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Alone in the Moonlight

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Abstract: This article states that experiencing soul satisfying circumstances is better when one is not alone. Sharing such experiences with loved ones increases the satisfaction, as is exemplified in the Book of Mormon. Examples of such phenomena include Lehi, who tastes of the fruit of the tree of life and desires to share; Enos, who prays for his brethren; and the sons of Mosiah and Alma, who shared their experiences as missionaries following their conversion.

ALONE IN THE



He was a high school boy, working at Scout camp for the summer and proud of his independence. He didn't want to sound mushy in the letter he was writing to the girl who lived next door but he did miss her and wanted her to know. After repeated efforts, he finally mailed the letter in which he glowingly described the mountains and lakes, the forests and streams, the brilliant sun and the gigantic moon seemingly touching the towering peak—and said, “*But, you know, Margie, alone in the moonlight is better when you aren't.*”

In truth, *alone* in any satisfying circumstance, or viewing a stirring sight, or having a moving experience, or becoming acquainted with wonderful people is better when one isn't! All that is good and true and beautiful and satisfying to the soul is infinitely more valuable and desirable when shared with those whom we love; which, in fact, increase with the sharing.

This principle has special meaning and relevance for those who learn the gospel, know the love of God, and get the witness of his Divine Son. Perhaps as well as any source, the Book of Mormon exemplifies this truth.

THE LOVE OF GOD

In the marvelous vision recorded in 1 Nephi, Lehi follows the path which leads to the tree of life, which is a representation of the love of God, tastes the fruit of that tree and calls it “most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted,” and testifies,

“And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceeding great joy.”

Then follows Lehi's wonderful expression of the principle which every child of God must feel when he truly tastes the fruit of the gospel, knows its sweetness, and is filled with the joy of it:

“... wherefore, I began to be desirous that my

BY PRESIDENT MARION D. HANKS



MOONLIGHT!

family should partake of it also;" (See 1 Nephi 8:8-11.)

And he immediately begins to look for his family to share the joy with them.

How many thousands of times has a father, mother, brother, sister, son, or daughter tasted the sweetness of the fruit and at once been moved with the burning desire that "*my family should partake of it also*"? How many neighbors and true friends? How many missionaries? How many converts? In the early days of the Church the convert of one day became the missionary of the next, and under the stimulation of the same spirit that moved them in those days, the story is the same today. Converts season in the Church a little time and then often depart to share with others of God's children, their brothers and sisters, the joy which has filled their souls. The receiving and sharing go on, the kingdom rolls forth, the Spirit increases in the earth, the purposes of God for his children are being accomplished.

ENOS PRAYS

There is further impressive expression of this principle and spirit in the Book of Mormon in the story of Enos, son of Jacob, and there is encouragement also, for earnest parents and teachers who have sought anxiously to teach the gospel to the young without much apparent immediate success. Jacob had taught Enos "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Enos 1) but seemingly had not really reached his son. How unresponsive Enos had been to his father's teaching, or how far from the truth in principle or conduct, or how long he took to get the desire to know for himself and to cry unto the Lord, we can only conjecture, but the story gives us warrant to suppose that Enos had been somewhat far from the faith. One day while (Continued on page 262)

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Alone in the Moonlight

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he was hunting in the forests, the "words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints" sunk deep into his heart, his "soul hungered," and he knelt and cried unto the Lord for a witness and he received it. He heard the voice of the Lord, and was made whole. Enos wrote,

"... when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them." (See Enos, verses 1-9.)

Having freely received, this child of God was moved freely to share the marvelous blessing.

SONS OF MOSIAH

Among other Book of Mormon examples is the moving account of the sons of Mosiah, who, having been "the very vilest of sinners," turned from a course of wickedness and followed the way of truth. Having traveled among their own people in Zarahemla with young Alma "zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church" (Mosiah 27:35), they asked the privilege of going as missionaries among the then unbendingly, antagonistic Lamanites in the land of Nephi to teach and testify to them "that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God." The thought that any of God's children should be denied the sweetness and joy of knowledge, faith, and testimony was unbearable to them, and they turned away from their kingly heritage to follow their faith as missionaries.

It is marvelous to enjoy the sweetness and light and warmth of the gospel, of the love of God, but in truth, *alone* in these things "is better when you aren't!"

People should understand that there is no man born upon the face of the earth but what can be saved in the kingdom of God, if he is disposed to be.—Brigham Young