



## WHY SERVE A MISSION?

I was stumped by the question. A night at the movies with a friend had somehow turned into a one-hour discussion about religion. We'd discussed our beliefs and read Bible verses, and now my friend had posed this question:

"Why are you going to serve a mission?"

I'd been preparing for my mission all my life, and now, somehow, I couldn't come up with a good answer. Why would I give up two years of my life—college, scholarships, friends, family—for a mission? It didn't seem logical from a worldly point of view.

I don't remember my answer from that night, but whatever it was, it didn't satisfy me. I pondered the question over and over again for the next several months.

One day I was chatting online with a friend. She'd met with the missionaries but wasn't really feeling the Spirit, and another friend of ours kept encouraging her to listen to the missionaries. She asked me why our friend was so eager, and I told her, "Well, if you had something in your life that meant everything to you, you would be a pretty bad friend if you didn't try to share it with others!"

Suddenly, my answer started to come to me. As I lay in bed that night, I remembered a time when I'd felt the Holy Ghost very strongly. I'd been struggling with a decision; I'd finally prayed about it and felt an overwhelming sense of joy and peace, knowing that everything would work out. I realized how much I wanted everybody to feel that same feeling. I thought about how if you discovered a cure for cancer, you wouldn't just hide it in a laboratory—you'd share it with the world! I understood that the gospel was a "cure" for all of life's problems, so why wouldn't I want

to share it with others? I realized that nothing the world offers can ever measure up to the wonderful opportunity of serving the Lord and sharing the gospel with others.

**Dan R., Idaho, USA**

## BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE

**O**ne summer I decided to read the Bible. I was worried that I would find it boring, but I tried to read it every morning.

For several years, a quote from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, had hung on the bulletin board over my desk: “Be strong and of good courage. You are truly royal spirit daughters of Almighty God. You are princesses, destined to become queens. Your own wondrous story has already begun” (“Your Happily Ever After,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 127). I love this quote and have it memorized.

One day I stumbled on the phrase “be strong and of a good courage” in Deuteronomy 31:6! Recognizing it from President Uchtdorf’s quote, I highlighted the verse. I finished Deuteronomy that day and felt satisfied.

The next morning I began reading Joshua. In chapter 1 it says, “Be strong

## “YOU ALREADY KNOW IT IS TRUE”

**W**hile working on my Personal Progress, I came across a goal that required me to read the Book of Mormon (Virtue value project) and invited me to pray afterward to know if it’s true.

Over several months I read the Book of Mormon. When I finished, I eagerly went to my room, kneeled at my bed, and asked God to let me know if it’s true.

Nothing happened.

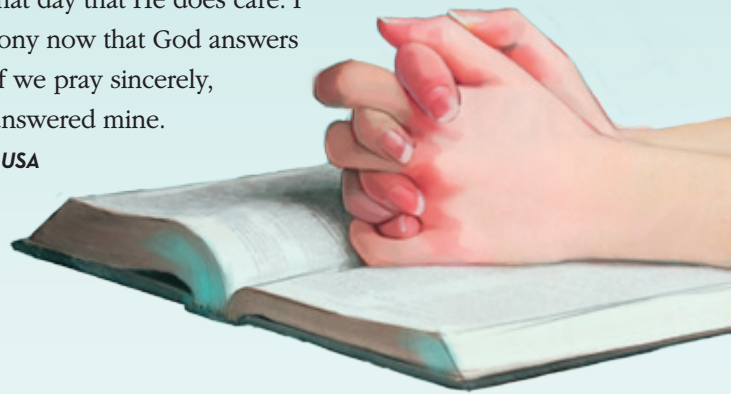
I rephrased the question several times and still felt nothing.

The next Sunday during fast and testimony meeting, a sister told a story about when she’d followed Moroni’s invitation to pray to know if the Book of Mormon is true. She didn’t receive an answer, so she prayed again and again. As the days passed, she worried about whether the Church was really true. Finally, she felt the Spirit speak to her mind: “You already know it is true.”

As I listened, I realized that God was answering my prayer through this woman’s testimony.

I learned that day that He does care. I have a testimony now that God answers our prayers, if we pray sincerely, because He answered mine.

**Annika C., Utah, USA**



and of a good courage” (Joshua 1:6). I marked this scripture, noting the coincidence in my scripture journal.

A moment later, I found the phrase “be strong and of a good courage” again in verses 9 and 18! To me, the repetition of this phrase was a connection between the Old Testament and today. It must be important if the Lord’s servants are still giving us the same counsel today.

As I continued to read the Old

Testament, I found several more verses with that same phrase. These verses are spread out and keep me eager to read my scriptures in the hope that I might find more.

This simple experience helped me to be diligent about my scripture study. It made the Old Testament interesting to me. And it became my personal goal to always “be strong and of good courage.”

**Makenna K., Arizona, USA**