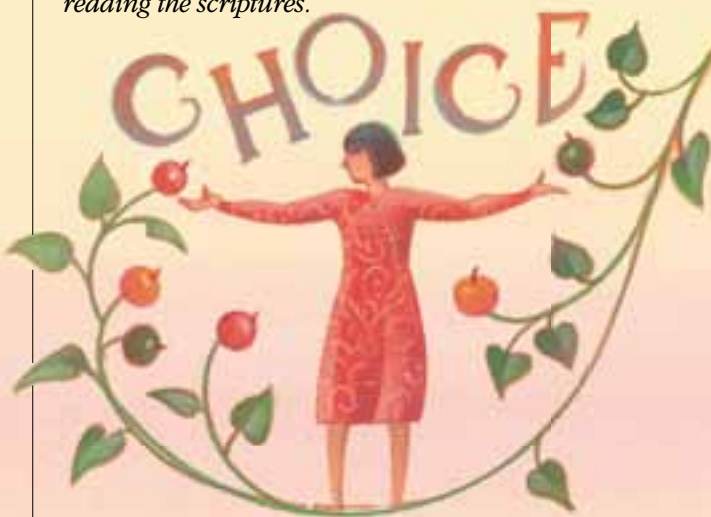


HIS POWER IN

Young adults find guidance with scripture reading.

Personal scripture study has the power to change and enrich our lives. Here, members share lessons they learned in their young adult years from reading the scriptures.



My Lesson on the Power to Choose

During my senior year of college I became acquainted with a woman who was very difficult to get along with. She was critical and harsh, and I felt that no matter how hard I tried, she always found something to criticize. I felt belittled every time I was around her. My initial feelings of hurt soon turned to anger and then to resentment. She consumed my thoughts as I dwelled on all the perceived injustices that had been done to me.

I recognized that I was suffering spiritually because I was harboring such negative feelings, and I didn't like the continual state of defensiveness I was in. I desperately wanted to feel peace of mind again. I had been taught that the scriptures contain the answers to life's questions and

that if we approach the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, He will lead us to those answers. I pleaded with the Lord that He would soften my heart and help me to be humble so that the Holy Ghost would be with me as I studied the scriptures. I prayed specifically that in my study that day, I would find a way to overcome my bad feelings toward this woman.

I turned in my scriptures to the place where I'd left off the day before, Mosiah 27. Verses 3 and 4 read, "And there was a strict command throughout all the churches . . . that there should be an equality among all men; *that they should let no pride nor haughtiness disturb their peace*; that every man should esteem his neighbor as himself" (emphasis added).

I was struck with wonder and amazement as I realized that here was my answer: it was *my* pride that was preventing me from feeling peace! What a revelation! I could not change this woman's behavior, and I could not blame her for the unhappiness I had been feeling. I alone was responsible for my spiritual progression, and I could choose not to become offended.

How grateful I was to the Lord for answering my prayer and verifying that what I had been taught was true: the scriptures *do* contain the answers to life's questions. How much richer our scripture study is when we follow Nephi's counsel to "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23).

Michelle Olson, Utah



MY LIFE

The Lord's Love for Me

As a partly active college student, I came across Doctrine and Covenants 59:18, which helped me better understand God's love for me. One phrase in particular had special meaning for me: God gave us the earth and all things in it "to please the eye and to gladden the heart." As I read this, I was struck with the understanding that Heavenly Father wants us to enjoy life. He wants us to be happy because He loves us. Somehow I had developed the attitude that most of our Heavenly Father's intentions were to punish us for wrongdoing, but now I had a new perspective. This one passage from the Doctrine and Covenants was the first verse that spoke of God's love for me in a way I could understand.

John Bonner, Idaho

VIRTUE

Beauty in God's Eyes

My friend and I sat on a street curb in Venice, Italy, poring over a map and happily discussing options for the rest of our day on tour.

We had been thoroughly enjoying Italy for the last few days and had noticed that it seemed to be a country that reflected an appreciation for great beauty in everything from its ancient architecture to its fashionably dressed citizens.

In contrast, I was feeling anything but beautiful. Touring the country on a budget and living out of a backpack meant I was wearing the same clothes again and again, and the humidity was making my naturally curly hair especially hard to manage. My friend, on the other hand, was naturally gorgeous—one of those tall, slender types who could wear her pajamas to the symphony and still look beautiful.

As we sat side by side on the curb that day, completely engrossed in our planning, we didn't notice a young man approaching us from across the street. We looked up to see him carrying a single chair under his arm as he came nearer.

"Bellissima [most beautiful]," he said to my friend when he reached us, setting the chair down in front of her and motioning for her to sit in it. Then he turned and walked away—leaving me to sit on the curb alone—without even acknowledging my presence.

I had never felt so unattractive in my entire life. Though my friend and I laughed about his "chivalrous" gesture, I ached inside. I had felt insecure about my looks for years, and this snub seemed proof that I was as plain in others' eyes as I was in my own. All throughout the day I grew more and more depressed as internal questions about my worth gnawed at me.

Later that night I was still upset, so I began searching my scriptures, hoping to find some comfort. I opened them to Proverbs 31, where I read, “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. . . . Beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (vv. 10, 30).

Relief washed over me. I might not have been the most beautiful girl in the world, but I *was* doing my best to be virtuous. Feelings of peace and comfort came to me as I considered that, in my Heavenly Father’s eyes, my virtue was more important than anything else, including my looks. Soon I was sleeping peacefully, with reassurance from the scriptures that the Lord knows the worth of His children—even when others do not.

Julia Ditto, Washington

scripture study. The list could then be a reference for me to turn to when I needed encouragement.

Preparing for marriage wasn’t a topic I remembered ever having seen in the scriptures before. But as soon as I began studying the verses on the bishop’s list, I found that they—and many others—did, in fact, give me marriage preparation counsel and that studying them brought me comfort.

One of the scriptures that gave me new insight on preparing for marriage was Alma 32:40–43. Just as we are to nourish the gospel in our lives with patience, faith, and long-suffering and watch for the fruit of our obedience, I would need to be patient and faithful while I waited for the blessing

of marriage to come to me. Even before reading this scripture, I had known that the blessings of a temple marriage were worth waiting for. But now I came to realize that preparing for marriage wasn’t just waiting; it required faith and hard work to prepare myself—as well as some long-suffering. Studying the scriptures, particularly Alma 32, helped me focus on patiently waiting for Heavenly Father’s will to be fulfilled and on working toward my goal.

At age 31 I married in the temple. Shortly afterward, my husband and I were invited to teach an institute course on preparing for eternal marriage. Our preparation for teaching the course helped us both reflect on how our experiences working toward marriage while we were single were now helping us in our marriage. I shared with the students my experiences finding marriage-related scriptures, and we began searching for marriage advice in them together. Each week the students found other marriage-related scriptures to add to the list.



PATIENCE

Bishop’s Marriage Advice

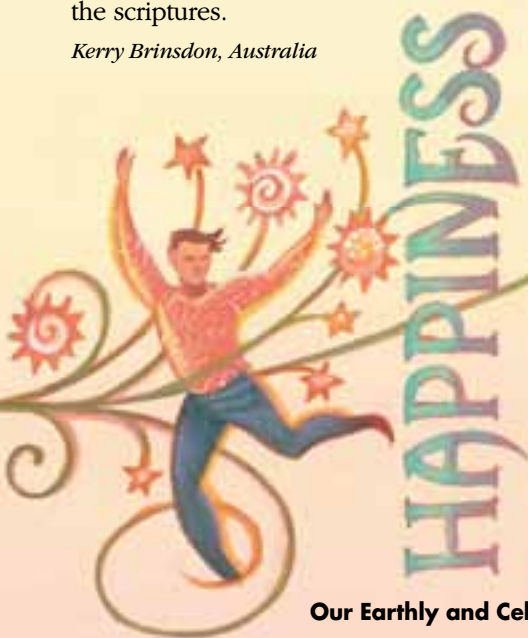
I joined the Church when I was 20 years old and made many friends with other young single adults. I hoped to find someone to marry; yet as time went by, I began to feel as though the odds of my obtaining a celestial marriage in this life were waning.

During a period when I was feeling particularly discouraged, I counseled with my bishop. He surprised me by pulling out a list of scriptures, each of which he said could teach a lesson about preparing for marriage. Working to prepare myself for marriage and focusing less on the fact that I was single would help me feel happier and more patient while I looked for a spouse.

He recommended that I study the scriptures on the list and then add others to it. I could watch for possible applications to marriage in my personal

My bishop had taught me a pattern I could use for the rest of my life and even teach to others. I am grateful for his loving guidance in helping me see how to find answers to my questions in the scriptures.

Kerry Brinsdon, Australia



Our Earthly and Celestial Purpose

One of the questions I was asked most often as a missionary is “Why am I here, and what is my purpose?” Lehi, speaking to his son Jacob in the wilderness, answers this very question. He tells Jacob, “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Upon contemplating Lehi’s words, I have developed a testimony that our life’s purpose is to gain happiness—both here on earth and in heaven—and that we can find this happiness by being obedient to the Lord’s commandments.

Knowing from this scripture that the Lord’s greatest desire is for us to be happy helps me see others and myself in a different way. We are divine children loved by our Heavenly Father. This scripture has given my life greater meaning and has brought me joy and a goal to work toward. Because I know that happiness is the greatest goal, I can wake up in the morning looking forward to a bright new day, and I can be ready for the experiences that day will bring. The words of a prophet from long ago, which I read in the scriptures, taught me how to find this joy.

Vince Mōlējōn, Philippines



A TESTIMONY’S CORE

“Personal, sincere involvement in the scriptures produces faith, hope, and solutions to our daily challenges. Frequently reading, pondering, and applying the lessons of the scriptures, combined with prayer, become an irreplaceable part of gaining and sustaining a strong, vibrant testimony.”

Elder Donald L. Staheli, formerly of the Seventy, “Securing Our Testimonies,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 39.



Divine Potential

When I was a teenager, my activity in the Church wavered. My family was not active, and my mother’s boyfriend was against the Church and was abusive. I was unhappy at home. When I did manage to attend church, I noticed a wonderful difference between the atmosphere in the chapel and that of anywhere else I had been.

One day a teacher challenged our class to read a chapter each day from the Book of Mormon. I began getting up a little earlier so I could quietly read before anyone else at home awoke or could object.

By the time I got to Alma, I was feeling more and more desperate about my family’s situation. I also worried about my own standing with the Lord because I was struggling to obey His commandments. When I read of the king’s experience in Alma 22:18, an incredible peace came over me. I quickly developed a desire, just like this Lamanite did, to truly “give away all my sins” so that I could know my Heavenly Father.

My family situation didn’t change—but I did. This scripture helped me resolve to keep the Lord’s standards. I studied the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet and committed to live by its teachings. By acting on my newly strengthened desire to come to know Heavenly Father, I obtained the hope and testimony I needed to endure my struggles and become a better person. Even now, when I find myself struggling to reach my full potential as a child of God, I reread that scripture. Pondering it again strengthens my commitment to living His standards and renews my hope for eternal life.

Name Withheld ■