

# “I HAVE LEARNED FOR MYSELF”



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Seminaries and Institutes

*Want to learn for yourself the truthfulness of the gospel? Elevate your gospel learning in seminary.*



For more information about the new graduation requirements, visit [seminary.lds.org](http://seminary.lds.org). For an example of a young adult who gained a testimony by sincerely studying the scriptures and praying, you can read Clayton M. Christensen's experience in "The Most Useful Piece of Knowledge," *New Era*, Jan. 2009, available at [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org).

“I have learned for myself” were five simple words spoken by the Prophet Joseph Smith to his mother after he experienced the First Vision (Joseph Smith—History 1:20). These words contain a powerful lesson for us today. As President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “Whether you are 12 or 112—or anywhere in between—you can *know for yourself* that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true.”<sup>1</sup>

In order to help you “know for yourself,” seminary students worldwide now complete two additional requirements to graduate from seminary: (1) read the assigned scriptures for the course and (2) pass two learning assessments during each course. Here’s how these new graduation requirements can help strengthen your testimony:

## YOU READ AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES FOR THE COURSE.

As you study the scriptures, you will begin to feel the stirrings of the Spirit that will lead you to deepen your conversion. After completing the required scripture reading in her last year of seminary, one student shared that she learned much more because she “really read the scriptures—not just read them but studied them.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught what it means to study: “When I say ‘study,’ I mean . . . reading a few verses, stopping to ponder them, carefully reading the verses again, and as you think about what they mean, praying for understanding, asking questions in your mind, waiting for spiritual impressions, and writing down the impressions and insights that come so you can remember and learn more.”<sup>2</sup>

## YOU CAN USE THE LEARNING ASSESSMENTS TO EVALUATE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.

A learning assessment is like the question an angel of the Lord asked Nephi: “What beholdest thou?” (1 Nephi 11:14). This question prompted Nephi to evaluate and express what he had learned.

Learning assessments have three parts: multiple-choice questions and an essay question, which are graded, and a personal assessment of your beliefs, which is not graded. After taking a learning assessment, one student said, “I was looking forward to it because I wanted to see what I had taken out of seminary.” Another student commented that the learning assessment will “help you to understand where you are at in the gospel and where you need to be.”

The assessments will be even more effective when you focus on the gospel doctrines and principles that are the basis of the learning assessment questions. After a seminary class discussed the doctrines behind the questions, one student shared, “It changed the outlook of the test into more of a discussion and a testimony builder. It helped to solidify what you learned.”

## WHAT DO STUDENTS LIKE ABOUT THE LEARNING ASSESSMENTS?

### STUDENTS' COMMENTS:

- “I FEEL LIKE I COULD GO ON A MISSION AND KNOW WHAT I’M TALKING ABOUT.”
- “IT HELPS YOU RETAIN WHAT YOU LEARN IN SEMINARY.”
- “WE ARE ABLE TO GRASP THE CONCEPTS A LOT BETTER.”
- “YOUR CONFIDENCE IS STRENGTHENED.”
- “WE ARE ACTUALLY GOING TO BE ABLE TO LEARN THESE THINGS INSTEAD OF JUST FEELING GOOD AND KIND OF FORGETTING ABOUT THE DOCTRINES.”

## YOU CAN LEARN TO LOVE LEARNING FOR YOURSELF.

“Learning for ourselves that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is true can be one of the greatest and most joyful experiences in life.”<sup>3</sup> One student said, “I have enjoyed being more engaged and realizing I have to step it up a little more every day instead of just coming and sitting in a chair and listening but not necessarily participating.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught the importance of learning: “Learning to love learning is central to the gospel of Jesus Christ, is vital to our ongoing spiritual and personal development, and is an absolute necessity in the world in which we do now and will yet live, serve, and work.”<sup>4</sup>

The more effort you invest, the more enjoyment and learning you’ll experience. **NE**

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 62; emphasis added.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “When Thou Art Converted,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 11.
3. Craig C. Christensen, “I Know These Things of Myself,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 50.
4. David A. Bednar, “Learning to Love Learning,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2010, 26.