

More Than a **SCRIPTURE JOURNAL**

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"Hi, my name is Robbie. I'm a senior in high school. Last night I had the inspiration that I need to write in a journal, so that's what I'll do. I kinda have already, but I'm hit-and-miss on random pieces of paper."

Setting a Duty to God goal to keep a scripture-reading journal brought all kinds of unexpected blessings.

This was the first official entry in Robbie S.'s journal. "It just kind of started like that," Robbie says, "and then it started to transform, and I started to figure out why I needed to keep a journal."

Robbie explains that he used to think keeping a journal was just for posterity, but then as he read in the scriptures each day and actually wrote down the impressions and ideas that came to him as he read, an important discovery came to him: "When I started to read my scriptures and write in my journal at the same time, I figured out that's one way you receive revelation."

The Plan

Since ninth grade, Robbie had been consistently reading from the scriptures, but it was after turning to the "Pray and Study the Scriptures" section in *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* that he decided to transform his scripture *reading* into scripture *study*. He set

a goal to read from the Book of Mormon every day and write in a journal about what he had read and about his day. Robbie liked how he could set his own goals in *Duty to God*. He says it was more personal and he felt like he was doing more than just checking off boxes to earn an award. "I really like that *Duty to God* is something you do your whole life," he adds.

The Blessings Begin

"As I studied the scriptures and wrote things in my journal afterward, I would look down at what I had written and say, 'That is not me who wrote that.' It was personal inspiration given directly to me from God. I have received answers to prayers and counsel for my life on things that I need to do better. I had no idea revelation worked that way."

Keeping the journal has changed Robbie in profound ways, like helping him recognize personal revelation in his



Robbie (center) and his brothers, Scott (left) and Josh (right), have all been blessed by faithfully reading the scriptures and keeping a journal.

life, but also in smaller, everyday ways, like helping him reach out to others at school. Another entry in his journal is a good example of how reading a specific passage in the Book of Mormon prompted Robbie to change his behavior. The entry reads:

"Beware of pride. I just started 4 Nephi today, and I need to be careful of pride. And I need to try to befriend more people and talk to more people in school."

So Robbie decided to sit by people at lunch who didn't have anyone to sit with. He also made it a point to meet new people at school each week. From this experience, Robbie learned that "when you forget yourself, you can make a big difference in people's lives."

Robbie is now off to meet new people and make a difference in their lives on a larger scale. He is currently serving a full-time mission in Kyiv, Ukraine.

All in the Family

Even before Robbie went on a mission, the impact of his example was not just on friends at school—it was also much closer to home. Robbie's brother Scott, who is now a priest, decided to follow his brother's example and made a plan to read his scriptures every day and to also keep a scripture journal. Scott wanted to experience the same kinds of blessings he saw Robbie enjoying. Scott faithfully reads from the Old Testament in the morning to match his seminary schedule, and then he reads

from the Book of Mormon in the evening. Like Robbie, he says his *Duty to God* plans have helped strengthen him and bring him closer to the Savior.

"I can see a big difference in how I handle things throughout the school day," says Scott. "I just feel happy, and I feel clean and pure. It gives me more assurance that I'm doing the right thing."

And the pattern of example is continuing in the family. As part of the "Learn, Act, Share" process in *Duty to God*, Scott shared his testimony of scripture study with his younger brother, Josh, who is a deacon. Scott wrote him this note to encourage him to read the scriptures:

"Josh, I don't know if you have started reading the Book of Mormon by yourself or not. But if you haven't, I would challenge you to start. The Book of Mormon has been a huge influence on strengthening my testimony. I know that it is the word of God. I love you and want to be with you forever in the celestial kingdom. I know that my life has been blessed through the teachings of the Book of Mormon, and yours can be too."



WRITE DOWN YOUR IMPRESSIONS

"Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely," *Ensign*, June 2002, 32.

Now, Josh has set a plan in *Duty to God* to read his scriptures every day and to keep a scripture journal—following the examples of both his older brothers.

What started as a "study the scriptures" plan for one young man has not only enriched his own scripture study, but it has also helped the rest of his family experience the joy that scripture study can bring. Robbie's study plan has become much more than just a scripture-reading journal. **NE**