



# Becoming a *Preach My Gospel* Missionary



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*You can do this! The Lord you represent and serve knows you can do this. I know you can do this.*

**A**n Apostle is first, foremost, and always a missionary. For that reason, I am especially pleased to address you as fellow servants in this magnificent latter-day work.

## WHAT IS A *PREACH MY GOSPEL* MISSIONARY?

A *Preach My Gospel* missionary is a servant of the Lord, called by prophecy and authorized by the laying on of hands, who proclaims the Savior's everlasting and restored gospel in His way (see D&C 50:13–14, 17–24; D&C 68:1).

The overarching purpose of a

missionary described in *Preach My Gospel* is to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”<sup>1</sup>

The sacred responsibility to proclaim authoritatively the gospel and administer the saving ordinances has been in operation since Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden and will continue until “the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”<sup>2</sup>

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME *PREACH MY GOSPEL* MISSIONARIES

I want to discuss five basic requirements for becoming *Preach My Gospel* missionaries.

**Requirement #1: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand that they serve and represent Jesus Christ.**

*Preach My Gospel* missionaries know and understand whom they represent, why they serve, and what they are to do. Full-time missionaries are called to serve and properly set apart as servants and representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. We bear witness of His name and of the reality, divinity, and mission of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (see D&C 133:37).

We love the Lord. We serve Him. We follow Him. We represent Him.

His purposes must be our purposes. His interests should be our interests. His work should be our work. His ways should be our ways. His will increasingly should become our will.

As representatives of the Redeemer, we preach the fundamental doctrines and principles of His restored gospel simply and clearly. We do not present personal opinions or speculation. We proclaim and testify of simple restored truth in the Lord's way and by the power of His Spirit.

*Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand that the responsibility to represent the Savior and to bear testimony of Him never ends. Please



remember Him in all that you think, in all that you do, and in all that you strive to become, and represent Him appropriately to all of Heavenly Father's children with whom you interact now and always.

**Requirement #2: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries are worthy.**

An essential prerequisite to becoming *Preach My Gospel* missionaries is personal worthiness before the Savior.

Let me state several simple truths just as clearly as I know how.

- We are authorized representatives of the Redeemer and Savior of the world.
- We are called to declare His restored and everlasting gospel.
- We cannot be stained with the spots of the world and authoritatively represent Him and act with power in His holy name.
- We cannot help others to overcome the bondage of sin if we ourselves are entangled in sin (see D&C 88:86).
- We cannot help others learn to repent if we ourselves have not learned to repent properly and completely.
- We can proclaim and preach with power only that which we are striving to become.
- We will be held accountable before God for our righteous desires and worthiness to act as His agents.

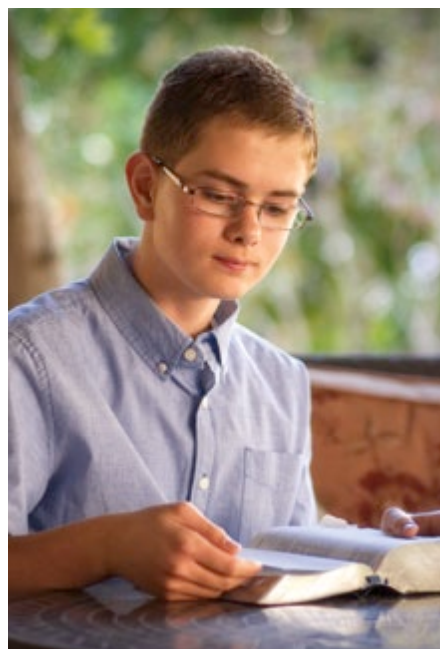
We are not required presently to be perfect. But we are commanded to be clean and to walk uprightly before the Redeemer of Israel. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42).

Repentance is a principle of hope and healing—not of discouragement and despair. Repentance indeed is humbling—but not frightening. Repentance is simultaneously demanding and comforting, rigorous and soothing. Repentance is a priceless gift made possible through the Atonement of Him whom we love, serve, and follow.

Even if you have committed serious sins, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, you have been or can again be made clean and worthy.

There are youth who yet need fully to repent. The time is now. Please, please, please do not procrastinate the day of your repentance.

There are youth who have repented and are continuing to repent and who wonder if they have done all that is necessary to be accepted of the Lord (see D&C 97:8). Please remember, the Lord requires you to be clean but not perfect. The Holy Ghost operating again in your life is the surest indicator of forgiveness by the Lord because “the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24). And recognize that the mandate to “forgive all men” (D&C 64:10) includes forgiving yourself.



*Preach My Gospel* missionaries are covenant-honoring and commandment-obeying disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please always remember Him and be pure and worthy to represent Him.

**Requirement #3: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries treasure up the words of eternal life.**

I invite you to “treasure up in your minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85). Treasuring up the words of eternal life is more than merely studying or memorizing, just as “feasting upon the word[s] of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20; see also 2 Nephi 32:3) is more than simply sampling or snacking. Treasuring up suggests to me focusing and working, exploring and absorbing, pondering and praying, applying and learning, valuing and appreciating, and enjoying and relishing.

Recall how the sons of Mosiah—four truly remarkable missionaries named Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—“had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and

they had searched the scriptures diligently” (Alma 17:2).

These valiant missionaries truly treasured up continually the words of eternal life. They did not neglect or simply go through the motions of individual and companion scripture study. Spiritual knowledge and understanding penetrated deep into their own souls, and the doctrines and principles of the gospel were confirmed in their hearts as true by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As representatives of the Savior, you and I have the ongoing responsibility to work diligently and to implant in our hearts and minds the fundamental doctrines and principles of the restored gospel, especially from the Book of Mormon. As we do so, the promised blessing is that the Holy Ghost will “bring all things to [our] remembrance” (John 14:26) and empower us as we teach and testify. But the Spirit can work with and through us only if we give Him something with which to work. He cannot help us remember things we have not learned (see Alma 31:5).

*Preach My Gospel* missionaries treasure up continually the words of eternal life, they rely upon the virtue of the word, and they have the power of the word in them. Please always remember Him, always be worthy to represent Him, and treasure up and rely upon the virtue of the word.

**Requirement #4: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand the Holy Ghost is the ultimate and true teacher.**

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead, and He is the witness of all truth and the ultimate and true teacher. The lessons we teach and the testimonies we bear are preparatory to an investigator acting and learning for himself or herself.

As missionaries, one of our most important roles is to invite investigators to exercise their moral agency and act in accordance with the teachings of the Savior. Making and keeping spiritual commitments, such as praying for a witness of the truth, studying and praying about the Book of Mormon, attending Church meetings, and keeping the commandments, require an investigator to exercise faith, to act, and to change.

Regardless of how earnestly we serve, you and I simply cannot push or force truth into the hearts of investigators. Our best efforts can only bring the message of truth *unto* the heart (see 2 Nephi 33:1). Ultimately, an investigator needs to act in righteousness and

thereby invite the truth *into* his or her own heart. Only in this way can honest seekers of truth and new converts develop the spiritual capacity to find answers for themselves.

Since our responsibility is to help investigators learn by faith and by the power of the Holy Ghost, this work is never about me and it is never about you. We need to do all in our power to fulfill our missionary responsibility and simultaneously “get out of the way” so the Holy Ghost can perform His sacred function and work. In fact, anything you or I do as representatives of the Savior that knowingly and intentionally draws attention to self—in the messages we present, in the methods we use, or in our personal demeanor and appearance—is a form of priestcraft that inhibits the teaching effectiveness of the Holy Ghost.

“Doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:17–18).

Please always remember Him, be worthy to represent Him, treasure up His word, and allow the ultimate and true teacher, the Holy Ghost, to witness of all truth.

**Requirement #5: *Preach My Gospel* missionaries understand teaching is much more than talking and telling.**

As the Savior sat on the Mount of Olives, He declared: “Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mark 13:11).

The Savior in the early days of this dispensation instructed missionaries



to “open your mouths and they shall be filled” (D&C 33:8, 10) and to “lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; for it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:5–6).

These scriptures emphasize a most demanding and exacting pattern for preaching and helping investigators to learn truth. *Preach My Gospel* missionaries know we do not teach lessons; we teach people. We do not merely recite or present memorized messages about gospel topics. We invite seekers of truth to experience the mighty change of heart. We understand that talking and telling alone are not teaching.

Preaching the gospel the Lord’s way includes observing and listening and discerning as prerequisites to talking. The sequence of these four interrelated processes is significant. Please note that active observing and listening precede discerning and that observing, listening, and discerning come before speaking. Employing this pattern enables missionaries to identify and teach to the needs of investigators.

As we observe, listen, and discern, we can be given “in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man” (D&C 84:85)—the truths to emphasize and the answers to give that will meet the specific needs of a particular investigator.



Only by observing, listening, and discerning can we be guided by the Spirit to say and do the things that will be most helpful to those whom we serve.

Observing is a vital preparation to receive the spiritual gift of discernment. Discernment is seeing with spiritual eyes *and* feeling with the heart—seeing and feeling the falsehood of an idea, the goodness in another person, or the next principle that is needed to aid an investigator. Discerning is hearing with spiritual ears *and* feeling with the heart—hearing and feeling the unspoken concern in a comment or question, the truthfulness of a testimony or doctrine, or the assurance and peace that come by the power of the Holy Ghost.

*Preach My Gospel* missionaries act in faith and are guided by the Spirit to help investigators learn truth. Please always remember Him; be worthy to represent Him; treasure up His word; allow the Holy Ghost to witness all truth; and observe, listen, and discern as you testify of Jesus Christ to honest seekers of truth.

#### YOU CAN DO THIS!

You may read my message and believe that all the other youth can and will do what I have been describing. But you may be wondering if you can do it. Please listen. You can do this!

If I had the wish of my heart, I would take a few moments with each of you individually. I would shake your hand, draw you close, look you in the eyes, and say, “You can do this! The Lord you represent and serve knows you can do this. I know you can do this. And as His servant, I promise you will have His help. Please remember always that with His help and in His strength, you can do this!”

I love you and pray as you strive to become what you need to become, you will recognize and respond in faith to the Lord’s voice and guidance. Then you truly will become powerful and effective representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

*From a devotional address given at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 24, 2011.*

#### NOTES

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 142.