

*"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."*

- Matthew 13:13

When I married my sweetheart at the age of 19, my journey as a man begun. No more was I to think only of myself, for now I had another human being to care for and to love as much as or even more than I loved myself.

A short time into this journey there came a knock at the door. Two LDS missionaries introduced by my wife's father had brought me a gift. It was a "marvelous work and a wonder". It was called the Book of Mormon. It came in a box.

The interesting thing about this box was its workmanship. It was simple yet had an attractiveness about it that made me want to keep it along with the book. The box was somewhat bigger than the book, but I thought it might be good to keep the book safely stored in it, and there was space for other interesting things that might come a long, so I placed it on my study bookshelf.

The study where the bookshelf was, had a comfortable chair. When time permitted, I would sit in the chair and immerse myself in this Book of Mormon. It felt comfortable reading and pondering and answers to questions came and life was good.

It wasn't long before another wonderful event occurred, the most beautiful that we could have imagined, our first child, a girl. As we continued our journey, four more beautiful events occurred. Two boys and two more girls. Life was good. During this time, experiences in life were learnt, some wonderful and some difficult. When time permitted I was able to sit in the study and read the Book and the chair became even more comfortable.

As the journey continued I noticed some items collecting in this box along with my Book. These items seemed to contradict what was being taught in the book. I don't recall how they got there, only that from time to time one would appear. These items didn't bother me at all as I had plenty of room in the box and the Book of Mormon would fit in the box and cover them easily and I didn't really pay them any attention.

As life went on, being a husband, a father, and serving in the church, I came to rely on the time I could sit in my comfortable chair in the study reading the Book. However more contradictory items appeared in the box. Some of these items appeared when I had helped others struggling in their lives and testimony. Some items I was able to remove and some I could not, but still, they did not bother me greatly, especially after reading the Book in my comfortable chair.

More recently, some larger heavier items were discovered as I helped some of my now adult children with their own struggles. Although there was still enough room in this box for my Book of Mormon, I had noticed that the shelf where the box was kept was starting to sag from the weight of the extra items. For some reason I could not empty out those items that were adding the weight. Now I found that even the Book of Mormon was difficult to put back in the box.

What could I do? Perhaps I could check with the owners of the Book. Yes, they did have an answer to my problem. It came in the mail wrapped in a plain brown wrapper. It didn't have my name addressed on it. There was no name of the sender on the back. It did however have the LDS church logo in the top left corner.

I opened the letter that came with it and it started with "To whom it may concern". There was a lot of information in it that covered a lot of the problem items that were accumulating in my box, but it was so heavy and cumbersome. The information was somewhat vague and confusing, but because it was from the church, and it was to help me with those items in my box, I put it in the box. Now there was an even bigger problem with the shelf. It was significantly bowing now due to the weight. I need-

ed more help.

I went to my leaders in the church and shared my problem with the box on the shelf. They didn't have any immediate answers, but advised me to take the Book of Mormon out of the box and sit in my chair and read it as I had done before. As I did so I started to feel comfortable again. The chair was shaped to my body from all the time I had spent in it in reading the Book of Mormon and once again, I started to feel at ease. But the shelf with the box came into my view. The sagging shelf was so obvious. I couldn't keep my mind on the Book. The problem had to be fixed.

I tried to take the items out of the box so the shelf wouldn't sag. I took out all the items except for the information that the church had sent, but for some reason the church's item was the heaviest item of them all. Hadn't it been put in the box to help me?

Some friends noticed my shelf when they came to visit. They felt sorry for me because they could see that the sagging shelf was out of place in my home. They offered to help. Some provided me with shelf brackets that I could place under the box. It straightened the shelf but the bracket itself became an eyesore and the heavy church item still continued to cause pressure on the shelf.

Church leaders and close friends continued to encourage me to go back to sitting in my chair and read the Book of Mormon. Some suggested that I turn the chair around so that the shelf wasn't in my line of sight. This worked well whilst I sat in my chair reading the Book of Mormon. However, every time I got out of my chair, the unsightly shelf came to view. The only thought that came to my troubled mind was; I must empty that box.