





# BE LIKE Ammon

*This hero from the Book of Mormon  
can teach us a lot about missionary work  
and activation today.*

**A**mmon is a heroic figure in the Book of Mormon, known for his valiant service that included defending the flocks of Lamoni, a Lamanite king (see Alma 17:25–39; 18:1–10). Ammon’s story, like many other scriptural accounts in the Book of Mormon, can teach us much about how to embrace the opportunities and overcome the challenges we face today.

## **A Meaningful Mission**

Suzanne E. Tarasevich of Millville, New Jersey, USA, learned some lessons from Ammon while serving a full-time mission with her husband, Adolf.

“When the large, white envelope containing our mission call arrived in our mailbox,” she says, “my husband and I were ecstatic. We had fasted and prayed about our call. Not that we were concerned about the *where* of the assignment, but we deeply desired a confirmation that we would have the abilities to meaningfully fulfill our calling.

“Later that evening, with children and grandchildren gathered, we opened the envelope and read our call to the Poland Warsaw Mission. As we did so, we felt peace in our hearts that this was, indeed, an assignment meant for us. We were both overjoyed.”

However, having arrived in the mission,

Sister Tarasevich found herself struggling to understand exactly what she could contribute. “My husband had immediately been given duties that provided him with challenging, growth-promoting leadership opportunities,” she says. “Though neither of us could speak Polish, his service seemed to transcend the language barriers.” On the other hand, she says, “I frequently struggled with feelings of uselessness and isolation. I doubted the meaningfulness of my missionary efforts.”

## **Mighty Missionaries**

Sister Tarasevich found herself thinking about great missionaries in the Book of Mormon. “During many years as a Primary teacher, I had often drawn on the inspiring and motivating power of the stories of Alma and the sons of Mosiah to teach the children about missionary work. Whenever I thought of missionaries, the image of a strong and powerful Ammon popped into my mind, and I could easily envision the dynamic young missionaries of our mission as modern-day sons of Mosiah. But I wondered if it showed a lack of humility for a gray-haired grandmother to aspire to such a role.”

While she was thinking, she says, an inner voice began to question her gently.



## FIND THE ONE WHO IS LOST

"It is important for each of us to ponder how it feels to be lost and what it means to be a 'spiritual' shepherd who will leave the 99 to find the one who is lost. Such shepherds may need the expertise and assistance of the search and rescue team, but they are present, accounted for, and climbing right beside them to save those who are infinitely valued in the sight of God, for they are His children."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Bring Souls unto Me," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 112.

"What was Ammon's first assignment?"

"To be a servant, to tend the flocks, and to gather the scattered sheep," she responded.

"Well then, be an Ammon."

### Prepared to Serve

These thoughts provided Sister Tarasevich with insight. "Suddenly I understood exactly what the nature of my assignment should be," she says. "I realized that while I hadn't mastered the language skills needed to proselyte, years of Relief Society experience had prepared me to serve others—to seek out, find, and love those who felt forgotten and uninvolved."

She began to view her missionary labors through new eyes. "I became aware of the many ways in which Christ-centered

principles could overcome language deficiencies," she says. "I began to see what I could do to tend the flock and gather the scattered sheep."

After that, she says, "life as a senior missionary became a wonderful period of learning and service as we were privileged to see the gospel change and enrich the lives of those who embraced it." She often felt like singing what she calls Ammon's hymn: "Behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God" (Alma 26:11).

### Saving the Sheep

Peggy Wallace Poll of South Weber, Utah, USA, gained her insights from Ammon when she was assigned to teach about rescue and

*Nourishing every person with love is a great way to follow Ammon's example.*



activation at a stake priesthood and auxiliary leadership training meeting.

“Reading the familiar story of Ammon, I noticed something new,” she says. “Remember, Ammon is serving a mission among the Lamanites. He has been given an assignment to tend the royal sheep. There are other servants with him, and as they are bringing the sheep to Sebus to drink, robbers scatter the flock. This is terribly frightening to the other servants. Apparently, others who have allowed the sheep to be scattered have been put to death, and they are certain they will now suffer the same fate. (See Alma 17:25–30.)

“But Ammon sees an opportunity,” Sister Poll says. “He tells the other servants to be of good cheer because he has a plan. Read Alma 17:31–33, and you’ll see it clearly laid out:

1. Notice as early as possible that sheep are missing.
2. [Rush] forth with much swiftness.’
3. Gather the sheep together.
4. Bring them safely back to the sheepfold.
5. Encircle them, keep them safe, and nourish them with love.”

Sister Poll says she was impressed with how this story can apply to activation: “It is possible to look at the story of Ammon as symbolic of Church leaders today, rescuing members who have scattered. There are many influences in the world that, like the robbers, can drive members away from the good word of the gospel. We must be vigilant and move quickly when one of His precious souls is missing from the flock.”

She quotes President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who said, “I would hope, I would pray, that each of us . . . would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and put them on the way of happy and productive lives.”<sup>1</sup> ■

#### NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Reach with a Rescuing Hand,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86.



## AMULEK CAN TEACH US TOO

**A**mulek is another great hero from the Book of Mormon. He shows what people can become when they return to the path of righteousness.

Wealthy and well-known, Amulek acknowledges that he had witnessed the mysteries and power of God but had hardened his heart. “I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know,” he says (Alma 10:6; see also verses 4–5).

But the Lord sends an angel to tell Amulek to receive Alma, the prophet, into his home. Amulek feeds Alma, and Alma blesses and teaches Amulek and his household. Then Amulek joins Alma in the ministry, becoming a powerful second witness of gospel truths. (See Alma 10:7–12.)

Amulek becomes Alma’s companion in calling the people to repentance, and he preaches the gospel with such strength and authority that the people are astonished (see Alma 11:46). Bound and cast into prison, Alma and Amulek miraculously escape, establish the Church in Sidom, and then teach the gospel throughout the land (see Alma 14; 15; 31).

Just like Amulek, there are many in the Church today who, when they return to activity, will find that the Lord will bless them and that they can become powerful witnesses of the truth.