



as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord



press forward, feasting upon the word



Feasting

ON THE
WORDS
OF
CHRIST

As we press forward, we will remain stronger and more faithful as we study and savor the scriptures.

id of Christ, and endure to the end



By Elder Randy D. Funk
Of the Seventy

I remember well our missionary visits to a small home in Semarang, Indonesia. With a dirt floor and only two rooms, the home was illuminated more by the goodness of the family that lived there than by the single light bulb hanging above the small table around which we met.

During heavy rains our shoes would go underwater as we pedaled our bicycles to and from their neighborhood. The air was always hot and the mosquitoes were always hungry, but the experience of sharing the gospel in that home was one of the most joyful of my mission.

As one of the early missionaries in Indonesia from 1971 to 1973, I was assigned to help begin the work in the city of Semarang in central Java. When Elder Peterson and I arrived, there were no members.

A local newspaper published an article about the new church in the city and mentioned the English classes we taught. Samad,¹ a young husband and father, read the article and visited our English class. At the time, he was an acting minister for another Christian church, but he expressed interest in learning about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Several Verses

Samad was a sincere seeker of truth. He was also faithful in keeping commitments. Soon he began attending our meetings every Sunday morning before meeting with his congregation in the afternoon. We continued teaching him, and he understood well what we taught. But as we finished the standard discussions,



despite his sincere prayers and diligent efforts, he had not yet received a spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of our message.

So I did something I felt would help Samad to gain a testimony. Because the Book of Mormon had not yet been translated into Indonesian, I translated several important verses into Bahasa Indonesia, the official language.

A few years ago, I returned to Indonesia as a General Authority for a mission tour. I invited Brother Samad and his wife, Katoningsih, to join me in a meeting with missionaries serving in the Surakarta Indonesia Stake.

As Brother Samad shared his testimony, he held up his well-read Indonesian Book of Mormon. He encouraged the missionaries to use the sacred book in their teaching and testified of its power to change hearts. Then he shared his own experience.

He said that as he read those few verses I had translated, he felt a strong spiritual witness that they were the word of God. He knew if those verses were the word of God, then the Book of Mormon was the word of God. The Spirit confirmed to him that the Book of Mormon was true; therefore, what we had taught him about Joseph Smith, the Restoration, priesthood authority, and the plan of salvation was also true.

The next Sunday, Samad informed us that his prayers had been answered. He and his wife were baptized on September 16, 1973. A branch was organized a few months later, and Brother Samad was called as branch president. Later, he served as district president. When the Surakarta Indonesia Stake was organized in 2012, he was called as its first patriarch.

A Different Experience

I contrast Brother Samad's experience with that of another young husband and father who came to see me when I was serving as a stake president. This man had grown up in the Church and served a mission, but he was struggling with his testimony. He still believed in God and prayer, but when I asked if he believed the Book of Mormon to be true, his response surprised me. He said, "I don't know. I've never given it much thought."



With access to only a few verses in a language he could read, Brother Samad had followed Moroni's exhortation to read, ponder, and ask. He had done so with a sincere heart, real intent (meaning a willingness to act), and faith in Christ. He gained a testimony of the book's truth by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3–4.)

He also experienced what is promised in the introduction to the Book of Mormon: "Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah."

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Nephi powerfully teaches the doctrine of Christ. Speaking to those who have already been baptized, he says, "Ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ." Then he adds, "Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19–20).

We need to study the Book of Mormon both before and after baptism.

Without "the word of Christ" as found in the Book of Mormon, most investigators struggle to develop sufficient



4 WAYS TO FEAST

1. *Read for knowledge and to be filled with the Spirit.* In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, Lehi has a vision in which he is given a book and told to read. “As he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:12). We can liken Lehi’s experience to the outpouring of the Spirit we can receive as we read the Book of Mormon.
2. *Study for understanding and wisdom.* Study is more than reading; it requires searching. Footnotes and other resources, such as the Topical Guide and the triple combination index, can help us study topics and themes and find connections and patterns.
3. *Ponder for inspiration.* Prayerful contemplation allows the Spirit to guide our thoughts and opens our minds to inspiration. Answers to our sincere questions and desires often come as we ponder the scriptures.
4. *Pray for confirmation.* Remember Moroni’s promise that those who read the Book of Mormon and pray about it with a sincere heart and real intent will receive a witness of its truthfulness (see Moroni 10:3–4). That witness can be received over and over again as we seek to “know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).



feasting upon the word of Christ

faith to act—to repent and to be baptized. For that reason, *Preach My Gospel* teaches missionaries and all of us that “the Book of Mormon, combined with the Spirit, is your most powerful resource in conversion.”²

Savoring and Enduring

Conversion is an ongoing process, however, not a one-time event. President Thomas S. Monson recently taught that “once obtained, a testimony needs to be kept vital and alive through continued obedience to the commandments of God and through daily prayer and scripture study.”³ As Nephi emphasized, to gain eternal life we must “press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end” (2 Nephi 31:20).

The second man I mentioned was struggling, in part, because he had never given much thought to the Book of Mormon. Brother Samad, on the other hand, has pressed forward, feasting on these precious words of Christ. He continues to diligently study the Book of Mormon, nourishing the faith that has guided him throughout his life. Today more than 35 members of his family enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

“To feast means more than to taste,” President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught. “To feast means to savor. We savor the scriptures by studying them in a spirit of delightful discovery and faithful obedience.”⁴

I know that as we read the Book of Mormon, gain a witness of its truthfulness, and then press forward feasting upon its words throughout our lives, we will remain stronger and more faithful as we encounter the challenges of life. Our spiritual roots will go deeper, our faith will increase, and our ability “to remain true to the commandments of God despite temptation, opposition, and adversity”⁵ will be enhanced. ■

NOTES

1. In Indonesia, some people have only one name. Such is the case for Samad.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 104.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 87.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 17.
5. *Preach My Gospel*, 70.