

The Real Reward for

Once I learned the Book of Mormon is true, I just had to share it.

By Paul C. Hardin

For me, the key to choosing to serve a mission was gaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon. When I was 15, living near St. Louis, Missouri, my seminary teacher challenged us to read the Book of Mormon not just once, but *twice* during the school year. As a reward, she offered a steak dinner. Eating a steak dinner with the girls I knew would take the challenge sounded very appealing to me.

For the first time in my life I began a committed attempt to read the entire Book of Mormon. I had tried many times before, but I always got stuck in the Isaiah chapters. I pushed past those, and within a few months I had read all the way through for the first time. When I finished, I thought, “This is a really good book! But is it *correct*?”

I started reading again with the intent of determining whether it was factual or fabricated. I checked for consistency in dates and calculated the ages of the various prophets to see if they were realistic. I found evidence supporting the reliability of the Book of Mormon as an ancient text. When I finished reading the second time, I was convinced that it was correct.

At this point I had reached the original goal to read the Book of Mormon twice. I was surprised to realize that I was no longer interested in the steak dinner—this was becoming too important, too sacred, for such a reward. I was now convinced the Book of Mormon was good and correct, but was it *true*? To answer that question, I read it for a third time.

Before I read, I said a short prayer, asking, “Father, is what I’m about to read true? If so, please tell me through Thy Spirit.” Then, when I was finished reading for the day,

I’d close the book and ask, “Father, is what I have just read true?” I read it through this way the third time, and not long after that, the Spirit bore witness of its truthfulness in an unmistakable manner. I had found out for myself that the promise found in Moroni 10:3–5 really works!

Since that day, I have been on fire to share the gospel with others. I’d openly carry my Book of Mormon around school with me, hoping people would ask me about it. I would talk about it whenever I could.

I talked to my friends about it and invited them to Mutual, seminary, and church. Ultimately, three of my high school friends and the mother of one of those friends were baptized. It was very exciting!

After a year of college I was called to be a full-time missionary in Colombia. That was one of the greatest events of my life.

Do I love missionary work? You bet! Just as I learned for myself that the Book of Mormon is true, I learned that what the Book of Mormon says is true: “The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15).

Just as gaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon was an anchor to my soul, going on a mission laid a foundation for my life. I still refer back to those special, sacred events that happened on my mission. Beyond the witness I received of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, these sacred experiences were further witnesses to me of God’s reality, divinity, and love. **NE**

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GREER

Reading



THE BOOK IS TRUE

“Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: ‘I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.’ . . .

“We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in their hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3–5.)”

Introduction to the Book of Mormon.