

*Familiarity can lead us “to be less
and less astonished at a sign or a
wonder from heaven.”*





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By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines



REDISCOVERING A WONDER OF THE WORLD... and Avoiding the Dangers of Spiritual Apathy

Ciro Villavicencio estimates that during his first three years as a tour guide in Peru's Cusco region, he led nearly 400 tours to Machu Picchu, the famed "lost city" of the Incas. Yet, even after his many visits, this site—included on various lists of wonders of the world—has not lost its wonder for him.

"There's always something new to learn," he says. Spending several hours taking a group of visitors through Machu Picchu isn't unusual for Ciro. However, he has seen how easy it is to lose that wonder. A few of his colleagues do a whole tour in 45 minutes. "They've lost interest," he says.

Ciro, a member of the Chasqui Ward and high councilor in the Cusco Peru Inti Raymi Stake, believes that understanding his colleagues' disinterest could help Church

members increase interest in another wonder of the world—the most significant one—the "marvelous work and a wonder" of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Nephi 25:17).

The Dangers of Wonder Lost

Abandoned in the late 1500s by the Incas and undiscovered by the conquistadores, this isolated city high in the Peruvian Andes was lost to all but a few. At the turn of the 20th century, its discovery by the outside world brought droves of researchers and tourists.

After decades of study, "some people thought that they had found everything to be found at Machu Picchu," Ciro says. "When people think that everything has been found or that everything is done, they give up or devalue the item or the effort."



As long as researchers have studied Machu Picchu, they have been rewarded with new discoveries and additional knowledge.

Ciro worries that the same complacency can happen in the Church. He has seen how time and familiarity can lead some members “to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, insomuch that they [begin] to be hard in their hearts, and blind in their minds, and [begin] to disbelieve all which they [have] heard and seen” (3 Nephi 2:1).

This loss of wonder can leave members susceptible to Satan’s lies, such as: You don’t need to listen to that speaker; you already know it all. You don’t need to go to Sunday School; you’ve heard that lesson before. You don’t need to study your scriptures today; there’s nothing new there.

“And thus [does] Satan get possession of the hearts of the people” (3 Nephi 2:2).

Experiencing peaks and valleys in enthusiasm for gospel learning is not uncommon. But those who allow a lull in spiritual learning to lengthen into a lifestyle are in danger of losing “even that which they have” in spiritual understanding (2 Nephi 28:30; see also Matthew 25:14–30).

Rekindling Wonder

Understanding three truths has helped Ciro remain teachable in spite of apathy’s appeal:

1. There is more that I need to know.

During times of intense gospel study on his mission and as an institute teacher, Ciro has discovered that there is always something more to learn, whether it’s a new principle or a new application of one he already knew. More important, that new spiritual knowledge is often something he needed to know to get through whatever challenges he was facing—or about to face.

“Part of being teachable,” he says, “is remembering that there’s always something I don’t know that I probably need to know.”

2. I need the Holy Ghost’s help to learn what I need.

When you don’t know what you need to know, you need a knowledgeable teacher (see John 14:26). As Ciro studies the scriptures alone or with his wife or as he participates in classes and meetings, he is constantly reminded that it doesn’t matter how often he has read a particular verse or heard a particular concept.

“The Spirit can teach me things I had never considered,” he says. “The Holy Ghost is the teacher.”

3. Learning takes effort on my part.

Learning is an active not a passive exercise.¹ It requires desire, attention, participation, and application of principles learned (see Alma 32:27).

“I have to take responsibility for learning,” Ciro says. “Heavenly Father won’t force me to learn anything.”

Wonder Rewarded

For Ciro, Machu Picchu remains a wonder of the world because, for as long as researchers have studied it, they have been rewarded

with new discoveries and additional knowledge.

Even after a century of study, archaeologists have found in just the past several years a burial site, ceramics, and even additional terrace structures, all of which have added to what is known about Machu Picchu and the Incas.

Such is the case with studying the gospel of Jesus Christ. “There is always something new to discover in the gospel for those who make the effort,” *Ciro* says.

Just as new discoveries at Machu Picchu build upon previous knowledge, providing researchers with a more complete understanding, “he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full” (Alma 12:10; see also D&C 50:24).

“The gospel is an unending fount of living waters to which we need to return regularly,” *Ciro* says.

The Marvelous Work of Wonder

As *Ciro* watches from a ledge high above Machu Picchu, dozens of different tour groups walk among the ancient buildings. For *Ciro* the tragedy in the disinterest among a few of his colleagues is that it hurts not only them but those who could be experiencing wonder through them.

Keeping wonder for the gospel alive will bless not only the individual but those associated with him or her. “The

change the gospel makes in people’s lives is a wonder,” says *Ciro*. “And those who have experienced that change can



themselves become a wonder in the lives of others.” ■

NOTE

- 1. See David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” *Liahona*, Sept. 2007, 16; *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 60.



Finding Motivation to Read the Scriptures

By Wilfer Montes Leon

We need to pray for motivation to read the scriptures and also for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We need to delight in the scriptures; that is, enjoy the word of God and feel the love offered to us by the message it gives us. We need to not just let the letters pass before our eyes, because the idea is for us to fall in love with this marvelous gospel.

Each time you search the scriptures, you will learn more, and through them you can come to know the will of our Heavenly Father. He often answers our prayers through the standard works of the Church. When we feel peace and receive inspiring thoughts, we can know that they come from Heavenly Father through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:1–3).

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