

“I don’t have a testimony even though I go to church and keep the commandments. How can I believe and gain a testimony?”

Initially you might believe in the Church and its doctrines because your parents, friends, teachers, or other family members do. But as you’ve found out, you can’t simply rely on the convictions of others forever.

When seeking a testimony, it may be helpful to think of gaining a testimony not as an event but as a process. As you continue to keep the commandments daily and desire to believe, gradually you’ll begin to recognize in your life the fruits of the Spirit, some of which are love, joy, peace, patience, and faith (see Galatians 5:22–23). You’ll see how living the gospel has improved your life, and you’ll know that it “must needs be . . . good . . . for it beginneth to enlarge [your] soul” (Alma 32:28). This will happen particularly as you study the Book of Mormon, which God has provided as an instrument of testimony and conversion for our day.

Also, your parents and Church leaders can help. Ask them why they believe. Tell them about your struggle to find a testimony, and ask their advice.

Remember that gaining a testimony may be less like the turning on of a light switch and more like the slow building of a fire. The flame may start out weak. It may flicker a few times at the start. But if you continue to kindle it and fuel it, then over time it will grow strong and provide warmth and light throughout your life. **NE**

Listen to Others



We’re all working on our testimonies. We’re all just at different levels. A good thing to do is to listen to other people’s testimonies. Also, when you bear testimony, you sometimes realize how strong your testimony actually is. Have faith, pray, and continue to do what’s right. Your testimony is growing, whether you realize it or not.

Kaitlin C., 15, California

Uncover Your Testimony



Since you go to church and keep the commandments, I think you may already have a testimony and just not realize it yet. Ask in prayer for Heavenly Father to help you recognize your testimony. Eventually you will know that you have a testimony of your own.

Adam P., 14, Utah

Study and Pray with Intent

I was born into the Church but didn’t have much of a testimony until I started to read the scriptures with pure intent. Instead of just reading the words on the paper, I began searching deeply for their meaning. I read 3 Nephi 11:3 and put myself in the people’s shoes. That

scripture and the ones following it shook me. From then on I kept reading the scriptures and praying with sincerity, and my testimony grew.

Ryan R., 14, Washington

Light a Candle



I found that the best way to gain a testimony is to pray and read the scriptures. Earnest prayer and scripture study will light a candle that can only get brighter.

Rebekah S., 18, England

Ask for Help

Try to read the scriptures all the way through, even if you've already done it. If you have trouble doing so, ask someone to read them with you. Make sure you pray every night for guidance, and ask help from your bishop or branch president and your loved ones. In time, you'll gain a testimony.

Adriene W., 15, Wyoming

Not a Borrowed Testimony



I used to share my testimony ever since I was small growing up, but it was like a routine for me to share it every fast and testimony Sunday. I knew all the commandments that I should keep, but it never really had great meaning in my life. Then I fasted and prayed about Joseph Smith and about whether he was indeed a prophet of God and translated the Book of Mormon. After much fasting and prayer, the Spirit confirmed in my heart that all these things were true. Now I've earned a testimony of my own and it is no longer a borrowed testimony.

Meradani R., 20, Fiji

Let It Grow



A testimony can grow as we go to church, follow the commandments, and recognize the blessings that we

have received because of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. But it mostly comes by our desire to have one. Moroni 10:4 teaches that we must ask with a sincere heart—a desire—and with real intent, willing to act upon the answer. Our testimonies may not grow as fast as we want, and sometimes we may not even recognize the growth, but our testimonies do grow.

Elder Matt Haugen, South Africa Cape Town Mission

Learn about Christ

To gain a testimony and believe, I would try to learn about Jesus Christ by studying the scriptures and getting to know Him. In Primary there is a song that says, "Search, ponder, and pray Are the things that I must do. The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside, I'll know the scriptures are true." I think this can help us believe and gain a testimony.

James L., 13, Utah

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"I try to be nice to my sister, but she still treats me rudely. How can I regain the friendship we used to have?"

Send us your answer and photo by August 15, 2009.

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THAT "LEAP OF FAITH"

Oh, if I could teach you this one principle: a testimony is to be found in the bearing of it! Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that 'leap of faith,' as the philosophers call it. It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a footstep or two."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge," New Era, Jan. 2007, 6.