

# THE Spirit Worked Slowly on Me

Like the river flowing through the Grand Canyon, the Spirit worked slowly on me.

By Olivia Snow

**T**he Grand Canyon did not always exist in its current magnificent form. Millions of years ago, the river flowed over a flat plateau. But its slow, diligent persistence carved a sublime canyon with steep ridges and weaving channels. As I came to recognize, that's how the influence of the Holy Ghost worked on me.

## Something More

I was raised an atheist in Montana. My parents taught me many wonderful things, like loving life and being kind to others. But some lessons they

taught me never felt quite right. Even though they told me there was no God and no heaven—or hell, for that matter—I felt drawn to the idea that there was something more.

Because my parents taught me that dying was the end of existence, I feared death. I was still a child when my mom became sick and was confined to a wheelchair. My fears intensified. What would happen to my mother if she died? Would she disappear forever?

Years passed, and my mom seemed to always be on the verge of dying. One day, she told me death would bring her relief from the pain she felt. I left the room in tears, thinking she would no longer exist. Searching for answers, I visited my Mormon friend Isaac, and he assured me that my mother would not cease to exist after death. She would still have the choice to

learn about and accept the Lord and His gospel, even if she didn't believe in God in this life. I didn't have the same faith, but I did feel peace.

Over the next few years, many of my friends, including Isaac, invited me to learn more about Jesus Christ.

One gave



me a Bible, and Isaac sometimes brought me to church. I learned that I needed to pray, but I didn't know how. Fearful that my parents would overhear me, I prayed silently in bed with my hands clasped underneath my pillow. I desperately asked Heavenly Father every night if He was real, but He never seemed to answer.

### A Testimony Takes Shape

Although I had prayed for nearly a decade, it wasn't until I went to college that my testimony truly took shape. Isaac suggested that I look into Brigham Young University. After visiting the campus and feeling the same peace I felt the night I talked to Isaac, I applied only to BYU. Thankfully, I was accepted.

The first Sunday at BYU I attended my ward. Thinking I was a member, the bishop asked me to give the opening prayer, which I happily did—even though I still didn't know if God was really there. A few weeks into the semester, I got a job working as an investigative actor at the missionary

training center, where newly called missionaries practiced teaching me lessons multiple times a day. Gradually my testimony turned from a shallow waterway to a deep channel. I started reading the Book of Mormon every free moment—before bed, waiting for class to start, and even standing in lines. Slowly my diary entries transformed from “I wish this were true” to “I think I believe this is true.”

Even as I experienced this excitement about the scriptures, I struggled with recognizing the Spirit. I liked the idea of having a way to know for sure if something was true or not but didn't know how to obtain such assurances myself.

In Relief Society one Sunday, the teacher began talking about priesthood blessings. As she spoke about experiences she had had with blessings, I felt a strong desire to receive one. Little did I know then that this urge was a spiritual prompting. I called a friend in my ward and asked if a nonmember could receive a blessing. He said yes, and that night he blessed

me that I would feel the Spirit from my head to my toes and to my fingertips and that I would know that it was the Spirit without a doubt.

And I did. In that moment, I knew that it was all true. There really is a God, and He loves me. His Son atoned for me, and I can live with Them forever if I obey Their commandments.

### Carving a Canyon

Once I finally identified the voice of the Spirit, I recognized all of the small moments when the Spirit had guided me without my really knowing it. The Spirit had slowly worked within me, carving my doubts into faith and sculpting my fears into comfort.

A few weeks later, I was baptized. My parents respected my decision to join the Church, although they still do not believe in God—yet. But I have hopes that the Spirit is slowly working on them just as it worked on me. After all, a small stream helped carve a canyon; it just took some time. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

