

My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures

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If you have not already developed the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying.

When I was a new bride, I asked my mother-in-law, who is a very good cook, if she would teach me how to make her delicious dinner rolls. With a sparkle in her eye, she replied that it took 25 years to learn to make a good roll! Then she added, “You had better start making some.” I followed her advice, and we have enjoyed many good dinner rolls at our house.

At about that same time, I was invited to a lunch for all of the Relief Society sisters in my ward who had read either the Book of Mormon or a short Church history book. I had become casual in my scripture reading, so I qualified to attend the luncheon by reading the short book because it was easier and took less time. As I was eating my lunch, I had a powerful feeling that though the history book was a good one, I should have read the Book of Mormon. The Holy Ghost was prompting me to change my scripture reading habits. That very day I began to read the Book of Mormon, and I have never stopped reading it. Though I do not consider myself to be an expert, I truly love reading all the scriptures, and I am grateful I started the lifetime habit of reading them. It would be impossible to learn the lessons the scriptures contain by reading them only one time through or studying selected verses in a class.

Roll making is a great homemaking skill. As I bake them, a sweet aroma fills the house. I am able to show my love for my family by sharing something I created. When I study the scriptures, the Spirit of the Lord fills my home. I gain important understanding, which I then share with my family, and my love for them increases. The Lord has told us that our time should “be devoted to the studying of the scriptures” (D&C 26:1) and that “the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given ... for [our] instruction” (D&C 33:16). Every woman can be a gospel doctrine instructor in her home, and every sister in the Church needs gospel knowledge as a leader and teacher. If you have not already developed the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying in order to be prepared for your responsibilities in this life and in the eternities.

My early attempts at making rolls and scripture reading were not always successful, but over time it got easier. For both pursuits I needed to learn proper techniques and gain an understanding of the ingredients. The key was starting and doing it again and again. One good way to start studying the scriptures is to “liken” them to ourselves (see 1 Ne. 19:23). Some people start by choosing a subject in the Topical Guide that they need to know more about. Or they start at the beginning of a book of scripture and look for specific teachings as they read through.

For instance, when I was called to serve as a Young Women leader, I bought a new set of scriptures, and as I read

and marked those scriptures, I looked for things that would help me in my calling. Sometimes I put colored pieces of paper in my scriptures so I have quick access to topics or themes I am studying. I have paper tabs in my scriptures for many of my favorite verses about repentance and the Atonement so I can find them easily as I ponder during the sacrament each week. I usually make notes about what I am learning. Sometimes I keep those notes in my scriptures, and sometimes I write what I am learning in a separate notebook.

Once in a while I invest in a new copy of the Book of Mormon. When I start reading that new book, I make notes in the margins so I have a record of what I am learning as I study. To help me remember what I am learning, I draw lines to connect ideas. I shade verses and underline key words. When I find ideas that relate to each other, I make a scripture chain to link those ideas (see “Scripture Linking,” *Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 58). I like to think of my scriptures as a workbook, so sometimes I record where I was when I gained an insight or the name of the person who taught me. That way the experience is refreshed in my memory when I read that passage again.

Many of you study foreign languages. You might like to start reading the Book of Mormon in another language. When you read the scriptures in another language, you learn what the words mean in a new way. Some people start by finding answers to their questions. They want to know who they are and what they should be doing with their lives. A friend of mine suggested that I start looking for questions that the Lord asks *us* in the scriptures and ponder them (see John S. Tanner, “Responding to the Lord’s Questions,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 26). Since then I have discovered many important questions such as “What desirest thou?” (1 Ne. 11:2) and “What think ye of Christ?” (Matt. 22:42). I keep a list of those questions in the back of my scriptures. I often choose one to think about in quiet moments because pondering enlightens my mind that I “might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45). When I do not have my scriptures nearby, then I start my study by reviewing teachings I have memorized. By reciting the Articles of Faith or other verses to myself, I am able to keep them in my memory bank.

Whichever way a person starts studying the scriptures, the key to unlocking important knowledge is to keep studying. I never tire of discovering the rich treasures of truth in the scriptures because they teach with “plainness, even as plain as word can be” (2 Ne. 32:7). The scriptures testify of Christ (see John 5:39). They tell us all things we should do (see 2 Ne. 32:3). They “make [us] wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15).

Through my scripture reading and the prayers that accompany my study, I have gained knowledge which brings me peace and helps me keep my energies focused on eternal priorities. Because I started reading the scriptures daily, I have learned about my Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and what I need to do to be like Them. I have learned about the Holy Ghost and how to qualify for His companionship. I have learned about my identity as a daughter of God. Essentially, I have learned who I am, why I am here on earth, and what I should be doing with my life.

As a youth, the Prophet Joseph Smith had a great question weighing on his mind. He started reading the scriptures and found a solution in the Bible (see James 1:5). He said, “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine.” He reflected on it “again and again” (JS—H 1:12). Because Joseph acted upon what he read in the scriptures, he learned about Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and his identity as a son of God. Joseph learned who he was, why he was here on earth, and what he needed to do in this life.

The scriptures are so important that Nephi risked his life to obtain a copy of them. He wanted to “see, and hear, and know” (1 Ne. 10:17). He “searched [the scriptures] and found that they were desirable [and] of great worth” (1 Ne. 5:21). In the scriptures he learned about “the doings of the Lord in other lands, among people of old” (1 Ne. 19:22). He started a study of the scriptures and learned about Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and his identity as a son of God. He learned who he was and what to do.

I have great confidence in the young women of the Church. Through your habit of daily scripture study, you will be “led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written” (Hel. 15:7). You will be the mothers and leaders who will help prepare the next generation with gospel understanding and testimony. Your children will be men and women of faith who will continue to build the kingdom of God on the earth because of what you teach them from the scriptures.

If reading the scriptures is not already a habit with you, today is a great day to start. It did not really take 25 years to learn to make good dinner rolls. I just needed the encouragement to get started. Homemade rolls have brought much enjoyment to my family. But the greater joy has come from the habit of daily scripture reading which I started so many years ago. Some days I have a lot of time to contemplate the scriptures. Other days I reflect on a few verses. Just as eating and breathing sustain my physical body, the scriptures feed and give life to my spirit. I can now echo Nephi and say: “My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them. ... Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard” (2 Ne. 4:15–16). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.