

# THE SCRIPTURE STUDY PUZZLE

*Like putting together a puzzle, each time you study the scriptures, you get a larger and larger view of God's truths.*

By Cody Phillips

In September 2011, students at a university in Vietnam set a new world record by putting together the largest jigsaw puzzle in the world. It took 1,600 students 17 hours to put all 551,232 pieces in place.

They created a 48-foot by 76-foot (15 m by 23 m) puzzle showing a lotus flower with six leaves representing people, geography, history, culture, education, and economy. Think of it—more than half a million tiny pieces interlocking to form one giant picture. Each piece of that puzzle might seem unimportant and uninteresting by itself, but the puzzle is incomplete if just one piece is missing.

The scriptures are like a jigsaw puzzle: the more pieces you put together, the more you see the truths of God's plan. As your view of that plan grows, you'll see that the scriptures are interesting and relevant to your life.

Here are a few scripture-study suggestions to help you see the big picture—and the tiny details. As you put these pieces together, you'll see the amazing truths that await you in the scriptures.

## **Doctrine: Large Pieces That Teach Eternal Truths**

The scriptures teach the doctrines and principles of the gospel. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Timothy 3:16). Since we can be saved only through Jesus Christ (see John 14:6), we need to learn about Him and His doctrine. That's why the Lord asks us to "search the scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

## **People: Colorful Pieces That Teach Lessons**


There are hundreds of people to read about in the scriptures. Which of them do you admire most? Maybe you look up to Ammon for his courageous obedience in the face of danger. Or maybe you think of Job and his unwavering faith and integrity.

Have you read about the donkey that talked to its master (see Numbers 22)? or the wicked king who was willing to give up his kingdom to be forgiven (see Alma 22)? or the woman who was known by her whole city as a virtuous person (see Ruth 1–4)?

There are also people in the scriptures who weren't so admirable. What can you learn from them and the poor choices they made?

Pay attention to people you read about in the scriptures, and ask yourself how you can follow their good examples





and avoid their mistakes. The puzzle pieces of their lives are some of the most interesting and colorful pieces of all. Their experiences are a memorable way to learn and remember the principles of the gospel!

### **Symbolism: Uncovering Hidden Pieces**

Sometimes the scriptures use symbols to teach gospel principles. You'll be missing some puzzle pieces if you

don't see the symbolism. In addition to Church and seminary classes, study helps like the Guide to the Scriptures or seminary and institute manuals can help you find the missing pieces.

For example, the story of Abraham and Isaac (see Genesis 22) is inspiring, but it takes on a deeper meaning when you discover that it is symbolic of our Heavenly Father's sacrifice and of the Savior's atoning sacrifice for us (see Jacob 4:5).



### GOD SPEAKS TO US

“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.

### The Holy Ghost: Finding Pieces That Connect

Some puzzle pieces look like they go together, but they don't quite fit. The Spirit can help you see which pieces really do go together. As you invite His help through prayer and pondering, the Spirit will help you see how verses you have studied before connect to what you're studying now as well as how those teachings connect to your life. Ideally, you'll receive inspiration from the words in the scriptures but also from the Spirit as you ponder on the things you read.

### Application: Putting the Pieces Together

You won't see what picture the puzzle is forming if you don't put the pieces together. Similarly, the doctrines, principles, and commandments you learn from the scriptures will not help you very much unless you live what you learn (see John 7:17). As you try each day to live by the principles of the gospel taught in the scriptures, your faith and testimony will grow stronger, and scripture study will become an essential part of your life. ■

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