

BY JOHN HILTON III

*The advice of family and friends is helpful, but we can turn to an even better source.*

Some time ago, one of my institute students approached me and asked if I would give him some advice. He wanted to go to graduate school and was trying to decide which university he should attend. As we talked, I thought of a phrase from 1 Nephi. Nephi's older brothers didn't understand what their father had taught them concerning the gathering of Israel (see 1 Nephi 10:14). When they came to Nephi to ask for an explanation, he asked, "Have ye inquired of the Lord?" (1 Nephi 15:8).

Often when we have problems, we turn to friends or family members and seek their advice. This isn't necessarily bad; in fact, often it is part of the process of studying things out. But do

# Have Ye Inquired of the Lord?



we sometimes forget to inquire of the Lord? Similarly, when others approach us for counsel, we may be tempted to draw on our reservoirs of knowledge and forget to point them to the One who knows all things. I realized that the best advice I could give this student was to invite him to inquire of the Lord.

The phrase “inquire of the Lord” appears several times in the scriptures, and with only one exception, after the people inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered their questions.<sup>1</sup> Consider the following examples:

King Mosiah had a question about his family. He needed to know whether to allow his sons to go on a mission to the Lamanites. He “went and inquired of the Lord . . . and the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up” (Mosiah 28:6–7).

The Lord also answered inquiries pertaining to temporal concerns. On several occasions King David pleaded with the Lord for the wisdom to know how to handle military conflicts. “And David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up” (2 Samuel 5:19). A short time later, David again had trouble with the Philistines. “And when David enquired of the Lord, he said, Thou shalt not go up” (2 Samuel 5:23). Although the Lord’s specific advice was different the second time David inquired, the pattern was the same—inquire of the Lord and receive an answer.

Inquiring of the Lord is not limited to situations of familial or physical necessity. When Alma was faced with a difficult ecclesiastical dilemma “he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter. . . . And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him” (Mosiah 26:13–14).

The process of inquiring of the Lord also leads to understanding doctrine. When Mormon heard some were preaching the doctrine of baptizing infants he “immediately . . . inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the



## LET HIM ASK OF GOD

*“Searching and inquiring are a means of coming to a knowledge of all truth, whether*

*that truth be spiritual, scientific, or moral. The restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and all that means to us came about because of the inquiring after truth of the 14-year-old Joseph Smith, guided by the passage, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him’ (James 1:5).”*

**President James E. Faust (1920–2007), “The Truth Shall Make You Free,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 4.**

word of the Lord came to [Mormon],” explaining that this practice was incorrect (Moroni 8:7).

Inquiring of the Lord is not a practice exclusive to ancient times. Joseph Smith wrote, “My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18). As we know, the Lord answered this request. In fact, many sections in the Doctrine and Covenants were given because Joseph “inquired of the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

The question “have ye inquired of the Lord?” can be extremely beneficial for Church leaders. For example, if

a Relief Society president were to be approached by a ward sister with a difficult dilemma, that president would have a powerful opportunity to teach that sister about receiving revelation. By doing this, the president not only helps the sister with the current crisis but also teaches her how to handle future challenges.

When I started studying the scriptural pattern of “inquiring of the Lord,” I saw immediate application for my institute students. They frequently face important life decisions such as where to go to school, where to live, whether or not to serve a mission, and whom to marry.

As pertinent as this principle is to them, I’ve learned that it applies to everyone. Toward the end of one semester, several weeks after I taught this principle, I invited my students to evaluate the class. One student responded to the question “What can I do to be a better teacher?” by writing “Have ye inquired of the Lord?”

That student taught me an important lesson. I learned that in addition to seeking feedback from my students, I could receive divine guidance in how to improve my teaching. The need to inquire of the Lord is an important spiritual key for us all. ■

## NOTES

1. See 1 Samuel 28:6. Note that at this time Saul had turned from the Lord.
2. See the section headings for Doctrine and Covenants 6, 12, 17, and 23 for examples.