

I have never known more surely than the day I put Moroni's promise to the test.

# WHY I BELIEVE THE BOOK OF MORMON

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My best friend in high school was an agnostic. My friend said he didn't know if there was a God, but if a God created us, He must have gone far away and left us all alone. Why else would so many bad things happen in this world? How could a God who watched over His children let them be hurt so much?

I understood why some people did bad things. I knew about agency and the effects of choices we make. My widowed mother had taught me about those things at home. I knew the gospel was the right way to live. I saw it work for my mother in her life, and I knew in my mind that it was the way Heavenly Father wanted us to live.

But I didn't know this where it really counted—in my heart. I thought I was sure of the truth, but sometimes I had my own “why” and “what if” questions about God and His plan for us. I wasn't so sure of what I “knew” that I could tell my friend and mean it with every part of me.

That kind of knowing did not come until I took a Book of Mormon class while I was in college. Sister Irene Spears taught the class as if the Book of Mormon were completely new to us. In a way it was for me; I had never read the book all the way through.

When I reached the end, I found Moroni's promise to readers: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4). I knew this promise was

to me. I got on my knees beside my bed to ask. I didn't expect an answer to be so strong or to come so fast. Before I could finish the words of my prayer, I knew that the Book of Mormon was the word of God and that Joseph Smith was a prophet. If those things were true, then David O. McKay was also a prophet, and he had said that every young man who was able should go on a mission, so I was going on a mission.

I was called to Central America. After several months in the mission field, I realized what a blessing had come to me in that call. While I was helping to find people who loved the Lord, I was also walking in places where much of the Book of Mormon may have happened. This was a second witness to the testimony of my grandfather, who had learned to love the Book of Mormon on one in the 1920s. His father was a salesman and trader who traveled widely in Mexico. My great-grandfather had told his children stories of ruined cities and highways in the jungle, and my grandfather had always wanted to know who the people were who built them.

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Since my mission, I have had the opportunity to visit many of those ruined cities in Mexico and Central America. I have read what experts say about those places and about the history and greatness of their people. I am very grateful for the added knowledge I have received. But I have never been more sure of the Book of Mormon than I was that day when I asked the Lord if it was true and He answered me just as Moroni promised. I only wish I had asked sooner. My Heavenly Father wanted me to know the truth for myself all along, and I might have been able to share it with my friend. **ME**

