



Keeping Scripture Study Alive

As members throughout the Church can attest, there are many effective ways to study the scriptures.

In an 1830 revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord invited, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23). President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) reaffirmed this promise of peace and direction: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns.”¹

Here members share their insights on some ways we can immerse ourselves in the scriptures.

Study the Prophets

I have read the Book of Mormon many times, looking for different themes and teachings each time. This time I chose to approach it with the idea that I wanted to know more about the prophets of the Book of Mormon. When I began in 1 Nephi, I made notes on Lehi in six categories: teachings, personal characteristics, relationship with family, relationship with God, God’s relationship with him, and ways he received revelation. I then studied the same things with the next prophets, Nephi and Jacob. I am trying to identify the similar qualities of the men the Lord calls as prophets and to recognize each prophet’s key teachings.

Deb Walden, California, USA

LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

Nephi wrote, “My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children” (2 Nephi 4:15).

Ask Questions

I ask questions while I read. My questions fall into two categories. First, I try to understand the scripture and see how it might apply to my life. I ask questions like: What in my life is like this situation? What is the principle that is being taught? Why did the author include this? How can I apply this to my life right now? Second, I ask questions about things I am struggling with in my life: situations or problems for which I am searching for an answer. These could be anything from dealing with a family situation to making a career change. As I ask these questions, I may find I spend all of my scripture reading time on just a few verses as I try to listen to the Spirit and find what the Lord is trying to teach me. I have found that answers come when I read with questions in mind.

Joanne Z. Jobanson, California, USA

Picture Yourself in the Scriptures

Whenever I approach the standard works, I do so with a purpose. I try to have the desire to search for something that would

be interesting and useful to me and to others. I find a place free of noise and conversation. I avoid distraction and banish thoughts that are not related to the scriptures. To do this I imagine the physical location where the events I am studying took place and live them as if I were a spectator. My concentration is such

that I completely withdraw from the world around me.

Juan de Dios Sánchez, Dominican Republic

Keep a Scripture Journal

As I reflected on the times in my life when I was immersed in the scriptures, unvaryingly I was keeping a study journal in which I wrote impressions and scripture passages that inspired me. So I found a notebook and a pen and put them with my scriptures. At first, writing about what I read was a chore; it took too much time and effort. Really, I just wanted to have a spiritual snack and then move on with my daily work. But I persisted, and the scriptures came alive. I found myself thinking, dissecting passages, and applying them to my life. Simple phrases provided solutions to perplexing parenting problems. I soon found I could take notes, and it didn't really take any longer than reading alone. I have also found that as I reread past reflections, I find answers to current questions and concerns. It is as if the Lord gives me insight a couple of weeks before I need it.

Erica Miller, Utah, USA

Start with a Prayer

It wasn't until I grasped the concept of praying before I started reading that I noticed a significant improvement in my understanding of the messages that were in the scriptures. I realized that fervent prayer before starting to read allowed the Holy Ghost to speak to my mind. A sincere prayer, stated with real intent to my Father in Heaven, allowed my spirit to commune with the Holy Ghost while I studied and pondered the scriptures. Over time I have found many answers to questions in the scriptures. By focusing my prayers on specific questions



GO WITH A QUESTION

“Sometimes I go to the scriptures for doctrine. Sometimes I go to the scriptures for instruction. I go with a question, and the question usually is ‘What would God have me

do?’ or ‘What would He have me feel?’ Invariably I find new ideas, thoughts I have never had before, and I receive inspiration and instruction and answers to my questions.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Discussion on Scripture Study,” *Liahona*, July 2005, 8; *Ensign*, July 2005, 22.

relative to my current situation and asking Heavenly Father to bless my mind with understanding, I am able to receive new insight into areas of concern in my life. As I earnestly seek guidance before I begin reading, I find situations in the scriptures that I can liken unto myself (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

Jess Rudd, Washington, USA

Look for the Teachings of the Savior

While serving as a full-time missionary in the Chile Santiago West Mission, I gained valuable insight into scripture study and how to make it more effective for investigators and myself. One day while teaching a beautiful young family, I felt the clear impression to not only encourage them to read 3 Nephi 11 but to give them a purpose in reading. Rather than simply testifying that they would learn about the Savior's visit to the Americas, my companion and I challenged them to look for what the Savior taught, specifically the first thing He taught. In addition, we involved the children by describing the reading as a treasure hunt; as we did so, we had their undivided attention. With the children excited to help their parents find hidden treasures of truth in the Book of Mormon, we felt much more confident that the family would follow through with their commitment.

When we returned the following day, not only had the family read and not only had they discovered Christ's first teaching to the ancient American inhabitants, but they had outlined almost all of His teachings in the entire chapter. Even the children were excited.

Ryan Gassin, Minnesota, USA

Incorporate General Conference and Hymns

We had been struggling with our family scripture study. Getting our children to pay attention was difficult, so we tried this technique as a family. My husband and I took turns reading

general conference talks out loud to the family, and when we got to a scripture, we called it out. When our children found it, everyone marked it and then one of them read it. As we did so, our kids were poised on the edge of their seats, scriptures and pencils in hand. When we ended, they said, "Oh, please, can't we do just one more scripture?" We finished our scripture study by singing a hymn. As we got ready to sing the closing song, we showed our children how they could look up scriptures in the back of the hymnbook. They found one of the scriptures we had marked, and we sang a song that reinforced the gospel principle we had studied. It was truly meaningful scripture study!

Donna Macurdy Nielson, Virginia, USA ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 67.

