



MY PERSONAL STORY

By Monica Smith

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When my husband Kurt first found *The Sealed Portion* and read it, I didn't want to believe it was true. In fact, at first, I just rejected it altogether. "It can't be right!" I thought. "It can't be! It didn't come from the "proper authority" (The LDS church to which I belonged)!" Kurt read the whole thing, much to my chagrin, in just a few days. He tried a couple of times to share parts with me that really touched him—like when Christ was among the Nephites. I fell asleep listening to him read. I chose to stay in my little box, content that he would find something wrong with it.

I was perfectly happy with my beliefs, my church, my family, and my friends. I was about as Molly Mormon as they come. I was stricter with my kids than most people in the church I knew. For the most part, we had home evening every week, said every meal prayer before eating, had family prayer daily, and held nightly family scripture study, reading through the Book of Mormon about 8 times in 8 years. (While going from 4 to 7 children at the same time.) We had decided to homeschool the kids to keep them from many of the "evils of the world." On Sundays, we didn't watch anything but LDS church movies, and didn't let the kids jump on the trampoline, ride bikes, or play with their friends. We attended every single activity and event that the church put on, and would attend all 3 hours of church whenever we traveled. We studied the Gospel Essentials handbook as a family and sat on the very front row at church—even up to the week we left for good.) We almost never watched anything "worse" than PG, and didn't even really watch much TV. We paid our tithing on every penny that came into our house. We were the "golden LDS family."

I was happy. I wasn't seeking for the truth. I wasn't searching for anything at all—or so I thought.

Books have always played a big part in my life. I grew up loving the library and reading and books in general. I got in a bad book-buying habit after I'd been married a few years and acquired a library of my own of thousands of books. I had been part of many book discussion groups, and at the time we came upon *The Sealed Portion*, I was leading a group of about 25 women in bi-monthly discussions. I never imagined one book would change my life so drastically.

Kurt was convinced *The Sealed Portion* was true, and had given it to me to read on his Palm Pilot on a road trip to a family baby blessing. I was a captive audience for several hours, and consented to read. My original plan for the trip had been to read

the Book of Mormon, to complete (what I thought at the time was) the prophet's challenge to read it all the way through by the end of the year.

Instead, I read *The Sealed Portion* though—all the way there and all the way back on the trip. Per Kurt's suggestion, I didn't read the Book of Lehi to start with, but just started on *The Sealed Portion* chapter one. Sunday morning I read TSP chapter 12:25-35. In these verses, Moroni compares the Zoramites in the Book of Mormon (who stood upon the tower one at a time to speak in their synagogue) to the members of the LDS church. I then went to an LDS ward for the baby blessing and "fast and testimony meeting." WHEW! Was that ever an eye-opener! There I was, seeing right before my very eyes the truth about the church and the people in it (me being one), and I couldn't believe it.

After the family festivities, we drove back home. I had not mentioned *anything* to anyone in my family—not even to my own kids. I just read and kept it all to myself. Everything in the first chapters had seemed to make a lot of sense to me. I specifically remember learning about the dinosaurs and how they fit in the big picture. It just all made sense.

On the way home, I was again reading TSP Chapter 12 through the end of the chapter. Moroni talks all about temples:

- 36 And I, Moroni, have seen the manner in which the leaders of this church in the latter days present the Holy Endowment unto the people. And after the people have paid their money to the church, and after the church hath taken this money and constructed all manner of fine temples and adorned them with the fine things of the world; yea, even after they have done all these things, they shall prohibit those who are poor and needy, even those who are unable to comply with the requirements of the church, from receiving this endowment.
- 37 And they have changed the ordinance of the Lord and have broken his everlasting covenant. They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol that they do worship, instead of worshiping the Lord and doing the things that he hath commanded them.

The timing could not have been more "perfect" (or worse for me at the time). We happened to be driving by the string of LDS temples along the Wasatch front. I began to cry my eyes out--in secrecy, right there riding in the suburban with my husband and kids. I then came up against some things that I totally rejected. I literally "spewed" them out of my mouth after reading them. I got to somewhere in chapter 16 and stopped—dead in my tracks. I put the book down and said there was no way it was right. Absolutely no way. I could not reconcile what I read with my beliefs of the time.

For about 6 weeks, I went back into my cozy little way of life, content with *my own* truth and reality. In the meantime, Kurt read the Book of Mormon all the way

through to see if it matched with what he had read in TSP. Then he began to read *The Sealed Portion* again. All this while, I was just literally sick to my stomach every time I saw the "blue screen," or *The Sealed Portion* website on his computer screen across the living room.

I was pregnant at the time with my 7th child, and had the hardest time believing that the baby growing inside of me did not have a spirit in it, since its heart was beating, and it was constantly moving around. My belief was that if the body moved, surely it already had a spirit. Turned out I was wrong, and the temple endowment (which I didn't understand) was right. I also struggled with the concept that we (I) had ever had another mortal life, much less many lives.

I had my baby, and 5 days later, Kurt went to the first SLC symposium in Dec of 2005—through a huge snowstorm. I thought that if Heavenly Father wanted to deter Kurt from being "deceived," that this surely was NOT the way to do it. Kurt would never change his plans because of a little (or a lot of) snow. Driving in the snow had never bothered him. While he was gone, I had a conversation with someone I highly respected, and had my "testimony" of the truth of the LDS church confirmed. (Or so I thought.)

I assumed Kurt would come home from the symposium and it would be all over with. Boy, was I ever wrong. He was sure it was true. No one knew we had found *The Sealed Portion*. No one knew what I was going through. I felt all alone. Thus began my journey through "hell." All that month, I turned everything over and over in my mind. I shed buckets of tears and wore out Kurt's ears talking to him. I trusted him though. I knew that he knew the scriptures and the gospel, and I trusted him with all my heart. Day after day, I tried to reconcile the *real truth* with my "old beliefs." I just couldn't do it.

It has been said, "Those who do not approach this work with a *broken heart and a contrite spirit* are not those who are truly searching for the truth, for they believe they already have it."

This fit me to a tee. My flesh fought, and fought hard, trying to reconcile the "new wine" with the "old." My heart literally became broken. I felt sorry for my beliefs. I regretted being so deceived my whole life and not even knowing it, and I "repented" for my vain imaginations and the "evil" thoughts in my head. My spirit became contrite. I read the Book of Mormon in the month of December. Then came my moment of "looking at the serpent."

I had told myself my whole life that if I had lived in the time of Moses, that I definitely would have "looked." I would have looked at the staff in order to be healed from the serpent's bites. "How hard could that be?" I thought.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

So on December 22, 2005, I began reading *The Sealed Portion*, with the decision to read the whole thing from front to back this time. "It's only a book." I thought. "Only a book—words on a page, and I will know. When I finish, I will know whether it is true or not." This time I started with the Book of Lehi. The information stunned me.

Needless to say, I found *The Sealed Portion* to be true. Reading was like being baptized and born again. As the pages of Moroni's words unwound the old beliefs in my brain, I slowly began to be "immersed." I was amazed at what was revealed. Sometimes I was so excited, I just wanted to shout, "The Sealed Portion has been translated! It's really here!" The atonement of Jesus Christ finally made sense. The meaning of the temple endowment was absolutely incredible. The history of the earth laid out in one fell swoop was remarkable. Christ's visit among the Nephites brought me to tears.

Sometimes the truth was hard for me to handle. It was hard for me to swallow that living the gospel could be so easy. "All I have to do is Do Unto Others What I Would Want Them To Do Unto Me?" That seemed way too simplistic, and definitely not *hard* enough. I remember praying on my knees one day and bawling, wondering, "Who in the heck is answering my prayers? God is far away. Is it Adam in the spirit world?" I found something that helped me through those hard-to-handle times though. We heated our home with wood, and I had a stack of old Church News newspapers that I would start the fires with. As I read Moroni's words, and compared what he said with the newspapers, the truth stared me back in the face. It was unbelievable. As the papers would go up in flames, I imagined burning all my messed-up old beliefs for good.

It took me about 2 1/2 weeks to read the whole book between caring for my family and a new baby. Before I was even finished, we decided to leave the church. I could not deny the book. I felt like Joseph Smith: "I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it." We still had not told anyone, including our children (the oldest being 14 at the time). Everything had happened so fast, that we decided to go ahead and bless our baby in the ward; the same week our oldest daughter received her YW medallion. I was so scared to tell my extended family, and thought that I wouldn't have to for some time, seeing as how they all lived so far away.

Leaving the church was a very hard decision for me to make, but I knew that we couldn't stay. The church had been my whole life. In fact, I didn't have much of a life *outside* of the church. Yet, we knew that when we told our kids, they would not keep quiet, and once we began to teach them the truths in the TSP, it just wouldn't work. (Our kids were quite verbal in their comments, and we didn't want to infringe on anybody else's free agency.) We told the oldest 2 girls on a Friday that Sunday would be our last day. We told the younger kids after church. I thought it would be harder for

them since it had been so difficult for me. Instead, it was a relief for them, and a big party and a “Wa-hoo!!” for a few. They knew the truth using their *common sense*.

As Kurt tells in his story, we did tell the Bishop since we were both in Presidencies in the time, and felt we should for the integrity of our own sakes. We left with a bang. We scared the whole valley. They wanted to hold a church court within a week, but we opted out by writing a letter asking for our names to be removed from the records of the church. We didn’t feel we needed to waste anyone’s time, and also guessed that they wanted to make an example out of us by ex-communication.

In the meantime, our families found out, and it was quite an eventful first few weeks. Needless to say, they were upset. (That is definitely an understatement.) No one would read the book though. The phone soon became silent, and pretty much everyone was too scared to even talk to us. A few tried to convince us of our error (I’m sure many thought we were “the very elect being deceived”). We would just smile. It didn’t matter what anyone thought or said. We had read the book and we knew it was true. Every fiber of my being knew it was true.

I am happy to have found the truth. Happy that I decided to read the book. It is The Sealed Portion, the final testament of Jesus Christ. No man or woman alive can ever convince me otherwise.

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