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# LEARNING IN THE LORD'S WAY

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**T**he Lord's hastening of His work requires us continuously to learn, to change, and to press forward with faith in the Savior.

## A PATTERN IN ALL THINGS

In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in June of 1831, the Lord declared: "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations" (Doctrine and Covenants 52:14).

Interestingly, the Lord gave us "a" and not "the" pattern for all things. I do not believe the Lord is suggesting with the language "a pattern in all things" that He has only one pattern to be used in every situation. Rather,

the Lord's way includes a variety of patterns that can be employed to achieve different spiritual objectives.

Our ultimate goal in any learning and teaching experience should be to determine and use the pattern or patterns that best meet our needs and achieve the desired learning results.

## THE HOLY GHOST IS THE TEACHER

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead and a Revelator, a Teacher, a Comforter, a Sanctifier, and He brings all things to our remembrance (see John 14:16–17, 26; 3 Nephi 27:20). Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, "The Office of the Holy Ghost in His ministrations among men is described in scripture. He is a teacher

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# LEARNING BY FAITH REQUIRES BOTH THE HEART AND A WILLING MIND.



sent from the Father; and unto those who are entitled to His tuition He will reveal all things necessary for the soul's advancement.”<sup>1</sup> Inviting the Holy Ghost to be *the* teacher is a central purpose in all of the Lord's patterns for learning and teaching.

A learner who exercises moral agency and acts in accordance with correct principles opens his or her heart to the Holy Ghost—and thereby invites His teaching, testifying power, and confirming witness. Learning with and by faith requires spiritual, mental, and physical exertion and not just passive reception. In the sincerity and consistency of our faith-inspired action, we indicate to our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ our willingness to learn and receive instruction from the Holy Ghost.

Consider how missionaries help investigators to learn by faith. Making and keeping spiritual commitments, such as studying and praying about the Book of Mormon, keeping the commandments, and attending Church meetings require an investigator to

exercise faith and to act. This principle also applies to all members, including parents, teachers, and leaders.

Teaching, exhorting, and explaining—as important as they are—can never convey to an investigator, a child, a student, or a member a witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Only as their faith initiates action and opens the pathway to the heart can the Holy Ghost deliver confirming witnesses. Missionaries, parents, teachers, and leaders obviously must learn to teach by the power of the Spirit. Of equal importance, however, is the responsibility they have to help others learn for themselves by faith.

The learning I am describing reaches far beyond mere cognitive comprehension and the retaining and recalling of information. The type of learning about which I am speaking causes us to awaken unto God (see Alma 5:7), to put off the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19), to change our hearts (see Mosiah 5:2), and to be converted unto the Lord and to never fall away (see Alma 23:6). Learning by faith requires both the

heart and a willing mind (see Doctrine and Covenants 64:34) and is the result of the Holy Ghost carrying the power of the word of God both unto and into the heart. Learning by faith cannot be transferred from an instructor to a student, from a missionary to an investigator, through a lecture, a demonstration, or an experiential exercise; rather, a student must exercise faith and act in order to obtain the knowledge for himself or herself.

## A PATTERN FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

**1. Prepare to learn.** If you attend your Sunday School class and listen to your teacher present a topic, that is good. But if you have worked and prepared, if you are thinking about things your teacher has invited you to read, ponder, and pray about before class, there can be a powerful outpouring of the Spirit, and the Holy Ghost becomes your teacher. Preparation invites revelation.

**2. Interact to edify.** I want to draw your attention to this verse. “Appoint

among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesman at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:122).

This is one of the Lord’s powerful patterns for learning and teaching. May I suggest another way of looking at this verse: “Appoint among yourselves a teacher.” Who is the teacher? The Holy Ghost. Could it be that if you want the Holy Ghost to be the teacher, then “let not all [speak] at once, but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all”? The only one that can produce that edification is the Holy Ghost.

Interacting to edify invites revelation. Presently in the Church, we are learning and applying ever more spiritually sensitive, rigorous, and demanding patterns of learning and teaching. Will we always do what we have always done and get the same results that we have always gotten, or will we repent and learn and change and teach increasingly the Lord’s way?

**3. Invite to act.** Just one simple question helps to achieve this goal. What will you do with what you have learned? Acting upon revelation invites more revelation.

I pray we will keep pace with the Lord’s hastening, that we will not just simply do what we have always done

the way we have always done it.

I declare my witness of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I witness that He lives. He is resurrected. He stands at the head of this Church and He directs its affairs. He is petitioning all of us to keep pace

with His hastening and follow the patterns He has set forth for our growth and learning. **NE**

*From an address given at the seminar for new mission presidents on June 25, 2014.*

**NOTE**

1. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 162.



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