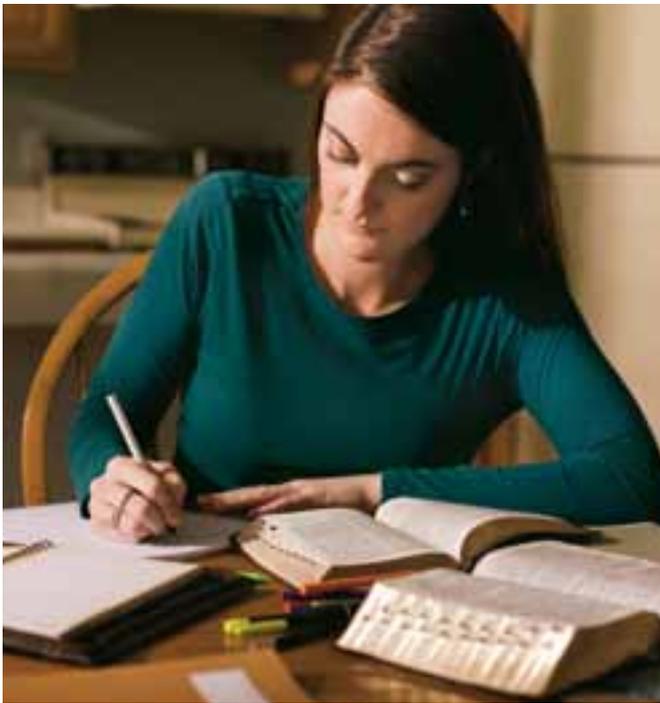


Getting the Most out of Your Scripture Study



BY DAVID B. MARSH
Church Curriculum Department

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) once encouraged us to read the scriptures by saying, “If I were a bishop or stake president today, what would I do? . . . I would encourage my people to read the scriptures, to read the Book of Mormon, to read the New Testament. I would urge them with all the capacity I have to read quietly and thoughtfully and introspectively.”¹ Hoping that we would gain a love of the scriptures, he also said, “I hope that for you this will become something far more enjoyable than a duty; that, rather, it will become a love affair with the word of God.”²

Practice and Patience

When I first heard of the importance of studying the scriptures, I didn’t really know how to study. I remember watching others find uplifting insights in the scriptures while I struggled to understand what I was reading. I labored just to get used to the language of the scriptures. I felt inadequate and found myself dependent on others for scriptural insights. During those initial efforts I could not always count on my daily study session to be a spiritual success. However, I received great comfort and the courage to persevere in my personal scripture study when I came across this insight from President Henry B. Eyring, given when he served as Church Commissioner of Education: “That first exposure to the scriptures is going to be hard. . . . It may



When we learn to use a few simple scripture study skills we improve our ability to discover uplifting insights, receive personal revelation, and draw closer to the Lord.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Read the article. Prepare 12 pieces of paper with the seven suggestions and the five scriptures listed in the first sentence of the section “Many Ways to Study.” Place these pieces of paper face-side down. Have each family member select a piece of paper and discuss the suggestion or the scripture.

2. Begin by reading the section “Practice and Patience” with the family. Select a short chapter of scripture to study together using the suggestions from the section “Many Ways to Study.” If young children are involved, suggest they draw a picture of the scripture. Discuss how different study methods can give different insights and inspiration.

closer to the Lord.

Many Ways to Study

The Savior and His servants have encouraged us to read, seek, search, ponder, study, feast upon, and treasure up His words (see Isaiah 34:16; John 5:39; 2 Nephi 31:20; 3 Nephi 17:3; and D&C 11:22). The number and variety of invitations suggest that there are different ways to study the scriptures. My own experience confirms this. Sometimes I like to read from cover to cover. At other times I search for answers to per-

sonal questions or challenges. Often I study topics listed in the Topical Guide or Guide to the Scriptures. I also enjoy researching how the Lord uses a specific word throughout the scriptures. When I am really serious, I mark phrases, underline words, or write notes in the margins of my scriptures. Occasionally, I relish in learning the Greek, Hebrew, or dictionary definitions of scriptural words. There are even times when I rush home on Sundays after church to open the scriptures, anxious to verify something taught in a lesson. One thing is certain: there is no one right way to study the scriptures.

While there is no one right way to study the scriptures, there are certain skills that can help us get the most out of our scripture study. Like a cook who uses specific skills to prepare delicious meals, so an able student of the scriptures uses specific study skills to prepare delicious scriptural feasts to feed the soul. The more we master these skills, the more satisfying our scripture study will become. ■

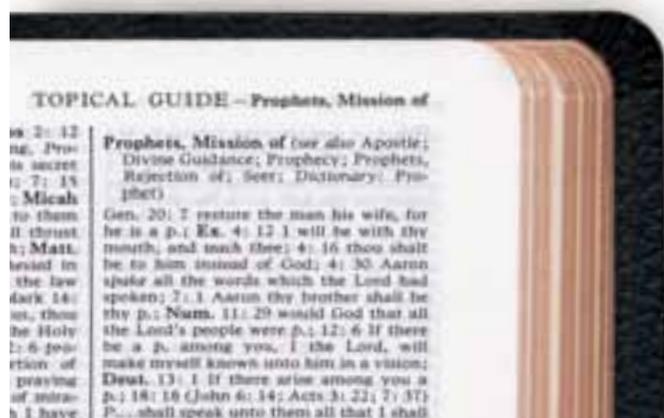
NOTES

1. “Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,” *Church News*, Apr. 5, 1997.
2. More recently, President Hinckley encouraged the young women of the Church to read specific books in the scriptures (see “Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts Unceasingly,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 116).
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99.
4. Henry B. Eyring, address to Church Educational System area directors, Apr. 6, 1981.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1995, 99.

be tough . . . because [you] won’t get great insights right away.”³

While my first experiences were not as successful as I had hoped, over time and with more practice, the number of uplifting discoveries and the moments of personal revelation occurred more frequently, even daily. I experienced what President Hinckley described when he said, “As you read, your minds will be enlightened and your spirits will be lifted. At first it may seem tedious, but that will change into a wondrous experience with thoughts and words of things divine.”⁴

It is my conviction that one of the most powerful influences in the world is the word of God and when the Lord’s words are learned and taught in the right spirit our lives are changed forever. I am equally certain that when we learn to use a few simple scripture study skills we improve our ability to discover uplifting insights, receive personal revelation, and draw



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