

TO GO *or not*

I wasn't sure I knew the gospel well enough to serve a full-time mission. Then my brother gave me a simple suggestion.

TO GO

Since I was a youth, serving a mission was always something I wasn't too sure about, but as I neared the age of 19, I knew I had to make a decision. My parents suggested I visit the islands they were originally from and focus on whether I really wanted to serve a mission or pursue a different path.

When I arrived in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, I was happy to see my extended family and visit with them. I wasn't always thinking about serving a mission, but it was still in the back of my mind. I got to stay with my grandparents, who live in a village called Pahu. I love my grandparents and my relatives I stayed with. They are the nicest people and are very caring. They are also members of another faith.

As time passed and I stayed with them longer, I began to recognize differences between their religion and mine. A lot of times my relatives would tease me about certain things I believe in as a Latter-day Saint. Sometimes they would tell me that instead of serving a mission I should enroll in school.

I started to feel that I really did need to make a decision about a mission, but for me it wasn't an easy decision to make. One of the reasons I was always scared about serving a mission was that I felt I'd never really known enough about the gospel. I pictured myself standing in front of an investigator and not knowing how to answer his questions. To make matters worse, I wasn't really sure that I even had a testimony of the gospel.

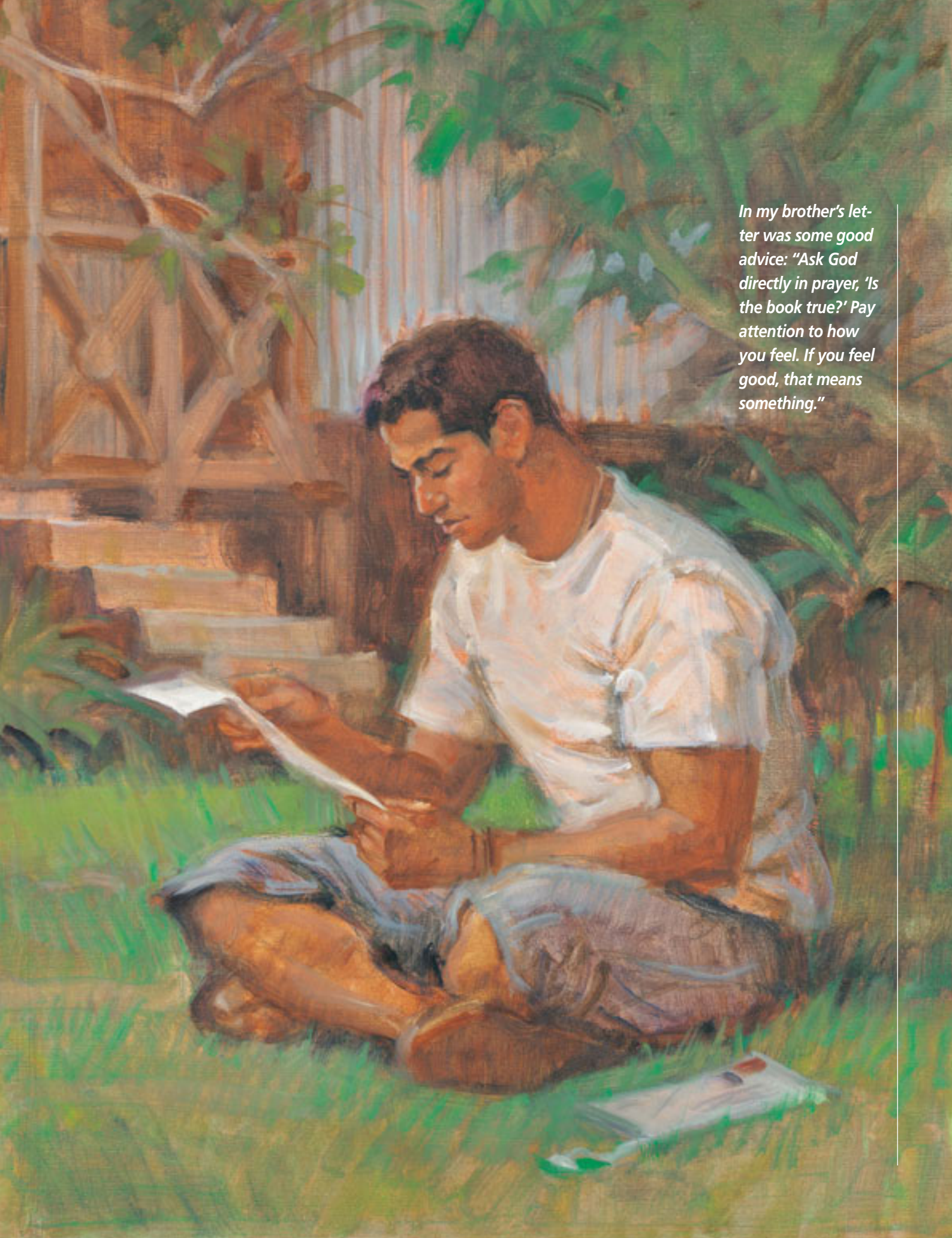
One morning I received a letter from my older brother Atolo Si'i, who had recently returned from a mission. I had written him a few weeks earlier asking him for advice in gaining a testimony. I wanted to know if the gospel was true. I felt that if I were to serve a mission, even if I didn't know everything about the gospel, if I at least had my own testimony of the Church and of the Book of Mormon, no one could disagree with me about that.

My older brother, Atolo Si'i, has always been a good example to me. I read the letter and the advice he gave me. I took it seriously. In the letter, after telling me how the family was and how everything was going with him, he said:


"I was thinking of advice I could give you. One thing I think you could do is: while reading the Book of Mormon, ask God directly in prayer, 'Is the book true?' Pay attention to how you feel. If you feel good, that means something." After I read what he had written, it seemed quite simple: read the Book of Mormon and pay attention to the way I feel, and I would receive my answer.

That afternoon, after I returned from work, I went to my room and read over my brother's letter again. I read over his simple advice a few times. Then, after opening with prayer, I began to read in the Book of Mormon. When I had read a few chapters, I knew it was time for me to kneel and ask my Father in Heaven if this book was indeed true and to know if the Church was true.

When I finished praying, I paid close attention to the



In my brother's letter was some good advice: "Ask God directly in prayer, 'Is the book true?' Pay attention to how you feel. If you feel good, that means something."



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way I was feeling and tried to recognize anything different. I stood for a while in the center of my room just waiting, but nothing came. I hadn't eaten yet, so I decided to walk to the store down the road and grab some food.

As I walked down the road, I suddenly felt this warm feeling inside. I remember lifting my head up toward the end of the road and smiling and just knowing inside that the Book of Mormon was true and that this Church was the same Church Jesus Christ established while on the earth.

After returning from the store I had the thought: I truly believe right now that the gospel is true and that the Book of Mormon is true. I realized that right then in my life I could actually be part of our Heavenly Father's plan and help build the kingdom of God. I could share with others the exact feelings I had felt while walking down the road.

After that day I continued to prepare myself and do all I could to study the gospel and build my testimony. I sent in my mission papers and eventually received my call and left on my mission.

I was continuously blessed by the people I worked with and by my Heavenly Father, who guided me every step of the way. I was able to explain the gospel when I needed to. I could tell others about the Book of Mormon and why I believe it is true. I bore testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that he really did see God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

I know I was blessed to serve a mission. We may not know everything about the gospel, and our testimonies may not be as strong as we'd like, but as we nourish what we have and continue to study and prepare ourselves, as we lean toward our Heavenly Father in faith and in prayer, we can be assured that when we need Him the most, He will always be right there. **NE**

NEmore

For additional information about serving a full-time mission, talk to your bishop or branch president. Also, see the March 2007 *New Era*.