



By Elder
Russell M. Nelson
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



WHAT THE BOOK OF MORMON TEACHES ABOUT THE LOVE OF

GOD

*Some of the most sublime examples of the Lord's love
are recorded in the Book of Mormon.*

Most Christians are familiar with the attributes of Jesus Christ as reported in the Bible. They marvel at the love He demonstrated for the poor, the sick, and the downtrodden. Those who consider themselves His disciples also strive to emulate His example and follow His beloved Apostle's exhortation: "Let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. . . . For God is love" (1 John 4:7–8).

This concept is clarified by the Book of Mormon. It describes *how* one is born of God and *how* one gains the power to love as He does. It identifies three core principles that bring the power of God's love into our lives.

First, the Book of Mormon teaches that exercising faith in Christ and entering into a *covenant* with Him to keep His commandments

is the key to being reborn spiritually. To Book of Mormon people who had made such a covenant, King Benjamin remarked, "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7).

Second, the Savior Himself teaches that the power to become more like Him comes through receiving the *ordinances* of the gospel: "Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:20).

Third, He exhorts us to *follow His example*: “What manner of men ought ye to be?” He asks rhetorically. His answer: “Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). Truly, He wants us to become more like Him.

Some of the most sublime examples of His love are recorded in the Book of Mormon. These examples can apply in our own lives



A PROPHET TESTIFIES

“The Book of Mormon has come forth by the gift and power of God. It speaks as a voice from the dust in testimony of the Son of God. It speaks of His birth, of His ministry, of His Crucifixion and

Resurrection, and of His appearance to the righteous in the land Bountiful on the American continent.

“It is a tangible thing that can be handled, that can be read, that can be tested. It carries within its covers a promise of its divine origin. Millions now have put it to the test and found it to be a true and sacred record.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “The Great Things Which God Has Revealed,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 81–82.

as we strive to become more like the Lord.

It was His love for Lehi and Lehi’s family—and their love for Him—that brought them to the Americas, their promised land, where they prospered.¹

It was God’s love for us that prompted Him centuries ago to command Nephite prophets to keep a sacred record of their people. Lessons from that record relate to our salvation and exaltation. These teachings are now available in the Book of Mormon. This sacred text stands as tangible evidence of God’s love for all of His children throughout the world.²

It was Christ’s love for His “other sheep” that brought Him to the New World.³ From the Book of Mormon we learn that great natural disasters and three days of darkness occurred in the New World following the death of the Lord in the Old World. Then the glorified and resurrected Lord descended from heaven and ministered among the people of the New World.

TO KNOW IS TO KNOW LOVE

I am a new member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to me the Book of Mormon is not just a book. It is solid proof that Heavenly Father loves us. It is proof that earlier Saints loved us and wanted us to come home. It is proof that God’s plan of happiness exists and is perfect.

To know that this book is true is to know that Heavenly Father and His Son live. It is to know that life is beautiful and eternal. It is to know that as long as you keep trying to be your best and repent when you fall, then you will always be forgiven. It is to know the true meaning of family. It is to know that you will never lose a loved one, as he or she waits for you. It is to know the blessings of Heavenly Father. It is to know the comfort that whatever storms come your way, you can face them, as they are for your benefit. It is to know the Holy Ghost is your constant companion. In essence, it is to know love in all its expressions.

Emma Adesanya, Ireland



“I am the light and the life of the world,” He told them, “and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:11).

Then He provided one of the most intimate experiences anyone could have with Him. He invited them to feel the wound in His side and the prints of the nails in His hands and feet, that they would know for certain that He is “the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and [had] been slain for the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:14).

Jesus then gave His disciples the authority to baptize, to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to administer the sacrament. He gave them the power to establish His Church among them, led by twelve disciples.

He delivered to them some of the foundational teachings He had given His disciples in the Old World. He healed their sick. He knelt and prayed to the Father in words so powerful and sacred they could not be recorded. So powerful was His prayer that those who heard Him were overcome with joy. Overcome by His love for them and by their faith in Him, Jesus Himself wept. He prophesied of God’s work in the centuries leading up to the promised advent of His Second Coming.⁴

Then He asked them to bring their children to Him.

“And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

“And when he had done this he wept again;

The Savior Himself teaches that the power to become more like Him comes through receiving the ordinances of the gospel.

Then He asked them to bring their children to Him. “And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.”

“And he spake unto The multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

“And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, . . . and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:21–24).

Such is the purity and power of God’s love, as revealed in the Book of Mormon.

In these latter days we who are privileged to have the Book of Mormon, to be members of the Lord’s Church, to have His gospel, and to keep His commandments know something of God’s infinite love. We know how to make His love our own. As we become His true disciples, we gain the power to love as He

does. As we keep His commandments, we become more like Him. We broaden our personal circle of love in reaching out to people of every nation, kindred, and tongue.

With profound gratitude for His exemplary life, we can make this scripture our standard: “Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons [and daughters] of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (Moroni 7:48).⁵ ■

NOTES

1. See 1 Nephi 17:35–44; Mosiah 7:20; Alma 9:9–11; 3 Nephi 5:20–22.
2. See Book of Mormon title page; 1 Nephi 13:35–41; 2 Nephi 33:4; Mosiah 1:2–7; Mormon 8:13–41.
3. See John 10:16; 3 Nephi 15:11–24.
4. See 3 Nephi 11–14; 18–20.
5. Compare 1 John 3:1–3.

RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF HIS LOVE

When I joined the Church during my freshman year of college, I felt good about the changes I was making to my lifestyle and saw how much better the gospel made my life. However, I soon felt that my past was hindering any progress I could make. How could Heavenly Father use me to help build His kingdom when I had made such poor choices?

Then one day I opened my Book of Mormon to the very last page. I read Moroni’s parting words: “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, . . . and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God” (Moroni 10:32). I stared at those words. I felt the Spirit tell me they were true. I realized that I had been limiting the power of God by assuming He could not use me in any way He saw fit.

I decided that from then on I would not “deny the power of God” but would accept my past and look forward to my future. The more I focused on my future instead of my past and trusted in the sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ, the more I felt my Savior’s love for me and the happier I was with myself.

Christy Pettey, Washington, USA