consistently live according to its teachings, we will have “no more desire to do evil.”³² Our heart, countenance, and nature will be transformed to become more like the Savior.³³ I share my sure witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior, Redeemer, and Friend. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.