



# The Scriptures, the Most Valuable Library in the World

*God has given us the holy scriptures to help us  
and our families prepare for eternal life.*

## From the Life of George Albert Smith

Late in his life, President George Albert Smith recalled an experience from his youth when a passage of scripture had a long-lasting effect on him: “When I was about fourteen years of age, I read the fortieth chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon in our Sunday School class. It made an impression on my mind that has been helpful when death has taken loved ones away. . . . It is one place in the scriptures that tells us where our spirits go when they leave this body [see verses 11–14], and I have wanted to go to that place called paradise ever since.”<sup>1</sup> [See suggestion 1 on page 109.]

President Smith hoped others would have their own meaningful experiences reading the scriptures. In his public discourses and his personal interactions with others, he encouraged everyone to study the scriptures as a way to build their own testimonies of the gospel. Once, while traveling by train, he started a conversation with a man who was raised in a Latter-day Saint family but was no longer participating in the Church. “As we visited,” he later said, “I talked to him about the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . And he said as we discussed the principles of the gospel, ‘These things interest me.’ We visited quite a long time, and when we finished, that good man, I believe he was a good man, said to me, ‘I would give all that I possess to have the assurance that you have. . . .’

“I said, ‘My brother, you don’t have to give all that you possess to have that assurance. All you have to do is to search the scriptures prayerfully. Go where they may be explained to you. Seek the truth,

and the beauty of the truth will appeal to you, and . . . you can know as I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Living God.’”<sup>2</sup>

## **Teachings of George Albert Smith**

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### **The truths contained in the scriptures are far more valuable than the philosophies of men.**

The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, do not contain the wisdom of men alone, but of God. While they do not find their way into the homes of many people, they contain the word of the Lord. What mattereth it, though we understand Homer and Shakespeare and Milton, and I might enumerate all the great writers of the world; if we have failed to read the scriptures we have missed the better part of this world’s literature.

My brethren and sisters, all the truth that is . . . necessary for our salvation, is contained within the lids of the books that I have already enumerated. We may not possess a library of two or three thousand volumes, but we may possess at small cost a priceless library that has cost the best blood that has ever been in this world.<sup>3</sup>

I am not concerned whether or not you have the books of the great libraries of the world in your home, provided you do have these books. Think of the millions of volumes that there are in [the] Congressional Library at Washington, in the British Library, and in the libraries of other countries, millions of volumes—and yet all that God has revealed and published to the children of men that is necessary to prepare them for a place in the celestial kingdom is contained within the covers of these sacred books. How many of us know what they contain? I frequently go into homes where I see all the latest magazines. I find the books that are advertised as best sellers on the bookshelves. If you were to throw them all away and retain only these sacred scriptures, you wouldn’t lose what the Lord has caused to be written and made available for us all to enjoy. So, brethren and sisters, among our other blessings let us not forget that the Lord has made it possible for us to have, enjoy, and understand the scriptures and to have his word that has been given down through the ages for the salvation of his children.<sup>4</sup>

As I read the scriptures, . . . I marvel at the goodness of the Lord to bless those who accept his teachings, for we find more comfort in these sacred records than in all the philosophies of the ages, as given to us by the wisdom of men.<sup>5</sup>

We talk about the philosophies of men and hold them up sometimes as a pretty picture, but when they conflict with the teachings of our Heavenly Father as contained in Holy Writ, they are valueless. They will never lead anybody into eternal happiness, nor help him to find a place in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.<sup>6</sup>

I sometimes feel that we do not appreciate the Holy Bible, and what it contains, and these other scriptures, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price that have been referred to . . . as letters from our Heavenly Father. They may be so received, at least they are his advice and his counsel to all the children of men given to them that they may know how to take advantage of their opportunities, that their lives may not be spent in vain.<sup>7</sup> [See suggestion 2 on page 109.]

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**The Lord gave us the scriptures to help us overcome  
our trials and prepare for exaltation.**

This is a day of proving ourselves, a day of trial. This is a day when men's hearts are failing them with fear. When the multitudes in the world are asking themselves what the end will be. A few inspired men know what the end will be. The Lord has told us what would occur, in [the scriptures], this wonderful library that I hold in my hand. He has given us the information that we need to adjust our lives and to prepare ourselves that no matter what may transpire we will be on the Lord's side of the line.<sup>8</sup>

Let me read what the Lord says with reference to these latter days in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants: . . .

“Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments. . . .

“Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.

“For behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever. Amen.” [D&C 1:17, 37–39.]

This preface is worthy [of] your earnest consideration. It is the admonition of the Father of us all. It is the loving advice of a tender parent who knows what we require, as he said in the chapter just read that knowing what was about to come upon the inhabitants of the earth he gave these commandments.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes we forget that the Lord has spoken and we fail to inform ourselves of His decrees. . . .

Dozens of passages in the scriptures could be cited as evidence that our Heavenly Father in mercy and kindness has been talking to the children of men all down through the ages, not only telling them what would occur, but pleading with them to turn from the error of their ways lest destruction should overtake them. . . .

Our Heavenly Father, through His faithful representatives, has told us of the important things that should occur and we can read about them in His holy scriptures. If we really desire to be saved and exalted in His celestial kingdom He has told us how to proceed.<sup>10</sup>

[The scriptures are] the greatest library to be found in all the world. What does it contain? It contains what your Father and mine has thought of enough importance to preserve and give to the children of men and make accessible in many languages of the World. These scriptures are all important and should be understood by the Latter-day Saints. I am not going to ask you to hold up your hands to ascertain how many here assembled have ever read these books, but I desire to call your attention to the fact that these are precious truths, and they contain the revealed word of the Lord printed and published to the world for the purpose of preparing his children

for a place in the celestial kingdom. That is why I say they are so valuable. . . . How thankful we ought to be that we live in a day and age when we can read his advice and counsel and have things explained that otherwise might be obscure and uncertain to us.<sup>11</sup> [See suggestion 3 on page 109.]

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**We inspire faith in our families by  
reading the scriptures with them.**

I would like you to ask yourselves, how many of you have read anything to your families out of these books from time to time, called them together to teach them the things that they ought to know. I am afraid many of us would have to say we have been too busy.<sup>12</sup>

We have already heard of many of the blessings that the Lord has given to us in the sacred records that have been kept until our day, and that contain the advice and counsel of an all-wise Father. It seems strange that so many of our people, with the opportunities offered, lack familiarity with the contents of these sacred records.<sup>13</sup>

Will our Father hold us guiltless when we go home, if we have failed to teach our children the importance of these sacred records? I think not. . . . Do you suppose that after the Lord has . . . placed within our reach the excellent teachings contained in these holy records, that he will consider us appreciative if we fail to teach them to our families, and to impress them upon those with whom we come in contact?

Brethren and sisters, I desire to emphasize again the teaching of the Master: “search the scriptures;” read them prayerfully and faithfully, teach them in your homes; call your families around you and inspire in them a faith in the living God, by reading those things that have been revealed. They are the most precious of all the libraries in all the world.<sup>14</sup>

Keep this library where you can find it, and where your children will find it, and then have enough interest in the eternal salvation of those boys and girls that are in your home that you will find ways and means to interest them in what these books contain, that they may know how precious they are in the sight of their Heavenly Father.<sup>15</sup>



*“Call your families around you and inspire in them a faith in the living God, by reading those things that have been revealed.”*

What a lovely thing it was to me when I was a child to have father and mother sit down by the fireplace and read the Bible while we children sat on the floor. . . .

Now, I want to say, my brothers and sisters, that the advice of Jesus Christ, is still in force with us wherein he said, “Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” [John 5:39.] Do not neglect the old family Bible; do not put it away upon the shelf and forget it. Find out, if you do not already know, what it says, and if you have read it before, read it again often to your children and to your children’s children. Read them not only the Bible, but other books of scripture that the Lord has given us for our exaltation, for our comfort and for our blessing.<sup>16</sup>

I admonish you, O Israel, search the scriptures; read them in your homes; teach your families what the Lord has said, and let us spend less of our time reading the unimportant and often harmful

literature of the day, and go to the fountain of truth and read the word of the Lord.<sup>17</sup> [See suggestion 4 below.]

## Suggestions for Study and Teaching

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Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages v–vii.

1. As you read the first paragraph on page 103, think of a time when a verse of scripture has inspired you in a similar way. How did you come to know that the scriptures are true? What experiences have you had with them recently that have strengthened that testimony?
2. Read the section that begins on page 104 and consider what place the scriptures have in your personal library (among the other things you read, watch, or listen to). What can you do to give the scriptures a more prominent place in your home and in your life?
3. Review the section that begins on page 105. How have the scriptures helped you face the calamities of the last days? Consider how you might use the scriptures to help someone you know who is facing a difficult trial.
4. Ponder President Smith’s counsel to families on pages 107–9. What blessings come to families who study the scriptures together? What are some effective ways to inspire our children’s (or grandchildren’s) interest in the scriptures? Prayerfully consider what you can do to be more diligent in studying the scriptures with your family.

*Related Scriptures:* Deuteronomy 6:6–7; Joshua 1:8; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2 Nephi 4:15; Helaman 3:29–30; Doctrine and Covenants 33:16

*Teaching help:* “You can help those you teach feel more confident about their ability to participate in a discussion if you respond positively to every sincere comment. For example, you might say, ‘Thank you for your answer. That was very thoughtful’ . . . or ‘That is a good example’ or ‘I appreciate all that you have said today’” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 64).

**Notes**

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1949, 83–84.
2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 165–66.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 43.
4. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 164–65.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1931, 120.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1946, 125.
7. In Conference Report, Oct. 1923, 70.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 14.
9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 42–43.
10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1940, 107–9.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 164.
12. In Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 179.
13. In Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 30.
14. In Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 43–44.
15. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 165.
16. “Pres. Smith’s Leadership Address,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 16, 1946, Church section, 6.
17. In Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 41.