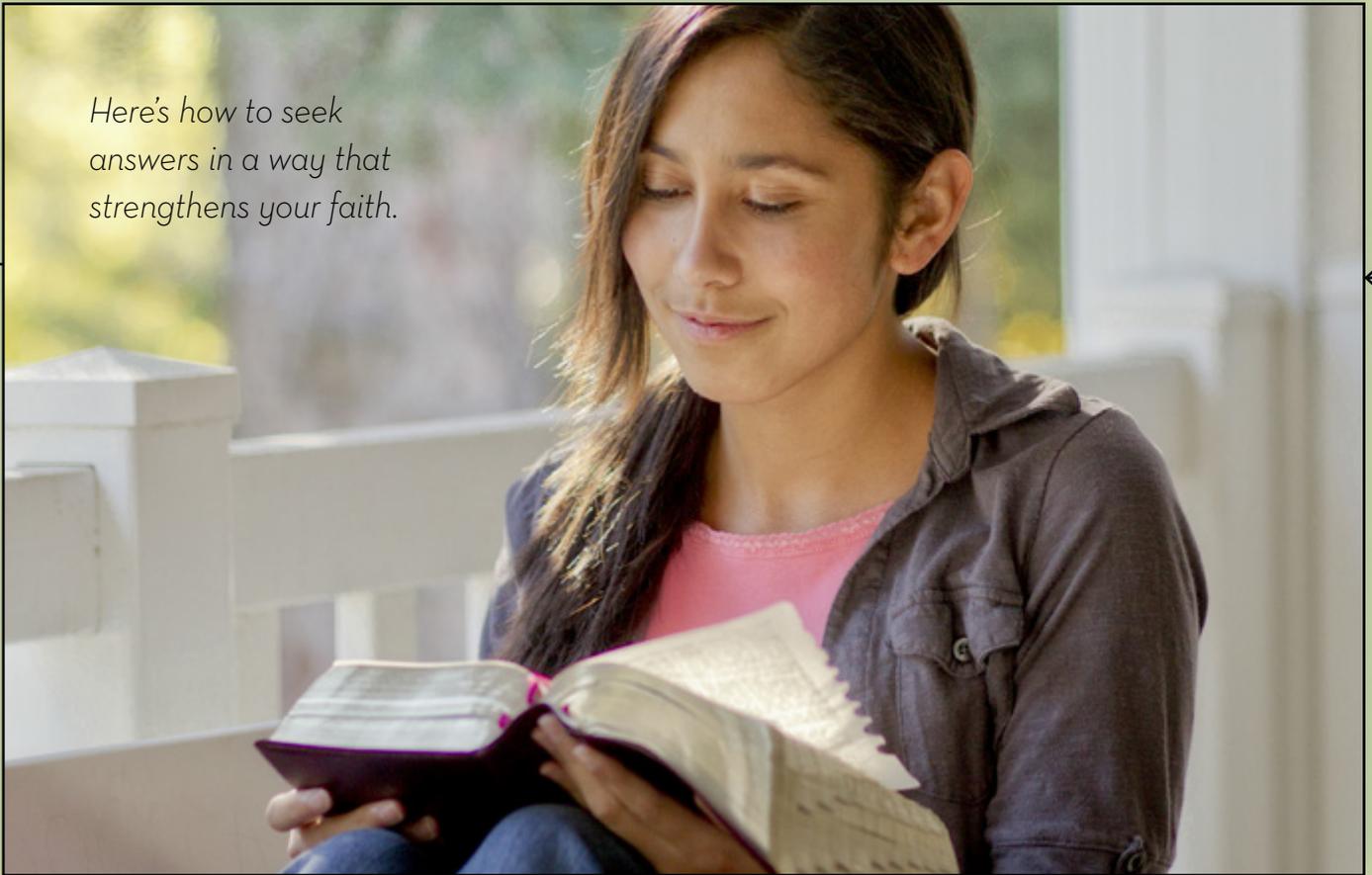


## Dealing with Difficult Questions:

# 3 PRINCIPLES THAT CAN HELP

*Here's how to seek answers in a way that strengthens your faith.*



By Sarah Hanson

**H**ave you ever had a question about the gospel or the Church? Have you ever worried whether your question means that you don't have enough faith or that your testimony isn't strong enough?

Questions are a normal and necessary part of your journey through mortality. They can lead you to greater insight and faith. However, your attitude, motivation, and process for finding answers affect the outcome. In seminary you will learn these three doctrinal mastery principles that can help guide you to eternal truths.

## 1. Act in Faith

When you have a question, you can act in faith by choosing to trust God and turn to Him first for answers. God gives answers “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). It is important to rely on the testimony you already have in times of doubt.

“Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.”<sup>1</sup>  
—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

“Hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.”<sup>2</sup>  
—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

## 2. Examine Concepts and Questions with a Gospel Perspective

If you consider questions in the context of the plan of salvation and the teachings of the Savior, you can begin to see things the way God sees them. This will help you reexamine your questions using God’s standard of truth rather than the world’s.

“Being anchored to eternal truth . . . will give us the peace that comes from faith in Jesus Christ and the knowledge that we are on the pathway to

eternal life.”<sup>3</sup> —President Dallin H. Oaks

“If you discover anything that seems to be blocking the light and joy of the gospel in *your* life, I invite you to place it in a gospel perspective. Look through a gospel lens and be vigilant not to allow insignificant and inconsequential matters in life to obscure your eternal view of the great plan of happiness.”<sup>4</sup> —Elder Gary E. Stevenson

## 3. Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

God has given you multiple sources to use as you seek truth. These include the Holy Ghost, the scriptures, your family, Church leaders, and even sources outside the Church that strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ. When looking for answers, be sure to distinguish between unreliable sources and reliable sources, which will strengthen your faith and invite the Holy Ghost into your life.

“Rich benefits . . . come from your efforts to

enlarge, extend, and increase your understanding of truth. Use the scriptures and the declarations of the prophets to expand your knowledge.”<sup>5</sup>  
—Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)

“We continually seek truth from all good books and other wholesome sources. ‘If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things’ [Articles of Faith 1:13].”<sup>6</sup>  
—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

## Try it for yourself!

The following examples show how it can be done. Note that these aren't complete answers, just examples of how a young man or young woman might try to answer these questions for themselves. You'll want to continue studying and praying about the topics you have questions about to find answers and strengthen your testimony.

### Why does a loving Heavenly Father let bad things happen?

**Act in faith:** I have felt God's love for me and know that He exists, even though I don't understand why God lets bad things happen.

**Examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective:** Agency is an important part of the plan of salvation. God sent us to down to earth to experience trials, make decisions, and receive a physical body. But allowing people to make decisions means that sometimes people will make wrong choices and affect other people's lives. And trials that are not a result of poor choices—such as natural disasters, disability, and death—can provide opportunities for us to strengthen our testimonies and trust in God.

**Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:** What do the scriptures and modern prophets say about why we go through difficult things? "Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high" (D&C 121:7–8). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "God never leaves us alone, never leaves us unaided in the challenges that we face."<sup>7</sup> I don't know the reasons for all of my trials, but I believe that Jesus Christ performed the Atonement for me and for everyone. I can turn to

Him and to Heavenly Father for peace, strength, and support during my trials (see Alma 7:11–12).

### How can I tell when the Holy Ghost is talking to me?

**Act in faith:** Even though it is sometimes hard for me to tell when I am receiving inspiration, I know from hearing the testimonies of others and reading the scriptures that the Spirit will help me understand if I keep trying to hear His counsel.

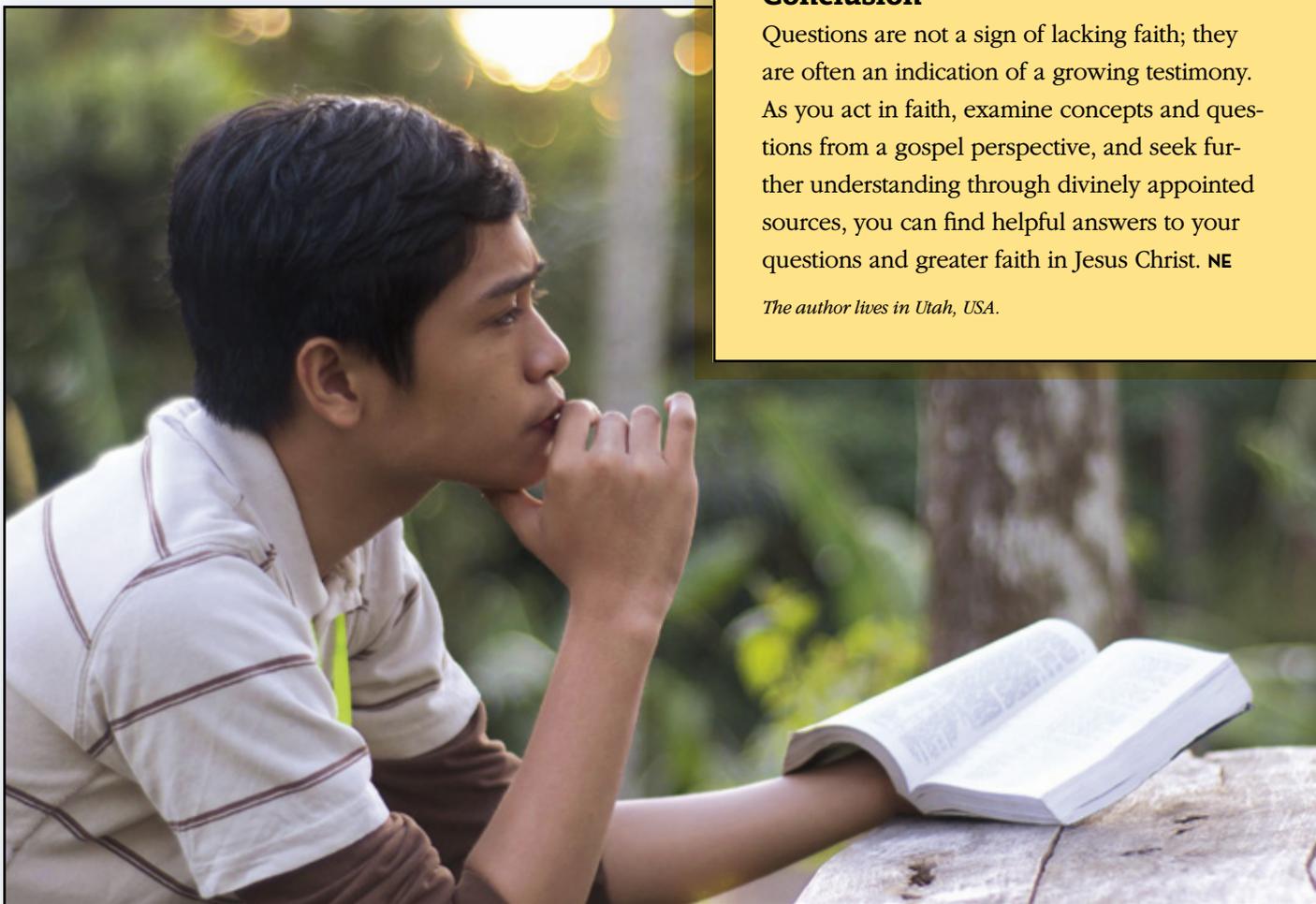
**Examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective:** God gives us the gift of the Holy Ghost so we can receive inspiration to do what is right. If I am getting a prompting to do something good, I can know that it is from the Spirit, even if it sounds like my own thoughts.

**Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources:** The scriptures teach: "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10). Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives."<sup>8</sup> If I am trying to be humble and doing my best to be worthy of the Spirit, the Lord will help direct me to answers. He will teach me how the Spirit speaks to me specifically.

## Conclusion

Questions are not a sign of lacking faith; they are often an indication of a growing testimony. As you act in faith, examine concepts and questions from a gospel perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources, you can find helpful answers to your questions and greater faith in Jesus Christ. **NE**

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### WATCH HOW THIS WORKS

Watch the video “Madison’s Story” to see a young woman go through this process to answer her own question. Visit [lds.org/go/71853](https://www.lds.org/go/71853).

### NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” Oct. 2013 general conference.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2013 general conference.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “As He Thinketh in His Heart” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Feb. 8, 2013), [lds.org/prophets-and-apostles](https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles).
4. Gary E. Stevenson, Oct. 2017 general conference.
5. Richard G. Scott, Oct. 1993 general conference.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 13, 2013), [broadcasts.lds.org](https://www.broadcasts.lds.org).
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 2008 general conference.
8. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2011 general conference.