

DO YOU KNOW **These** BOOK OF MORMON **Heroes?**

There is much we can learn from the righteous examples of lesser-known Book of Mormon heroes.

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Nephi, Abinadi, Alma, Ammon, Moroni, Mormon—the pages of the Book of Mormon abound with stories of great heroes. Their faith-filled examples of obedience, humility, and other Christlike attributes give us hope and patience as we face our own challenges. And their soul-stirring teachings and testimonies of Jesus Christ help us come closer to Him.

There are numerous other heroes in the Book of Mormon, however, whose stories are only lightly touched on. Generally only a few verses tell us about them—and many are not even named.

After quoting a scripture about the revered hero Captain Moroni (see Alma 48:17), President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) pointed out that two verses further on we read, “Now behold, Helaman and his brethren were no less serviceable unto the people than was Moroni” (Alma 48:19). President Hunter then observed, “Though Helaman was not as noticeable or conspicuous as Moroni, he was as serviceable; that is, he was as helpful or useful as Moroni.”¹

Let’s take a look at a few of these lesser-known heroes. How did they faithfully bless others, leaving their righteous examples for us to follow along with those of their more well-known counterparts?

Sam and Joseph

Sam, one of Nephi’s older brothers, faithfully supported Nephi. When Laman and Lemuel rejected their father’s prophesying soon after they had begun their journey in the wilderness, Nephi, “having great desires to know of the mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 2:16), prayed to the Lord. He wrote that his heart was softened and that he believed his father’s words. He confided his experience first to Sam and later recorded that Sam “believed in my words” (1 Nephi 2:17). Sam’s faithful support didn’t waver, even when he, along with Nephi, was beaten by Laman and Lemuel after their first attempt to obtain the brass plates failed (see 1 Nephi 3:28).

Before dying, Lehi blessed his family. He promised Sam that he would be like Nephi and be “blessed in all thy days” (2 Nephi 4:11). Sam and his family were among the faithful believers who followed Nephi when they separated from the Lamanites. In Alma 3:6 Sam is referred to as a just and holy man.

Joseph was Nephi’s youngest brother, born in the wilderness as was Jacob. In Lehi’s final blessing, he spoke to his youngest son at length, telling Joseph that he was “born in the wilderness of mine afflictions; yea, in the days of my



LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

greatest sorrow” (2 Nephi 3:1). Lehi related the prophecies of Joseph in Egypt about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and the covenant blessings to which Joseph was entitled if he was faithful. Among Lehi’s last recorded words to Joseph are these: “Blessed art thou, Joseph. Behold, thou art little; wherefore hearken unto the words of thy brother, Nephi” (2 Nephi 3:25).

Obedient Joseph did hearken. He, along with Jacob, followed Nephi when Nephi’s group separated from the Lamanites. Nephi consecrated Jacob and Joseph to be priests and teachers of the people (see 2 Nephi 5:26). Jacob wrote, “We labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ,” and “we did magnify our office unto the Lord” (Jacob 1:7, 19). It was also said of Joseph that he was a just and holy man (see Alma 3:6).

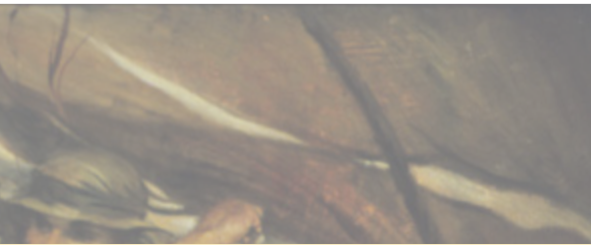
For Families and Individuals

- How can you support your brothers or sisters when they make a righteous decision?
- How will your support make them feel?
- How do you feel when you obey your parents or show respect to your siblings? Why?
- In the spirit of Sam’s example, think of someone you could bless with your support.
- Consider ways you can magnify your callings.

Nephi’s Wife and Children

Ishmael and his household followed Nephi and his brothers into the wilderness to join Lehi’s family (see 1 Nephi 7). Nephi, his older brothers, and Zoram married Ishmael’s daughters (see 1 Nephi 16:7). There is little mention of Nephi’s wife or children in the scriptural record, but Nephi’s wife certainly demonstrated her faith when Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi on the ship. The Liahona ceased to work, and the ship, unsteerable, was tossed about on the sea in the midst of a great storm. Lehi had pleaded with Laman and Lemuel to release Nephi, but they “did breathe out much threatenings against anyone” who spoke for Nephi (1 Nephi 18:17). Nephi’s wife showed their children by example that we pray to Heavenly Father for help. Nephi wrote, “Also my wife with her tears and prayers, and also my children, did not soften the hearts of my brethren that they would loose me” (1 Nephi 18:19).






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THEY DID TREAT ME WITH MUCH HARSHNESS, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; ESCAPE OF KING LIMHI AND HIS PEOPLE, BY MINERVA TEICHERT


Nephi wrote about teaching his children, “My soul delighteth in the scriptures . . . and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children” (2 Nephi 4:15). And, “We labor diligently to write, to persuade our children . . . to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God” (2 Nephi 25:23). And then, “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (verse 26). He made sure they would “look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the [Mosaic] law was given” (verse 27). Nephi’s children exhibited faith and a determination to follow the example of their mother when their father was bound (see 1 Nephi 18:19). Later, they accompanied their parents when the Nephites separated from the Lamanites, being among “those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God” and who “did hearken unto [Nephi’s] words” (2 Nephi 5:6).

For Families and Individuals

- Ponder the example you set for your children. Do your children know “to what source they may look”?
- How do you follow the examples of your parents?
- Do you turn to the Lord for help? Do you think about how your example of doing so can strengthen others?



Gideon and Limhi



After Alma and those who were converted to the Lord escaped from King Noah’s army, Gideon, a member of the army but opposed to the wicked king, sought to kill Noah. The king, seeing the Lamanites coming, pleaded for mercy that his people might not be destroyed, so Gideon spared him (see Mosiah 19:1–8). The king, really only concerned about himself, fled with some of his army and was later killed, as Abinadi had prophesied (see Mosiah 19:20; 17:18). The more righteous remainder of the people ended up in bondage to the Lamanites. Noah’s son, Limhi, a just man, became king, and Gideon served him faithfully as his captain (see Mosiah 20:17). Gideon noted that their

bondage to the Lamanites was the result of not heeding Abinadi's words (see Mosiah 20:21). After much suffering and learning humility, Limhi's people were discovered by Ammon. Gideon proposed a plan to escape the Lamanites, humbly reminding Limhi that he had many times been of service in battles (see Mosiah 22:3–8). The plan was followed, the people escaped, and they joined Mosiah's people (see Mosiah 22:9–13).

Later in the Book of Mormon, we again read about Gideon, now "stricken with many years" (Alma 1:9). He is described as a teacher in the Church (see verse 7). Nehor, who had introduced priestcraft and was preaching with much success, confronted Gideon. Gideon was not to be persuaded, "admonishing [Nehor] with the words of God" (verse 7). Nehor became angry and slew Gideon. Alma, now chief judge and presiding over Nehor's trial, accused Nehor: "Thou hast shed the blood of a righteous man, yea, a man who has done much good among this people" (verse 13).

Limhi, like Gideon, was a good man in spite of living under a wicked king—his own father. In his story we learn where his strength came from—he knew and revered the scriptures. After Ammon discovered Limhi's people, Limhi gathered his people and spoke to them, demonstrating a knowledge of the scriptures. He exhorted his people to trust in God, reminding them of God's help to His people in past times (see Mosiah 7:19–20). Next, he pointed out that the reason the people were in bondage was that they "would not hearken unto [God's] words" (verse 25). Limhi then quoted scripture to support this (see verses 29–31) and ended with the powerful promise that if the people turned to God, trusted Him, and served Him with all their hearts and diligence of mind, He would deliver them according to His will (verse 33).

Limhi also demonstrated a desire to gain knowledge when he asked Ammon if he could translate the Jaredite plates that Limhi's people had discovered. Limhi reacted with great joy to Ammon's explanation of what a seer is and that King Mosiah had this gift and could translate the plates. (See Mosiah 8:6–20.)

For Families and Individuals

- What are some things we can do that would help our family? What about neighbors and friends?
- Do you recognize the power scripture study can have in your life, as it had in King Limhi's?
- Although Gideon was not among the first group to be converted, he became converted later. Does knowing this help you have patience with someone you love who does not yet seem to be fully converted?
- Ponder whether your testimony and knowledge of the gospel is strong enough to withstand attempts to persuade you away from the gospel.
- Consider Limhi's knowledge of the scriptures and how such knowledge can fortify you in times of difficulty and temptation.

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King Lamoni's Wife and Abish

Through his faithfulness in the king's service, Ammon gained King Lamoni's trust. The king promised Ammon that he would believe his words and Ammon taught the king the gospel. The king, believing, cried to the Lord for mercy and then collapsed as if dead. His servants took him to his wife and children, who greatly mourned for him. (See Alma 17–18.) After two days, the servants came to take Lamoni for burial, but the queen, having heard of the fame of Ammon, called for him. She told him the king's servants had said he was a mighty prophet of God. She said that others said her husband stank and should be buried, but to her he "[did] not stink" (Alma 19:5). Ammon assured the queen that the king was not dead and that he would rise the next day. He asked her if she believed him. The queen



replied, “I have had no witness save thy word, and the word of our servants; nevertheless I believe that it shall be according as thou hast said.” Ammon then said, “Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith; I say unto thee, woman, there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites” (Alma 19:9–10).

The queen stayed by her husband’s side until the next day when he arose, held out his hand to her, blessed God, and then blessed her. He bore testimony of the Savior. Both the king and his queen were overpowered with the Spirit and

sank to the earth. Ammon, overcome with joy, also fell to the earth. (See Alma 19:11–14.) The servants began to pray, and they too sank to the earth, except one woman—Abish. She had “been converted unto the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father,” but she had told no one. She knew she was witnessing the power of God and excitedly ran to tell the people to come see so that they could also be converted. (See verses 15–17.) They came, but contention arose, and so Abish took the queen by the hand, who rose and said, “O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell!” (verse 29). The queen then pleaded to God for the people and took the king’s hand. He arose and began to teach the people, many of whom believed and were baptized. (See verses 30–31, 35.)



For Families and Individuals

- Consider talking with your children about how the queen gained her testimony.
- Clearly King Lamoni and his wife deeply loved and supported each other. What might you do to increase the love and support in your marriage?
- Ponder how believing the words of a prophet demonstrates faith.
- Do you, like Abish, run forth (see Alma 19:17) to share your testimony with others? Consider praying for opportunities to do so.

As you read and study the Book of Mormon, notice the less well-known heroes. Consider adding their examples to your list of Book of Mormon heroes who help you face your challenges and strengthen your love for and faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. ■

NOTE

1. Howard W. Hunter, “No Less Serviceable,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1992, 64.