

The gospel is a pattern for all

I testify that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is a pattern for all. It is not the location of events that matters; it is the good news—the timeless doctrine and atoning powers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I bear witness that He lives, that He is the Christ. I testify that the gospel restored

through the Prophet Joseph Smith is Peter’s “restitution of all things.” I bear witness that President Gordon B. Hinckley is the Lord’s prophet today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir and congregation sang
“Sweet Is the Work.”

Sister Cheryl C. Lant

Delighting in the scriptures

Our beloved prophet has recently asked us to read the Book of Mormon before the end of the year. As I have accepted this invitation, I have found myself discovering new and exciting things in this book even though I have read it many times before. For instance, I rediscovered 2 Nephi 4:15, which reads, “For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.”

This scripture teaches us how to read the Book of Mormon. It mentions three important ideas.

First, “My soul delighteth.” I love this phrase! I have thought about hungering and thirsting after knowledge as I read the scriptures, but delighting in them is something else. I find that what I take away from the scriptures is determined by what I bring. Each time I read them, I am, in a sense, bringing a new person with new eyes to the experience. Where I am in my life, the experiences I am having, and my attitude all affect how much I will gain. I love the scriptures. I treasure the truths I find as I read them. Joy fills my heart as I receive encouragement, direction, comfort, strength, and answers to my needs. Life looks brighter, and the way opens before me. I am reassured of my Heavenly Father’s love and concern for me every time I read. Surely this is a delight to me. As one little boy in a Sunbeam class put it, “I feel happy about the scriptures!”

Pondering the scriptures

Second, “My heart pondereth them.” How I love to carry the scriptures with me in my heart! The spirit of what I have read rests there to bring me peace and comfort. The knowledge I have gained gives me guidance and direction. I have the confidence born out of obedience.

Sometimes I have the luxury of immersing myself in the scriptures. Sometimes I read them in snatches. However, it doesn’t seem to matter where or when I read the scriptures; I can still carry them in my heart. I have found that by reading them in the morning I am able to carry the influence of the Spirit with me throughout the day. When I read them midday, it is usually because a need has taken me there, where I am able to find answers and directions that influence my decisions and actions. When I read them at night, the sweet, comforting messages from the Lord linger in my subconscious mind as I rest. Many times I awaken at night with ideas or thoughts that originate from the words I read just before drifting off to sleep. My mind may go many places during the day, but my heart securely embraces the words of the Lord found in the scriptures and “pondereth them.”

Through this I have learned that “as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). As I ponder the scriptures, something happens to me. I have a stronger desire to live close to my Heavenly Father. I long to serve Him. I want to

live the principles that I learn in the scriptures, and as I do, my heart “writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.”

Writing scriptures into our lives

I, of course, do not write scriptures as did Nephi, but when I read the scriptures and live the principles I learn, those scriptures become written in my life. They govern my actions and are written there for my children to see and follow. I can build a legacy, a tradition of righteous living, based on the principles I learn in the scriptures.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:39–40 teaches:

“And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

“But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.”

By reading the scriptures, I can be assured that I will know the “light and truth” that will bless me and my family. As I know what to do, I can work to bring my actions—my “traditions”—into line with what I know. Then my example will not lead my children astray but rather will lead them to the scriptures and to the truth that is found there.

I love the Primary song that teaches:

Search, ponder, and pray
Are the things that I must do.
The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside,
I’ll know the scriptures are true.¹

I find that if I pray not only to have a witness of the truthfulness of the scriptures but also to have the Spirit with me as I read, my sensitivity is heightened, and I see ever so much more clearly. I can see where I am in my life and where my Heavenly Father wants me to be. I can understand principles of truth, and I can see how to make the needed changes in my life. I can feel assured that the Lord will

help and strengthen me to accomplish the task. Thus the scriptures become written in my life.

Scriptures strengthen families

When we read the scriptures we are hearing the voice of the Savior. He is not absent from our lives. He is actively positioned in the verses of these holy books. Our prophet has asked us to draw closer to the Savior by reading the Book of Mormon.

And what of our children? How blessed is the child whose parents base their lives on the teachings in the scriptures! There is absolutely nothing more important we can do for our families than to strengthen them in the scriptures. Parents, call your families together to read the scriptures and work to make it possible in your busy family schedules. Children, respond quickly and happily when you are called to scripture study.

President Gordon B. Hinckley gave us an invitation, but he also gave us promises if we choose to accept. He promised “an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God.”²

One of my daughters, who is in a wonderful place in her life where her greatest blessings are her greatest challenges (she has three small children), said to me: “Mom, I am doing it. I am reading the Book of Mormon. And I am holding on to those wonderful promises. They are exactly what I need in my life right now.”

Are these blessings what you need in your life? They are ours for the taking. As individuals, let us pledge to follow the prophet. As families, let us claim our blessings. President Hinckley, we love you, we have heard your voice, and we will follow.

May I bear my testimony that I know that Heavenly Father lives and loves us. I know that Jesus Christ is our Savior.

I know that the scriptures are true. They are the word of God. I know that Gordon B. Hinckley is our prophet today. I know that as we follow him, we receive great blessings from our Father in Heaven. I am so grateful for this witness. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. "Search, Ponder, and Pray," *Children's Songbook*, 109.
2. "A Testimony Vibrant and True," *Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 6.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Mortality is a time of testing and growth

All around us we see a growing desire for spiritual direction the world over as a result of increasing natural and human-caused disasters. This yearning for spiritual guidance is a consequence of our being children of a divine Heavenly Father. It is understandable that when we face difficulty we turn to our Creator for help. Our loving Heavenly Father knew that deteriorating world conditions, severe personal challenges, and disasters would lead His children to seek His spiritual nourishment. The challenge is how to properly find it.

We lived in the presence of God our Holy Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in a premortal existence. There we gained an understanding of the Father's plan of salvation and the promise of help when we would be born as mortals on earth. The primary purpose of life was explained. We were told:

"We will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate [that is to be obedient in the premortal existence] shall be added upon; . . . and they who keep their second estate [that is, to be obedient during mortal life] shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever."¹

Those words express the most fundamental purpose of your being on earth.

That purpose is to prove yourself obedient to the commandments of the Lord and thereby grow in understanding, capacity, and every worthy trait. It is to receive every required ordinance and to make and keep every needed covenant. It is to form and nourish a family. This experience includes having periods of trial and happiness, with the objective of returning triumphantly, having met well the challenges and opportunities of mortal life to receive the glorious blessings promised for such obedience.

Preparation in the premortal life

So that the period of mortal testing and growth would yield its greatest benefit, you were taught and prepared for the circumstances you would personally encounter in mortality. Our Father's pattern for guiding you through mortal life was explained. He would choose from among the most valiant, obedient spirit children prophets and other authorized servants to hold His priesthood, to be taught His truth, and to be guided to disseminate that truth among His children on earth. God would give each child moral agency, the right to choose His counsel or to ignore it. All would be encouraged but not forced to obey. You understood that while you could choose your path on earth, you could not determine the outcome of your choices. That would be decided by eternal law.

Should one live to qualify for all of the richest promised blessings but for reasons beyond his or her control not be able