

# Come Follow Me Dialogue Gospel Study: Alma 36-38

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## Introduction:

Good morning everyone. I sincerely hope you are all well and staying safe as we experience the global Covid-19 pandemic together. I acknowledge those who are facing the associated economic storm and I am mindful of those who are left wanting. To those who have lost loved ones, I extend my arms in empathy and mourn with you. I am so very sorry.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to be your Dialogue Gospel Study instructor today! I bring you warm greetings from the margins, as a refugee of the faith. I thought I might begin with an introduction about my background and of Affirmation for those who are unfamiliar with it. I have had the honor to be a part of Affirmation's leadership for the past five years, with the last year and a half as the elected president.

Affirmation is a 43 year old LGBTQ led organization of and for The One. We stand squarely in the pressure-cooker of the LGBTQ/Latter-day Saint intersection, providing first-aid for those who feel acute rejection and loss. We are best known for building worldwide communities of safety, love and hope.

Most importantly, we have a lot of fun. You put a bunch of LGBTQ Mormons in a room together and within five minutes we are the best of friends and already planning our next activity. Our Mormon heritage experiences are the ties that bind, whether we are in the church, out of the church, or all points in between. It is such a great network to be a part of! Affirmation not only ties us together today, but it connects the generations of LGBTQ peers who have each taken their turn over the years creating a life-saving space in the LGBTQ/Latter-day Saint intersection. How each generation does this is unique to the current social landscape of the time. And this landscape is rapidly changing both in society and in the church.

You might be interested to know some of our latest findings from our strategic planning survey gathered in May of this year. It gives a more complete picture of who we are than what can be gleaned from our occasional appearance in the Ensign or in curated profiles on a church website.

In our survey, we had 320 respondents who participate in Affirmation's communities and programs. This was the largest ever response in our history. Here are a few interesting highlights:

### Affirmation Strategic Planning Survey Highlights: Intersection with the Church

Church membership	Current member: 71% Resigned member: 13% Excommunicated or Membership withdrawn: 9% Never a member: 4%	71% are members of the church
Belief	Strongly believe: 24% Believe: 26% Somewhat believe: 28% Disbelieve: 11% Strongly disbelieve: 3%	88% hold some sort of belief in the doctrines of the church
Activity/Attendance	Not active: 41% Somewhat active: 19% Active: 21% Extremely active: 17%	60% are not active or have low activity

(Interesting observations: More people hold some sort of belief in the doctrines of the Church than are members of the Church. Note that despite belief and membership, 60% are not active or have low activity. The high belief to lower activity ratio can indicate that we are looking at refugees from the faith, who are in the margins finding it not safe to attend.)

### Affirmation Strategic Planning Survey Highlights: What is Important for our Members? (For Affirmation to be doing)

Importance of constructive engagement with church leadership in SLC	High to extreme importance: 76% Moderate importance: 13% (89%)	See us
Importance that Affirmation and its leaders publicly advocate for LGBTQ issues, fairness, inclusion and affirmation in the media	High to extreme importance: 81% Moderate importance: 12% (93%)	Advocate for us (Publicly)
Importance that Affirmation partners with interfaith and community LGBTQ organizations	High to extreme importance: 76% Moderate importance: 17% (93%)	Connect us

And finally, a disclaimer: In Affirmation, we do not prescribe a path, but affirm and trust the self-determination of each individual as they define their own spirituality in ways that feel safe and peaceful for them. This latitude of self-determination even extends to me, as president. Because of this, the things I will talk about today as we cover Alma 36-38 come from my experiences and the thoughts are my own. They do not represent Affirmation. Instead, they become a part of the dialogue and not dogma. And this is the beauty of Affirmation's capacious tent: we are in continuous dialogue.

So let us begin the dialogue.

## How did we get to Alma 36?

In today's text, Mormon pauses his abridged narrative and inserts a primary source. Alma chapters 36-42 are Alma's commandments to his three sons, Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton, transferred from Alma's personal handwritten records made 300 years earlier.

For me, this signals that Mormon felt that the primary source was extremely valuable. But what does this mean for a historian? My husband is a historian of early modern France and the Catholic reformation. I asked him, "At what point in your writings would you feel to quote a primary source verbatim?" For Matt, he includes a primary source when the syntax could not be summarized more effectively than the original. Most importantly, original text is included when the text is linguistically powerful and attempts to "put it in my own words" would diminish its effectiveness and force.

Therefore, this inclusion is Mormon's *nota bene* to us as we proceed.

So how did we get to this very important pause in Mormon's narrative?

Alma had just assembled an all-star missionary team to reclaim the Zoramites. Who is on this team tells you of both the difficulty and importance of the task at hand.

Alma included:

1. Ammon, Aaron, and Omner: Three of the four the sons of Mosiah who were wildly successful in their mission to the Lamanites and with King Lamoni.
2. Amuleck: a heavy hitter pick-up from Alma's mission in Melek.
3. Zeezrom: First described as a "child of hell" by Alma, he was converted in Ammoniha by Alma, going from zero to hero in about a year's time.
4. And finally, rounding out the roster, Alma's two younger sons, Shiblon and Corianton.

Despite the team, their past, and their combined experiences, they still were astonished "beyond measure" by the Zoramites. The team was eventually successful in destroying the Zoramite priestcraft, but as we know, anytime you destroy a machine there is intense pushback. And in this instance a worst case scenario occurred: war erupts and refugees were created.

This is not the outcome Alma desired or even planned for, and it grieved him deeply. He had assembled the best of the best and labored intensely knowing "that the word of God had a more powerful effect upon the minds of a people than the sword." And yet here, it had failed. It is at this point we pivot from the missionary chapters in Alma to the war chapters. It is at this highly important junction in the narrative that Mormon inserts Alma's own words to his sons.

Alma is now facing a tragic and momentous loss, watching his people descend into what will become a 20 year war. It is here, in great sorrow, that he gathers his sons to speak with them.

As a father, I so get this.

When the November 5<sup>th</sup> policy was leaked to the world, I was sitting on my couch doing nothing particularly important,

Until the day I die I will remember the enveloping darkness as my curiosity turned to a crushing disbelief as the news of the exclusion policy began continuously rolling through my newsfeed. This handbook change preventing the children of same sex married couples from being baptized and branding same sex couples apostates, was so unbelievable that I initially dismissed it as an obviously sensationalized story. It wasn't scriptural. It wasn't kind. It wasn't doctrinal. I had an instant testimony that it wasn't true.

My church could never do this to children... to my children. This was not the church I knew.

But it was real.

So I get why Alma caused that his sons be gathered together at that point in time. As a parent, when things look dark, you do think of your children and desire to gather them in and share wisdom and insight as you comfort them.

On Sunday November the 8<sup>th</sup>, I gathered my three sons together after church. It was a tender moment to talk with them about the policy, my experiences in the church, and the humility and grandness of Christ forgiving those who "know not what they do." It was a sacred moment, as I held back tears, and worked through a conversation when my youngest son asked me, "Why would they want to do that to us?"

It was at that moment, really, that we became a refugee family.

So it is from this mindset of sorrow and grief that we begin Alma 36.

### Alma 36: Repentance leads us to be born again

In Alma 36 we are privileged to hear Alma's conversion story in first person, where he declares that he was born of God. We got the gist of his conversion story when Mormon summarized it in his own words back in Mosiah 27 as Mormon was moving the story along in the timeline narrative. Mormon the historian provided a very objective observation of Alma's experience, but now we get to hear "the rest of the story" in first person.

As a clinician, I work from a diagnosis. Any procedure I undertake, I must first have a diagnosis that supports my actions. Sometimes we do not know enough information to make a full diagnosis, but rather than sit around watching you deteriorate, we have enough information to form a working diagnosis and we can begin treatment as we wait for more information.

If I were to happen upon Alma right as he was waking from his three days of unconsciousness and hear him speak, I could reasonably form a working diagnosis that indeed Alma had been born of God.

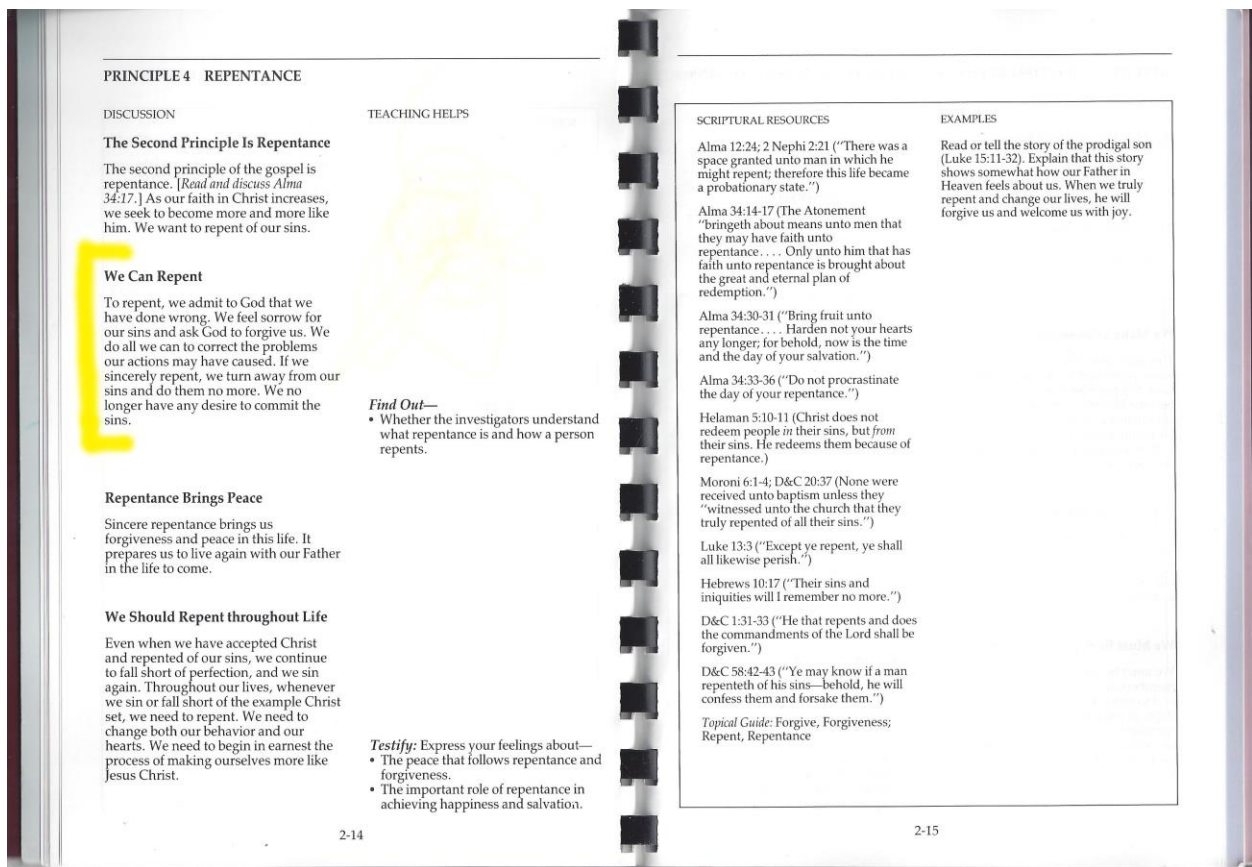
However, every diagnosis relies on two components. Yes, there is an objective component that we can measure, but a diagnosis is also reached by a subjective component as well. The subjective is the

patient's experience, in their own words. It is their personal narrative on what they are experiencing and how they are experiencing it. This is a necessary, even mandatory, component, along with the objective to reach a diagnosis. I find subjective observations critical in reaching a diagnosis.

All too often we reduce the process of repentance and being born of God to objective measures. We like lists. We like recipes, we like conditions to meet. I testify that repentance is not transactional.

In primary we are objectively taught the four "R"s of repentance: Recognize, Remorse, Restitution, and Resolve. Most certainly you can find these four "R"s easily in Alma's repentance story.

As missionaries we again objectively teach the four "R"s. Both in the 1986 standardized six discussions I used in Alabama,



as well as in the Preach my Gospel for missionaries today.

repent, we feel godly sorrow and return to Him with full purpose of heart. We stop doing things that are wrong and continue doing things that are right. Bringing our lives in line with God's will through repentance and faith on Jesus Christ is a central purpose of our lives. We can return to live with God the Father only through Christ's grace and mercy, and we receive Christ's mercy on the condition of repentance.

To repent, we recognize our sins and feel remorse, or godly sorrow. We confess our sins to God. We also confess very serious sins to God's authorized Church leaders, who will support us as we truly repent. We ask God to forgive us. We do all we can to correct the problems our actions may have caused; this is called restitution. As we repent, our view of ourselves and the world changes. As we change, we recognize that we are children of God and that we need not continue making the same mistakes over and over. If we sincerely repent, we turn away from our sins and do them no more. We resist any desire to commit sin. Our desire to follow God grows stronger and deeper.

Sincere repentance brings several results. We feel God's forgiveness and His peace in our lives. Our guilt and sorrow are swept away. We feel the influence of the Spirit in greater abundance. And when we pass from this life, we will be more prepared to live with our Heavenly Father and His Son.

Even after we have accepted Christ and repented of our sins, we may fall short and sin

Certainly we are very familiar with the four "R"s . This is the information that we intake new members with.

This reinforces the objective nature of the work. It's a "teach me all that I must do, to live with Him someday" model that at times introduces shame because the focus is on the sin, recognizing the sin, paying for your sin, and avoiding sin. If only there was something more uplifting to focus on than sin.

This is why I appreciate Alma's subjective experience, told in his own words, as a critical part of the diagnosis of being born of God. Are the four "R"s found in Alma's story? Absolutely. But we get the critical component from Alma that is missing from objective repentance.

As we read Alma's words in Alma 36: 16-20, pick out this critical component.

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the <sup>a</sup>pains of a <sup>b</sup>damned soul.

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus <sup>a</sup>racked with torment, while I was <sup>b</sup>harrowed up by the <sup>c</sup>memory of my many sins, behold, I <sup>d</sup>remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, <sup>a</sup>have mercy on me, who am <sup>b</sup>in the <sup>c</sup>gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting <sup>d</sup>chains of <sup>e</sup>death.

19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my <sup>a</sup>pains <sup>b</sup>no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

20 And oh, what <sup>a</sup>joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

Being born of God involves Christ; there is no repentance without Christ. In Alma's experience, between recognition and remorse and then restitution and resolve, Christ is in the middle of it all.

How we intersect with Christ is the very tender and sacred subjective experience that is the essence of being born of God. The four "R"s of Primary and the missionary discussions, the bishop assignments as he works with you after a confession—are all objective measurements, measurable signs, however they are but tools, some useful, some not.

The key is involving Christ. And that is sacredly subjective. More powerful than lists.

Christ is not our jailer, Christ is our Liberator!

By focusing on Christ, repentance becomes a Christ-centered rethinking.

Perhaps we have all felt this, you feel yourself so broken that you cannot fix yourself. And even after competent professional help for the physical and mental brokenness, there is still a part of you that nobody else can fix. You hit rock bottom. You call out. And then you feel the reach of the divine. It is the divine that fixes you. It is the love of Christ that burns in your heart, and it comforts you, loves you, changes you, transforms you. The four "R"s don't fix you, it is Christ that heals.

How does Christ do this?

In Alma 36, Alma (a.k.a. Alma the Younger) is teaching his son Helaman that Christ is the key to being born again by recounting his own conversion story. Like father, like son, Alma heard his father's own conversion story. Alma's father was one of the priests who sat with King Noah and listened to a chained Abinidi call Noah to repentance. Alma's father was the only priest who believed Abinadi.

Did Abinidi recite the four "R"s of repentance? No, but he does lay out the 10 commandments, and then Abinidi pivots and says that salvation does not come from the law of Moses. He then teaches Noah Isaiah chapter 53, the high point of Isaiah, where he teaches how Christ is essential for repentance and being born of God:

Mosiah 14: 4-12

4 Surely he has <sup>a</sup>borne our <sup>b</sup>griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was <sup>a</sup>wounded for our <sup>b</sup>transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are <sup>c</sup>healed.

6 All we, like <sup>a</sup>sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he <sup>a</sup>opened not his mouth; he is brought as a <sup>b</sup>lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the <sup>a</sup>rich in his death; because he had done no <sup>b</sup>evil, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to <sup>a</sup>bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his <sup>b</sup>seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall <sup>a</sup>bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the <sup>a</sup>great, and <sup>b</sup>he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sins of many, and made <sup>c</sup>intercession for the transgressors.

This is the powerful Christ that Alma the Younger remembers hearing about from his father. This is the Christ that is right in the center of being born again.

Our brokenness is swallowed up in Christ. Literally swallowed up in Christ. And it is at this realization that we comprehend that our souls will not be left in hell, and as Alma said, that he would not be banished and become extinct both soul and body. Christ overcomes this and is at the center of it all. It happens to each one of us very subjectively, and is essential in our declaration, our own diagnosis, that we are born of God!

Let me pose a question: What are some practical ways that you write Christ into your repentance?

As we wait for answers, let me give my own.

In Alma 36:17 Alma recounts that, "As I was racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered..." What did he remember? He remembered Jesus Christ. The teachings of Isaiah as given by Abinadi, passed through Alma the Elder to Alma the Younger. This is the power of the word of God unto repentance.

We have a weekly opportunity to write Christ into our continual rethinking when we partake of the sacrament.

The sacrament prayer in Doctrine and Covenants 20:77 reads:

77 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this <sup>a</sup>bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and <sup>b</sup>witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his <sup>c</sup>commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his <sup>d</sup>Spirit to be with them. Amen.



If we are going to think of the four “R”s, add a fifth one: Remember. Remember Christ. Remembering Christ is living like Christ and is central to being born of God.

So, what are some ways you write Christ into your repentance?

### Alma 37: The wise purpose of scriptures

Now let’s continue with Alma’s words to Helaman. In Alma 37, Alma entrusts Helaman with the text—all the records of the nation.

The scriptures provide a text. These are words.

Nephi knows something about writing text. In 1<sup>st</sup> Nephi 19 he started the whole Nephite civilization record keeping process that Alma is handing down to his son Helaman 650 years later. Nephi made small and large plates to write on. He also had the brass plates which he would teach his brethren from. In 1 Nephi 19:22-23 Nephi teaches how to read the text:

22 Now it came to pass that I, Nephi, did teach my brethren these things; and it came to pass that I did read many things to them, which were engraven upon the <sup>a</sup>plates of brass, that they might know concerning the doings of the Lord in other lands, among people of old.

23 And I did read many things unto them which were written in the <sup>a</sup>books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet <sup>b</sup>Isaiah; for I did <sup>c</sup>liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our <sup>d</sup>profit and learning.

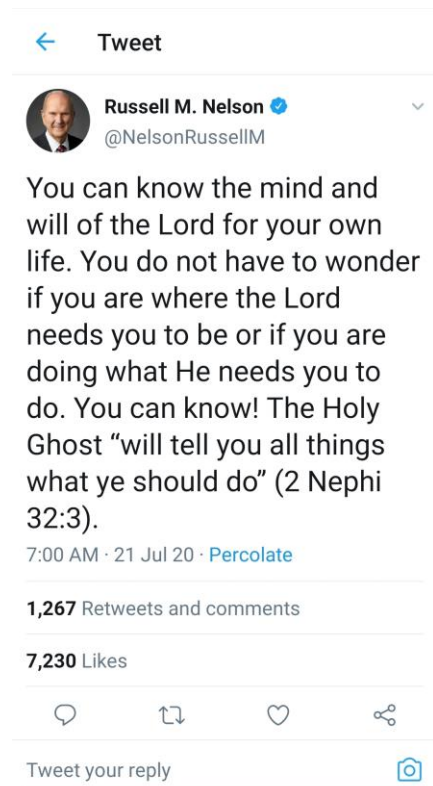
Nephi knew that while scripture is text, text comes alive when we liken the scriptures to ourselves and our own lives and our own experiences.

Like Proverbs teaches (5:15) we drink waters out of our own cistern, and running waters out of our own well. Draw waters from our own experiences.

Now we know how to approach the text, what is it that breathes life into the text?

The Holy Ghost.

President Russell M. Nelson spoke to this in his latest Tweet



Revelation breathes life into text. In 1829 as recorded in section 8 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reveals to Oliver Cowdery as he is trying to interpret scriptural text, that the Holy Ghost will come upon you and dwell in your heart and this is revelation.

Then in Section 9 the Lord shed more light on the subject: you study it out first, then ask God, and if you are right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you.

People worry, especially LGBTQ people who may not feel particularly worthy, that they do not have access to the Holy Ghost any longer, thus disqualifying them from personal revelation. It is of note that these instructions were given to Oliver the month before he was baptized. And even then he did not yet have the power of laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This was conferred later, probably months later.

However, the instructions were abundantly clear that the Holy Ghost was available as a part of revelation accessible to him. All of us can understand and liken the scriptures unto ourselves. When you are lacking in wisdom and seeking answers, you can access the divine to know for yourself what is true and know what is right for your life. The entire restoration started with a question, so question. God appreciates questions. Study, ask God. Liken the scriptures unto yourself. Personal revelation is the power of self-determination. You can know from the Lord where you need to be and what you need to do.

Alma then goes on to list the sacred items he is entrusting Helaman:

1. Plates of Nephi (reserved for a wise purpose)
2. Brass Plates (so a nation would not perish)
3. 24 plates of Ether (Danger, for prophets eyes only)
4. Urum and Thumin (to interpret it all)
5. The Liahona. The Liahona is for day-to-day guidance in the physical world. It shows you how and where to travel. It is a compass. It works when we exercise faith. We don't have a Liahona today, but Alma say that for us the Liahona is a type and a shadow for the words of Christ. The words of Christ are our own Liahona. These words point us to our promised land.

The words of Christ are found in the scriptures and it is found in personal revelation through the Holy Spirit. Personal revelation is where Alma intersected with Christ. Nurture this and you will know the way to go in your day to day life. And for my LGBTQ peers, this day-to-day journey is your hero's journey. As you encounter the current dominant narrative in the church about LGBTQ people, you may feel as if you are broken and not whole.

And at some point in your [Hero's journey](#), either in or out of the closet, you will encounter a mentor, a teacher, or even a sage who will pose to you this critical question: "Who told you that you were broken?"

Listen to them. It is a godly question.

For you are not broken, and as an LGBTQ Christian only your heart needs be.

["When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are."](#)

And what you are is a whole and healthy child of Heavenly Parents who love you.

Your choices will define you, but never, ever, ever let others define you. You will encounter many choices as an LGBTQ Latter-day Saint, but when a choice is placed before you ALWAYS question who or what is doing the placing of that choice. When our hearts break completely open to the Spirit of God we are capable of personal revelation and guidance in our choices. It is a gift of the restoration.

As an LGBTQ Latter-day Saint you are not broken. You may stand tall in the great heritage of Saints who gift a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Such is the privilege of every Christian in every age.

### Alma 38: Share your conversion

Lastly, lets' talk about Shiblón. Shiblón gets just one chapter dedicated for him. (Typical middle child)

Helaman as the oldest child has two chapters, is privy to his father's conversion experience, and is entrusted with the records. Then Corianton, being the youngest, is so filling the stereotypical youngest child role, with 4 chapters entreating him to take things seriously and repent.

In Alma 38, we have something very precious to take away from Shiblon's chapter. As you know, Helaman was not with his father during the mission to the Zoramites. So we see Alma reference the Zoramite experience with Shiblon.

This is the mark of a great teacher, where Alma utilized the shared frame of reference to teach from a common experience.

So Alma draws upon this remarkable experience with the Zoramites to teach Shiblon. He commends Shiblon for his faithfulness, diligence, patience, and long suffering with the Zoramites. Then he shares the secret to rise above one's afflictions

Alma 38:5-6

5 And now my son, Shiblon, I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your <sup>a</sup>trust in God even so much ye shall be <sup>b</sup>delivered out of your trials, and your <sup>c</sup>troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

6 Now, my son, I would not that ye should think that I know these things of myself, but it is the Spirit of God which is in me which maketh these things known unto me; for if I had not been <sup>a</sup>born of God I should not have known these things.

Let's face it, you are going to see a lot of crazy things in this life. Things that will leave you astonished, possibly beyond measure. However, when you put your trust in God you will be delivered out of your trials, your troubles, and your afflictions. We know this because we have written Christ into our lives, we have written the text upon our hearts, and we have exercised faith so that the Holy Spirit will guide us with the words of Christ in our everyday travels. The Liahona is not going to move mountains on your journey, but it will show you how to take them on and summit successfully.

At the end of the chapter, we learn how to intersect with those in the margins. The Zoramites had a problem with the margins and created refugees because of it. What can we learn from this experience for our LGBTQ siblings who are in the margins of the faith today?

Alma teaches Shiblon to not be like the Zoramites:

14 Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are <sup>a</sup>better than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my <sup>b</sup>unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy—yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.

To be like Christ, focus on the margins. He did. Be inclusive, welcome all. Stop for the wounded on your road to Jerico. There is so much focus right now on the law of God. But as the lawgiver, God giveth and God taketh away. As with our Black siblings in 1978, it will require a revelation akin to Peter's vision

concerning the Gentiles, to see LGBTQ people in the church as full and equal, to hear that “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common, for God is no respecter of persons.”

As an LGBTQ person, like Alma, we may subjectively and absolutely know that we have been born of God, and our experiences (as rich as Alma’s) confirm this to our souls, but it is the prophets who must objectively see it also before there is equality within the church.

We did not get Alma’s born again experience with Mormon’s narrative in Mosiah. We learned of this sacred moment from Alma himself much later on in the narrative. And prophets wrestle with God in their objectivity just as we do, if not more so. And as they do, good people caught in the transition are hurting and require our aid and care. So the best thing at the moment for LGBTQ people, if you feel safe to do so, is to share your experiences. Share your sacred and tender Alma experiences with all who will listen. These are “the rest of the story” experiences that members need to hear.

And in the meantime, this is a **moment** to mourn for the great loss to the Church, for every precious LGBTQ soul who leaves because they cannot see the same Christ outside the closet as they witnessed in the closet. As Elder Kearon so powerfully stated in his 2016 April General Conference address, “This **moment** does not define the refugees, but our response will help define us.

What will your response be?

To my LGBTQ peers in the faith: You are the small and simple things by which great things shall be brought to pass. And this will happen no matter where you find it safe to stand.

And finally, for my fellow saints in the diverse body of Christ:

It is unclear if we as an LGBTQ people are given or driven to the margins of faith,

But this much is clear:

We are your children and we asked for bread.

When you gave us a stone, we didn’t expect it to be cast at us.

We will always be with you, see us!

We continually wash upon your shores as waves,

Born to families to bless you

When you did not realize you were in need of blessing.

And the blessing of waves shapes shorelines

And tides bring life

To the everlasting lands

Of the Kingdom of God.

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And this I leave with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen