

COME
FOLLOW
ME

HOW SORROW



CAN LEAD TO



JOY



By Laura Fuchs
Church Magazines

I used to think of sadness as a universally bad thing. Why would you want to be sad or see others sad? It's either awkward or just an all-around downer, right? But then I started to notice an interesting pattern in the scriptures: when people were sad, missionaries often got excited.

PREPARED TO HEAR THE WORD

The first example I noticed was when Ammon was taking care of King Lamoni's flocks. People came to scatter the flocks and get Ammon and the other servants in trouble. It was something they had done before, and so the other servants got upset. They knew that King Lamoni had put many servants to death for losing the flocks. You can almost feel the fear in their voices when they said, "Now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of these men." They were terrified! "And they began to weep exceedingly, saying: Behold, our flocks are scattered already" (Alma 17:28).

To me, it sounds like a pretty sad sight. But Ammon's reaction threw me off guard. "Now when Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy." Swollen with joy? What was he thinking? "I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants, or the power which is in me, in restoring these flocks unto the king," thought Ammon. "That I may win the hearts of these my fellow-servants, that I may lead them to believe in my words" (Alma 17:29).

Another time a missionary gets excited about people being sad is just a few chapters later. This time the missionary is Alma the Younger. A large group of poor people came to him as he was preaching. They were all feeling down because they had been cast out of their churches and mistreated. Their leader asked Alma, "What shall we do?" (Alma 32:5). Just at the moment when I started to feel sorry for them, I read Alma's reaction—he was super happy! He immediately stopped teaching the people he had been teaching and turned to these others. What did Alma see that made him so happy? "He beheld that their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word" (Alma 32:6).

Both King Lamoni's servants and the humble Zoramites were ready to hear God's word, which would be the gateway

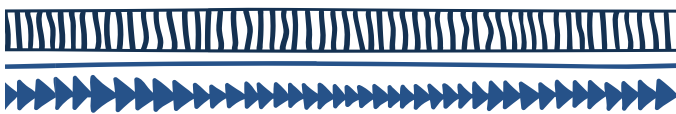
SADNESS AND JOY: THEY'RE OPPOSITES, RIGHT?
BUT SOMETIMES ONE LEADS TO THE OTHER.





"FOR THEIR SORROWING WAS NOT UNTO REPENTANCE. . . . THEY DID NOT COME UNTO JESUS WITH BROKEN HEARTS AND CONTRITE SPIRITS, BUT THEY DID CURSE GOD, AND WISH TO DIE."

MORMON 2:13-14



COME, FOLLOW ME: ALMA 32-35

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then-Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, "Godly sorrow inspires change and hope through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Worldly sorrow pulls us down, extinguishes hope, and persuades us to give in to further temptation" ("You Can Do It Now!" Oct. 2013 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 56]).

The *Come, Follow Me* reading for this month covers the story of Alma teaching the Zoramites who were humbled and ready to receive the gospel. As you read their story, consider what you can learn about the relationship between humility and godly sorrow. How can you strive to make sure that when you make a mistake, your reaction is to be sorrowful *unto repentance*?

to experiencing godly sorrow if they showed a willingness to change and repent as they accepted the message of the gospel (see 2 Corinthians 7:10).

THE WRONG KIND OF SORROW

By the time I got to Mormon, I thought I understood the pattern. Clearly these missionaries were excited because the sad people they were seeing were humbled and ready to hear and follow God's word. Of course, I now thought, it's good for them to be sad! That means they're looking for something to bring them happiness. So when I read about the Nephites who lived during Mormon's time being super sad, I thought I knew what to expect. When Mormon saw their sorrow, he said, "My heart did begin to rejoice within me" (Mormon 2:12). Yes! They were going to change and repent, just like the people Ammon and Alma taught.

But wait, in just the next verse things shift dramatically. "But behold this my joy was in vain," said Mormon, "for their sorrowing was not unto repentance. . . . They did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die" (Mormon 2:13-14).

Whoa! What a difference from the first two stories. Their circumstances were similarly terrible, but there was one big difference: these Nephites refused to change. They were upset "because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin." They wanted to keep doing what they had always done, just without the consequences. That's why Mormon calls their sorrow the "sorrowing of the damned" (Mormon 2:13)—because they had stopped their own progression by refusing to believe that righteousness, not sin, would make them happy.

TWO OPTIONS

Often when we are in misery, whether through our own choices or through other circumstances, we have two options: to humble ourselves and listen or not. We can wallow in bitterness, repeating our mistakes, with the hope that we eventually become desensitized to them (like Mormon's people). Or we can choose to turn to the Lord, realize our mistakes, and work with our Savior to change them. Repentance is only a sad thing when we insist on seeing it the world's way. When we do it the Savior's way, He will lift our guilt, wipe away our tears, and set us on the path to true healing. **NE**