

6 TIPS FOR

# Scripture Study



## Energize your time spent with the scriptures.

By Afton Nelson

**D**o you sometimes find it hard to study—*really* study—the scriptures? Here are some ideas you can use to add more life to your scripture study and make the most of your reading time.

**1 Pray and Seek the Spirit**  
Ask Heavenly Father to help you feel the Spirit as you read the scriptures. The scriptures were given by revelation and can be understood by revelation. When we rely on help from our Heavenly Father and the Spirit, we become humble, teachable, and ready to learn.

**2 Look at Maps**  
Maps can help set the stage for your scripture study. The words and stories will have more meaning if you have a better understanding of distances traveled, climate, topography, and other prominent features of the places you're reading about. For example, the story of Jonah in the Old Testament (see Jonah 1–3) gains depth when we know that the city of Nineveh was located close to modern-day Iraq and that Tarshish might have been located in Spain.

How far away are these two places from each other? What would Jonah have to do to travel to each place? It was a long, difficult trip. How does this knowledge change your understanding of the story?

**3 Look for Lists**  
Often a verse or verses of scripture will include a list. Once you start to recognize lists in the scriptures, you will see them often. For example, in 3 Nephi 17:3, Jesus has compassion on the Nephites and recognizes they are tired after a long day of listening and learning. He gives the Nephites a list of things to do:

- A. "Go ye unto your homes, and
- B. "Ponder upon the things which I have said, and
- C. "Ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and
- D. "Prepare your minds for the morrow."

Can this list help us get more out of our attendance at Church meetings? How can doing the things on this list help us with our scripture study? Whenever you see a list in the scriptures, write it out and see if you can apply the same steps to aspects of your life.

**Ways to Read the Scriptures**  
Sometimes you can improve your scripture study by reading the scriptures in a new way. Read additional ideas in "Successful Scripture Study" in the January 2012 issue of the *New Era* or at [lds.org/go/02A](http://lds.org/go/02A).





17 Never  
 and corn for the ox,  
 horse, and rye for the  
 wine, and for all beas  
 and barley for all us  
 and for mild drinks,  
 rain.  
 18 And all saints who  
 keep and do these say  
 in obedience to the cor  
 shall receive <sup>b</sup>health  
 and marrow to their b  
 19 And shall <sup>a</sup>find  
 great <sup>a</sup>treasures of <sup>d</sup>kn  
 idden treasures;  
 20 And shall <sup>a</sup>run  
 weary, and shall walk  
 21 And I, the Lord, g  
 wise, that the <sup>a</sup>de  
 them, a



## 4

### Look for Patterns and Repetition

When you notice a pattern or repetition in the scriptures, there's often something to be learned from it, like in the accounts of Christ's birth in the New Testament. In Matthew 2, Matthew repeats the phrase "that it might be fulfilled." He focuses on how various elements of the Savior's birth fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Instead of creating a pattern of words like Matthew, Luke creates a pattern of people in his account found in Luke 2, where the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna all saw and bore testimony of the Savior's divinity.

What can we learn from these two accounts of the Savior's birth? What do you think each writer was trying to accomplish by telling the story the way he did?

## 5

### Look for Commandments and Promised Blessings

Often in the scriptures, when the Lord gives commandments He then tells us the blessings we will receive from keeping them. Consider the following:

- "Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 4:7).
- "And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments [the Word of Wisdom], shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones" (D&C 89:18).
- "Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy

thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God" (D&C 121:45).

Consider using two colored pencils as you read, marking commandments in one color and promised blessings in another. What do you notice? How does this pattern affect your testimony of our Heavenly Father's love for you?

## 6

### Look for Personal Application

Nephi tells us that we should liken the scriptures unto ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23). The scriptures were written for us and apply to our lives. For example, we may not find ourselves mining ore to make tools to build a ship (see 1 Nephi 17), but all of us will be asked to do hard things. How can the way Nephi responded to his challenge to build a ship help us respond to our missions?

The more you practice looking for personal application, the quicker you will begin to see it. The Spirit can teach us the beautiful truths of the scriptures if we do our part. But we have to open them and do more than just read the words. As we study with the Spirit, the scriptures can truly come to life for us. **NE**

### DRAW NEARER TO GOD

"As we engage with God in sincere prayer, read and study each day from the scriptures, ponder on what we have read and felt, and then apply and live the lessons learned, we draw nearer to Him. God's promise is that as we seek diligently from the best books, '[He] shall give unto [us] knowledge by his Holy Spirit' (D&C 121:26; see also D&C 109:14–15)."

Elder Ian S. Arden of the Seventy, "A Time to Prepare," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 32.