



Finding Jesus Christ

IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

INSPIRING SOUNDBITES
FROM THE PODCAST



COMPILED BY ANNABELLE SORENSEN

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Finding Jesus Christ

IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

In this book, every mention of “the Church” refers to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All quoted scholars included in this book are members of The Church of Jesus Christ. However, the contents of this book is not limited to its members — it is meant for any and all who seek Jesus Christ. Please refer to <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/> for Latter-day Saint doctrinal references and vocabulary explanations.

Quotes have been modified for reader experience. Original transcripts can be found on <https://followhim.co/>.

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This book is dedicated to the listeners of the followHIM podcast. Thank you for keeping us inspired, motivated, and uplifted. Thank you for your examples of discipleship, and thank you for helping us carry the words of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all corners of the earth!

Contents

Introductory Pages to the Book of Mormon <i>Dr. Scott Woodward & Dr. Casey Griffiths</i>	9
1 Nephi 1–5 <i>John Hilton III</i>	15
1 Nephi 6–10 <i>Dr. Gaye Strathearn</i>	21
1 Nephi 11–15 <i>Joshua M. Sears</i>	29
1 Nephi 16–22 <i>Tyler J. Griffin</i>	37
2 Nephi 1–2 <i>Lili Anderson</i>	45
2 Nephi 3–5 <i>Jan J. Martin</i>	51
2 Nephi 6–10 <i>Dr. Robert Millett</i>	59
2 Nephi 11–19 <i>Dr. Shon Hopkin</i>	65
2 Nephi 20–25 <i>Camille Frank Olson</i>	69
2 Nephi 26–30 <i>Joseph Spencer</i>	79
2 Nephi 31–33 <i>Kerry Muhlestein</i>	87
Easter <i>Reyna Aburto</i>	97
Jacob 1–4 <i>Barbara Gardner</i>	105
Jacob 5–7 <i>Matthew L. Bowen</i>	113
Enos—Words of Mormon <i>Gerrit Dirkmaat</i>	121
Mosiah 1–3 <i>Jennifer Platt</i>	131
Mosiah 4–6 <i>Aaron Schade</i>	137
Mosiah 7–10 <i>Stephen Taeger</i>	147
Mosiah 11–17 <i>Ryan Sharp</i>	151
Mosiah 18–24 <i>Melissa Inouye</i>	157
Mosiah 25–28 <i>Jenet Erickson</i>	165
Mosiah 29–Alma 4 <i>Nate Williams</i>	177
Alma 5–7 <i>Frantz Belot</i>	183
Alma 8–12 <i>Daniel Sharp</i>	191
Alma 13–16 <i>Eva Witesman</i>	199
Alma 17–22 <i>Brian Meade</i>	205

Alma 23–29 <i>Lori Denning</i>	215
Alma 30–31 <i>Brent Top</i>	221
Alma 32–35 <i>S. Michael Wilcox</i>	231
Alma 36–38 <i>John “Jack” Welch</i>	241
Alma 39–42 <i>Adam Miller</i>	247
Alma 43–52 <i>David Boren</i>	257
Alma 53–63 <i>Justin Top</i>	263
Helaman 1–6 <i>Jenae Nelson</i>	273
Helaman 7–12 <i>Shima Baughman</i>	287
Helaman 13–16 <i>Sheri Dew</i>	297
3 Nephi 1–7 <i>Craig Manning</i>	307
3 Nephi 8–11 <i>Eric Huntsman</i>	317
3 Nephi 12–16 <i>Brad Wilcox</i>	327
3 Nephi 17–20 <i>Matt Townsend</i>	341
3 Nephi 20–26 <i>Ross Baron</i>	349
3 Nephi 27–4 Nephi <i>Rebecca Clarke</i>	355
Mormon 1–6 <i>Larry Nelson</i>	365
Mormon 7–9 <i>Sheldon Martin</i>	373
Ether 1–5 <i>George Pierce & Krystal Pierce</i>	381
Ether 6–11 <i>B.J. Allen</i>	389
Ether 12–15 <i>Doug Benson</i>	397
Moroni 1–6 <i>Shalise Adams</i>	405
Moroni 7–9 <i>Mark Ogletree</i>	415
Moroni 10 <i>Anthony R. Sweat</i>	425
Christmas <i>President & Sister Meredith</i>	437
References	447

Introductory Pages to the Book of Mormon

Dr. Scott Woodward &
Dr. Casey Griffiths

“The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.”

-Introductory Page

Dr. Scott Woodward:

You want to know that the heavens are open?
Here's the Book of Mormon. You want to know if
 Joseph Smith's a true prophet? *Here's the Book of*
Mormon. You want to know that God is speaking
 again in our day? *Here's a copy of the book. You can*
hold it in your hands.

Moroni says on the title page, "Now if there are
 faults, they are the mistakes of men; wherefore
 condemn not the things of God." He is very
 self-conscious of the possibility of errors in his
 record. *He knows his own inadequacies, he knows*
the inadequacies of the other writers. I love what
 he's saying here. If I could restate, I would say
prophetic fallibility does not negate the work of God.
For me, it only makes it all the more marvelous because
of what it shows us about what God can do through
flawed mortals.

Why might that matter, to know that the Book
 of Mormon came forth in 65 days? I would
 respond that the speed at which this comes
 forth is *very suspicious of a miracle. It kind of smells*
. . . it smells miraculous. For comparison, the King
 James Bible took seven years for 47 scholars,
 theologians, and clergymen to translate from
 Hebrew and Greek into English. The LDS
 triple-combination Book of Mormon, Doctrine
 and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price —
 that took three years for six full-time general
 authorities, full staff and secretaries, and 100+
 return missionaries three years to get that done.
 Some people might say, "Well, it's fiction. Book
 of Mormon, it's fiction," to which we'll shelf
 that argument for now. But I'd say, well, let's
 compare it to some fiction. *The Hobbit*, J.R.
 Tolkien — this took two and a half years for
 him to write. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, 12
 years. *Harry Potter*, just volume one, where we're
 doing some serious world building (Tolkien and
 J.K. Rowling build a world, which would be re-
 quired for the Book of Mormon), took six years.
Les Misérables by Victor Hugo took 12 years. Let
 me just state it again: *The Book of Mormon took 65*
days. One pass, and it was done. No punctuation. One
sentence.

It's virtually *impossible* to fully appreciate what it means that Jesus is the Christ outside of understanding God's covenants with the House of Israel.

You want to see a miracle? *Get a copy of the Book of Mormon* and you're looking at it.

Dr. Casey Griffiths:

The opening pages are crucial to understanding not just the Book of Mormon and its story, where it came from, but also what brought everybody together in the early Restoration.

God can and will still do miracles for us.

Are you going to find flaws here? Yeah. Is the message still powerful, potent, and life-changing? *An imperfect messenger can deliver a message that leads to perfection — that leads to Christ.*

The text of the Book of Mormon actually starts on the title page. This is written by Moroni and is intended to be the introduction to the Book of Mormon. So, don't skip over this by any means. It's not supplementary material, it's not modern; *it's literally taken from the plates and is designed by Moroni to sort of give you the crucial information that's in the Book of Mormon, why it matters, and the scope that the Book of Mormon's supposed to read. This is where the text begins.*

Every single person that was involved in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon saw it as miraculous — as something that they could not explain through natural means.

1 Nephi 1–5

John Hilton III

***1 Nephi 3:7** And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.*

By looking at the Book of Mormon with the specific lens of the voice of the person who's speaking, you start to feel the *distinctive* witnesses of Jesus Christ. These are unique individuals. *This isn't just a book I'm reading, I'm reading several books authored by individuals.*

Things may not work out the way we want them to in the short run, but in the eternal scheme of things, as we're faithful, *we can have confidence that Jesus Christ will wipe away all the tears from our eyes and that all things will be made right.*

I feel like no matter what circumstances are around us, things we can't control... the choices that others make... *we can still feel encircled about in the arms of our Savior.*

We are in the wilderness, metaphorically speaking. We are journeying toward the land of promise, the celestial kingdom. And what is it? *It's wisdom in the Lord that we carry those scriptures, these sacred records with us, that we search them.*

I hope that as we wrap up this episode that we think about this do-know, know-do model, and that we'll level up like we talked about at the beginning. That we'll find some ways to do something with our scripture study, to search them, to have our own experiences seriously studying the Book of Mormon. This year can be the year where we feel the power of the Book of Mormon and its testimony of Jesus Christ like we never have felt before.

The Book of Mormon does not get old. It is a book that is full of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and I love that.

Jesus Christ really is at the center of the Book of Mormon. We're not seriously studying the Book of Mormon to get closer to Nephi.

Whether I was a little kid afraid of getting beat up by bullies and I could find comfort from the scriptures then, or today in my own life when, like I mentioned earlier, this project that I have is kind of falling apart, I'm finding comfort right now as I'm reading 1 Nephi chapter 3. *I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. And I want to testify that the Book of Mormon speaks of Jesus Christ. He is the central figure and the Book of Mormon, and I know that in my life, I have come closer to Jesus Christ because of a serious study of the Book of Mormon.*

1 Nephi 6–10

Dr. Gaye Strathearn

1 Nephi 9:6 *But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words. And thus it is. Amen.*

Nephi and Lehi never give up on Laman and Lemuel, and that, I think, is a beautiful part of these early chapters of the Book of Mormon as well. They teach me something about God, and hopefully that He is not going to give up on me even though I do stupid things sometimes. And sometimes I fail to see, but He's always there for me if I can just wake up and remember how great He has been in my life.

Agency is very, very important in God's eternal plan, but the reason we have agency is not necessarily so that we can choose everything or anything. Lehi teaches us in 2 Nephi 2, "But we have agency so that in this world we can still choose God." *Are we willing to do that, even when there's a veil on us? Are we able to do it?*

I think generally, mortals are very self-centered. I'm sure that there's a reason for that in terms of protection and being able to survive difficult things, but we think about ourselves: "What is it that I need to survive? What do I need to help me along?" *It's about me, me, me, but what God is asking us to do is to stop and say, "Hang on a minute. It's not just about me. Life is so much more than that. This is also about giving. It's about God. It's about those around us."* Sacrifices were a way to show God that we're committed to Him and that He will use His sacrifices to bless the lives of others, who are also in need.

Mortality is meant to be difficult. It's meant to be, because how are we going to learn if we don't have to struggle with things? *Mortality is something God wanted for each and every one of us so that we could progress.*

We go to the temple to *enter the presence of God*, and all of these things (covenants) help us on the journey. If we lose sight of that fact, then we've missed the very heart and soul of what temples are here for.

Ultimately, *it is holding onto Christ* that enables us to come into the presence of God and participate in the full blessings of eternity.

You haven't got to be in the great and spacious building to come across difficulties in mortality. *Sometimes these mists of darkness are just a result of living in a mortal condition.*

Lehi *never* gives up hope on his sons, just as the Father doesn't give up on us.

When I have questions or the world tells me that I should have questions, I don't know the answer to that. But my response, at least I hope my response, is not to say, "Okay, walk away because of your questions." My response is *if I hang on, maybe I'll learn some more stuff that God sees and God knows. And those questions I have will no longer be questions, they'll make sense because God has an eternal perspective, whereas I only have a mortal perspective.*

I'm a nobody, but the Church is made up of nobodies who, every day, do things that help the kingdom of God move forward in incrementally small but important ways. That's what I mean about being engaged in it. I'm not going to be speaking at general conference, I might be in the nursery. But *those are the things that help move the kingdom of God forward in its manifested destiny.* That's where I need to be engaged in the trenches, because I have a vested interest in the outcome of what happens rather than being acted upon.

It's worth hanging on. It's worth pressing forward continually to the iron rod, understanding that *the more I know of God and about God and from God, the more I'm going to have an eternal perspective. Those questions, I have total trust and faith that they will make sense once I see them as God sees them.*

The Spirit doesn't teach me when I'm being passive, but it does teach me in powerful ways when I'm a seeker, and the scriptures are such a wonderful source. You can spend a lifetime studying these things, but there's always something new that the Spirit can teach us always. I think that will go on for eternity.

1 Nephi 11–15

Joshua M. Sears

1 Nephi 14:1 *And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks—*

When we face things that we don't understand, or things that don't make sense, it's okay to acknowledge that. But we can acknowledge, in fact, *lead with what we do know*. And what Nephi does say he knows is that *God loves His children*. That helps me a lot when there's things I can't make sense of that don't seem to fit with the way things are supposed to work. I'll go back to that to say, "I know that Heavenly Father loves us as His children, and therefore somehow this is going to make sense even if I don't get it right now."

God is not just helping you from afar, *He is coming down to earth to live like us and experience what we experience, to walk among us, to be hungry, to be thirsty*. I think Nephi is recognizing that is the biggest manifestation of love I could think of from my God — to come be here with me.

Heavenly Father wants to have an intimate, binding, exalting relationship with all of His children. That's why He offers us the new and everlasting covenant — so that we can come to Him in that close relationship where we can grow and develop and become like Him in the bonds of that covenant relationship that we have.

You can think of being in the presence of the Lord in two different ways. There's an afterlife sense to this — the Final Judgment and being in the celestial kingdom in God's presence or somewhere else. You have kind of an afterlife sense of being in His presence or not, but there are also many scriptures that talk about this in this life, that *this begins right now. We can be in His presence right now in this life before we're literally physically there in the celestial kingdom, or, you cannot be in His presence in this life*.

We choose whether we're in God's presence, enjoying the benefits of that close relationship, or we choose to walk away and be cast off from His presence. The words that we typically use to describe this are *repentance* and *rebellion*. If we're repenting, we're doing those things that move us *closer* to the Lord so that our relationship is close and we're in His presence. The opposite of repenting is rebelling. We're making conscious choices to move away from the Lord and do things that damage our relationship so that we no longer feel close.

The Book of Mormon never talks about the restoration of things. Instead, *it's always the restoration of people*.

I hope we can see that the Lamanites are meant to teach us about *your* family and *your* problems.

God is always willing to forgive when you repent and come unto Him. *We can't go so far gone, or for so long, that He's not willing to forgive.*

When people are off the covenant path, God is not simply sitting there twiddling His thumbs, waiting and hoping that they come back. *He's actively out there trying to get them back, and planning and preparing and doing all that He can do.*

The Book of Mormon is very clear again and again that *we must repent*, and that choosing not to follow God is a real option and there are real consequences for that.

The Book of Mormon is overall very hopeful about people's prospects, outlining what an amazing God we have who has bound Himself to us by covenants and is not going to give up on people. On the title page of The Book of Mormon, Moroni could have said, "One of the basic messages here is you got to repent or you're not going to make it." But instead, he chose a hopeful note: *'The Book of Mormon is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.'*

We have to respect agency. Everyone's going to have to make that choice to repent in this life or the next, but *we have a God who's dedicated to helping all His kids get home*. He wants us to be in a covenant relationship with Him.

I think all of us have some spiritual Alzheimer's here. *We would all act better if we understood better who we are*. And mortality is hard, and the flesh has its pulls, and there's distractions in the noise of the great and spacious building. And the Lord takes that into account I think, and that accounts for why He's so merciful. *He knows it's rough down here, and He takes that into account and is very patient and merciful*.

God is faithful. God will not abandon us. He's going to make sure that He's prepared *every* means necessary if we're to overcome every challenge the world can throw at us.

1 Nephi 16–22

Tyler J. Griffin

1 Nephi 16:29 *And there was also written upon them a new writing, which was plain to be read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it. And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things.*

I think some of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ are not what God promises to us in the end, although they're astronomically big and we can't understand them. *But I think some of His powerful, tender mercies are to be experienced along the journey, in the wilderness because, quite frankly, He's God.*

As a kid, I used to read this story and think, man, I would give anything to have a Liahona. And you know, it doesn't take too long to mature spiritually to realize, wait a minute, *God's given us all kinds of Liahonas that have writings that change from time to time, that point us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness.*

It's amazing the way God works with people who are willing to just move forward. *Just do the best you can with what you've got right now, and trust that the Lord will help you.*

I think it's in those deepest, darkest experiences where we can really come to know, more than anywhere else, of God's goodness — that *He hasn't forsaken us, that we are part of a covenant connection with Him.*

God didn't send us down to this earth to condemn us and mock us as we struggle out in the wilderness. *There is a deep ability for people to connect with God, especially when that wilderness gets extra wild, because they can no longer rely on themselves.*

Stop trying to be your own savior. Stop trying to fix it. I mean, you have to work. There are certain things you just have to do. But at the core, it's a mindset thing to *literally plead* with heaven to help us figure out how to better drop our burdens at the feet of the Savior and say, *Walk with me, please.*

It's about building a relationship with Christ. Stop focusing on the problems and put more time, energy, effort, and focus on that covenant connection with Christ. *Really try* to build a stronger relationship with God and with Jesus Christ.

Our job isn't to convince people that the Book of Mormon is true. Our job is to help them *dive in and discover their connection with Christ and be converted to the Lord through a study of the truthfulness of the gospel, which can only be brought to their soul*, to their mind, and their heart by the power of the Holy Ghost — not by the convincing arguments and archaeological evidences that we can show.

Instead of saying, "What's in it for me?" Say, "Dear God on high, what can I do to make this life better and easier for people around me?"

It's liberating to not feel so responsible for saving everybody and just say, look, I'm going to begin with what I know, and I'll do that. Magnify those efforts, and teach me along the way.

I think the point with every single one of these stories is that the struggle comes when we put the focus on self — when we put the focus on me, what I'm doing — because then we see ourselves as the one who's actually doing it, as opposed to being an instrument in the hands of the true Healer or Artist or Chef, or the one who's really doing the work through us.

I love the fact that in the gospel of Jesus Christ, people don't get dragged into heaven. They don't get dragged into the temple. They don't get dragged into a marriage, or they don't get dragged to the sacrament meeting. The preaching of the word has this tendency to lead people toward heaven. And Satan's efforts are to bind us so that he can drag us.

We don't deserve anything good when it comes right down to it, and yet He gives us that promise of comforting, reestablishment of that connection. And we get that opportunity very powerfully every Sunday when we go to church and pick up a little piece of bread that is so much more than bread and a little cup that is so much more than water, and we make that new covenant to say to Him yet again, "I want Thee to be my God, and I want to be Thy people."

You see it here with the Savior, with the palms of His hands being marked. Those aren't signs of the world's cruelty alone; those are signs of His love for us and of His sacrifice for us.

Once again, I believe the greater the sacrifice, the greater your capacity to love. I think that's why Jesus loves you infinitely, because He paid an infinite price to redeem your soul. Today.

Love isn't about what you get from someone. The sacrifice that you make for another person actually increases your capacity to love that person. And the perfect example, as you're describing here from Isaiah, is the mother with this newborn baby. She went through so much pain and so much discomfort and so much difficulty just to give that little creature a new life. And then she has to keep going through pain. And it never ends. It just changes. It just adapts through time. These are sacrifices, but a mother never says, "Now you repay me," and, "What can I get out of you?" There's something beautifully Christlike about that.

My testimony and my invitation to all of us is, *don't just read the book, immerse yourself in a serious study of the book to find your connection with the Savior. He's on every page.*

2 Nephi 1–2

Lili Anderson

2 Nephi 2:27 *Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.*

If we will worship Him, we will prosper.

To the righteous, any land is blessed in the way that it needs to be, because God keeps His promises to His people. We need to worship Christ. And from Him, all blessings flow.

I think that is how we fall into deep sleep: we cover our sins, we lie to ourselves, and we justify and rationalize, instead of allowing that divine discontent that we feel when we are not living up to our privilege.

This is our privilege: the covenants, the promises of God, the opportunities, and exaltation itself. Such great privileges. And here we live beneath them because we're human.

We need to expose ourselves to Christ by exposing ourselves to ourselves and seeing things as they really are. As we've been told, that is truth. Truth sets us free from a deep sleep, and it allows Christ to cover our sins in His divine way that cleanses us — cleanses us and then changes us.

God does not condemn anybody to a place of no growth, ever. There's always the potential for exaltation in whatever we do.

God is the alchemist. And He can take all the lead in our lives, all the worst parts of our lives, and He can consecrate it for our gain. He can alchemize it into gold. He makes it joy. He makes it the fullness of our potential. He makes it the magnification of who we are meant to be.

We could never do what would be required to lift us from where we are to where He invites us to be. It is His grace. It is the Holy Messiah. His grace and truth only can do that. All our reliance is in Christ. If we are gaining wisdom, we fall before Him and let Him be our everything.

Salvation, as Lehi tells us, is free. We have to receive it if we want it. It's there. It's free. Christ has done all for us. *It is amazing grace.* It is without limit. Christ will lift us and take us all the way to joint heirship with him. I cannot believe the generosity of that, and yet I do *because He is good.*

2 Nephi 3–5

Jan J. Martin

2 Nephi 4:28 *Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.*

Doing covenant things like keeping commandments, following the prophet, and looking after each other leads us to this happiness, even if we have to do hard things. *Happiness isn't always an absence of hard things.*

I have help in everything I need to do. And I'm guaranteed the help. Like, that's the thing, I can have absolute confidence that God is going to play a role in all of this. And that's that security that we're sometimes missing in life. But when you have that relationship with God, you absolutely have no reason to believe He won't help. Because He will. He's promised.

Rather than thinking of covenants as this obligation that I have, let's think of it as *I have so much help. I have constant help.*

When you recognize that what's going on around you is part of the fulfillment of prophecies and covenants, you can really handle things better because you see that there's a larger purpose. I'm not just suffering for the sake of it. God is really working here, and I can trust this. And the reason I'm out here is really great and grand, even though it's hard.

God has had a plan all along, and from your Old Testament all the way through your Book of Mormon you can see that plan — that He's working with individual prophets and keeping those covenants, and that we all fit into this.

I don't need to panic. I don't need to abandon God because I feel like things aren't going very well. I'm part of this larger purpose, and that helps me keep things in perspective when maybe it's rough.

Just because I have adversity does not mean I'm being punished. And when I'm in that covenant relationship, I have absolute confidence that *God's going to help me*. And I can go back and read these ancient stories and see God doing that, and then have confidence.

When we're struggling, having a hard time, where do we look for confidence? We'll go back and look at the Lord's promises for other people that He's made in the past. And we can have absolute confidence because we can see Him keeping His promises in the past, which means He is going to keep them in the future.

Even in the dark places, there are good things happening. We need to emphasize that. *And as we emphasize the light, the light can then have more power* to help bring us out of the dark place.

If I've ended the covenant for a while and went away and learned that maybe I'd be better off in the covenant relationship, I can come back and reengage with Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, through repentance and renewing my covenants. All is not lost here.

All these messy things about families will ultimately be healed. So, we want to speak to anyone who has grief — whether they've lost a loved parent or have never had a great relationship with a parent. There's grief of both types, but *the gospel can really keep us focused on healing and hope. And at some point, it's not over yet. And at some point it can be made maybe more of what we were hoping it to be.*

We all need help keeping our covenants. And we all need each other to remind us to keep them. And sometimes the interactions we have with other people can stir us up to remind us. Sometimes we're inspired by other people. Sometimes we're reminded by other people to be patient and Christ-like, and that we need to keep our covenants.

To live after the manner of happiness means to involve God in your life.

I love the Book of Mormon. I would talk about it as a very best friend. I remember so many times in my life where I had a hard time, like Nephi, and I just opened it up and read through the Book of Mormon. *He comforts me. He directs me. He teaches me.* So, it's a friend. It's a book I spend a lot of time in, and I know that it's true.

2 Nephi 6–10

Dr. Robert Millett

2 Nephi 9:28-29 *O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.*

But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

If we don't teach the Fall very well, then we'll have young people, for example, who see Jesus as kind of, "He's my bud. He's my helper. He's my advisor. He's kind of my spiritual cheerleader," instead of, "*He's the person who will redeem me from my sins. He's the person who will forgive me, yes, but will eventually help me reach the point where I have no more desire for sin.*"

God, in many ways, is set apart from you and me in that *He knows all things and we don't.*

What is perfect faith? Well, in the Book of Mormon synonyms for faith are total trust, complete confidence, and reliance upon God. In my mind, perfect faith is complete reliance, total trust, absolute confidence in Christ.

One of the beauties of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is *God's not going to punish anybody for not living a law or knowing a principle that they never had.*

I've seen and you've seen the danger when people begin to trust what they've learned academically more than they trust what the prophets of God have to say.

It seems like when we really understand the Fall as it's taught in scripture, particularly in the Book of Mormon, *you don't come away depressed. I do come away rejoicing in the fact that I don't have to stay this way — that somebody greater than I can lift me out of this situation.* In other words, we've said this before: the Fall and the Atonement of Jesus Christ are *companion* doctrines.

If He created worlds without end, which He did, *He redeems worlds without end.*

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The Book of Mormon isn't just something to be studied; *the Book of Mormon is something to be lived.* When I begin to feel myself being preached to by these people and *that they're talking to me*, and it isn't just that I've now come to better understand the doctrine of the Fall; it's that I know *that I need to repent of my sins through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*

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The Book of Mormon is not just a book of theology. It is not just a book about religion. *It is religion.*

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2 Nephi 11–19

Dr. Shon Hopkin

2 Nephi 12:2 *And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.*

One of the ways that the Lord answers your prayer is *through* prophetic messages.

We don't want to ask God for proof. But if God *asks you to ask for proof, you do that.*

God is in this. It's going to be okay. God is with us.

And I would submit, every time a child is born and the spirit that comes with that childbirth is a witness of Emmanuel, *God is with us*. He's still sending His children to this earth. It's another sign that *the story is not over*. Don't be afraid. There's still, in each one of you, children I'm sending that *have a divine destiny and are symbols and signs God is with us because of the central fulfillment of that prophecy when Christ was born, who truly was God amongst us.*

I think we love hiking to the tops of mountains. We don't love the hike, but there is something about the grandeur of seeing God's creations spread below you. And you just sort of feel, oh, *God is real and God loves me.*

The Book of Mormon is pure, simple, and powerful enough to change lives. *It has a depth to it that we have still not plumbed. There is more there that we can, and will, and must find in our quest for the Lord to understand the gift that we've truly been given.*

The Book of Mormon has had a purifying and life-changing impact for me. It has encouraged me to come to Christ. Isaiah teaches me who God is, and it is so deeply rewarding and powerful to dig into Isaiah. Great are the words of Isaiah. "*Search them,*" is what Christ says.

2 Nephi 20–25

Camille Frank Olson

2 Nephi 25:23 *For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.*

If there's anything we learn in scripture, reading through the Old Testament or the New Testament, we recognize *how seriously the Lord looks upon the vulnerable, and how much He cares for them and He sees them.*

Where we put our trust, where we put our faith, if it is not on the Holy One of Israel, there are surprises.

Put your trust in the Lord and make no alliance with others. *Only He can save us. Only He can protect us. It's His might that we rely on. It isn't our own might. It isn't our own wisdom.*

Wherever a temple is dedicated, there's evidence of gathering happening.

You can come to Him. You can find Him in the temple. You learn the truth of Him. Reconciliation, animosity, and envy melt like snow in the glance of the Lord. It's healing. It's true healing.

The Lord brings beauty from ashes.

If we will let Him, God will take us to that place where no one can help us but Him. *And it's in that place where we truly find Him.* That's what He wants for us.

He is saying, "Come. Come without money and without price. Come."

The Lord is very mindful. Not only of the poor of His people, *I think also of the poor in spirit* that come unto Him. “*The meek shall inherit the earth.*”

Although there are certain phrases or certain things that we might not completely really understand in Isaiah, *if you’re focused on Jesus Christ and a testimony of Jesus Christ, and you’re finding Him in these chapters, it makes a lot more sense.*

The Lord will *never* destroy without warning. We have prophets to warn us. If we are listening to the prophets, we have time. We understand what’s going on, we repent, we’re ready, and we have no reason to fear.

It’s about the power, wisdom, and enabling power of Jesus Christ. It’s about the peace that comes as we follow Him.

Nephi is saying God will always warn us through prophets. Generation upon generation, people haven’t listened to the prophets, even at the time of Christ. So many will not listen to the prophets, but the answer is always the same: *The only one who can save us, the only one who will save us, the only one to protect us, the only one to guide us, to inspire us, is the Savior.* Looking to the future, how will you respond to the prophets?

You want to be saved? You want to live? You want to have a fullness of life? You want to have hope and joy in life? *You look to Him. You trust in Him.*

What is “all we can do”? It is to repent, to return to the Holy One of Israel, to overcome Babylon and come back to Him, to come to a true knowledge of the Redeemer Jesus Christ, and to follow Him. That’s all we can do.

Do you know how much the Lord loves you? Do you know how much He sees you and all that you try to do to help others? Do you recognize that the Lord has enabling power to allow us to do the things that He needs us to do, that He will not leave us comfortless, that He’s merciful when we stumble? He delights in us trying to follow Him, but we will stumble. And when we stumble, He is there to take our hand. Just like Peter, as he fell in the depths of the sea, immediately He stretched forth His hand, and *He does that for us. He calls that progress.* It’s not failure, it is progress. We come closer to Him, and He delights in our hearts and our desires to serve Him, *but He does not intend for us to take the load of everything upon us.*

We obey because we love the Lord, we love our families, and we want to serve — not because we hope we get noticed or because that makes us closer to the tree in our estimation. *It is because we love and want to be like Him, and that’s what He would do.*

I think there is something so profound about the opportunity we have to pray and to ask our Father in Heaven to help us. “Where do you need me today?” And there are mundane things that have to be done, but sometimes the laundry doesn’t get finished. And there’s someone there that needs me to be with them and to listen to them.

He is the path. He is the rod. He is the tree. He’s our guide. We are not left alone.

Learn to hear the voice of the Lord through His spirit so that you can know when you have to make some choices that mean other things don't get done. You can know that the Lord is happy with what you've done and you're doing good things to help others.

We live in a fallen earth, and things are not perfect. If we let a to-do list determine our day-to-day, our minute-by-minute schedule, we'll be miserable to live with and we'll be miserable in our own life. *Let's turn our life over to the Lord and trust Him that He really will help us and lead us to what we need to be doing — to let go of the things that don't get done today.* God loves you and you need to know that. And you need to know and hear that from Him — not from me or from anyone else. You need to hear it from Him.

If you're on the Lord's errand and you are speaking in His name, don't you think that when people praise you, you can't take that?

Our lives become witnesses of the grace of Jesus Christ.

2 Nephi 26-30

Joseph Spencer

2 Nephi 28:7 *And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it be evil, it be evil; therefore, eat, drink, and be merry.*

“We’re saved by grace after all we can do” is saying even if I did everything right, it’s still grace that saves.

The discouraging thing is I’m going to fail. The encouraging thing is it’s not about me. It doesn’t matter that I’m going to fail.

My job is to look forward to Him in faith. And that, of course, comes with things He’s asking me to do. But I’m not supposed to be the one that fulfills the law. Whether we’re talking about the law of Moses or any law God has ever given, *Christ* is the fulfiller of the law. My job is to keep the law.

He asks for you to keep His commandments. The trick is to get out of our heads the picture in which the whole of the responsibility for God’s work falls on us. But to get that picture out of our heads is not to get out of our heads the idea that God has called us to a work.

“Those who are meek — who don’t take advantage of your weakness — those who are humble, my grace is sufficient for them.” I think the way to hear that is Moroni learning that even a work like the Book of Mormon is not supposed to be the thing that fulfills the whole law. Christ is the thing that fulfills the whole law, and the Book of Mormon points us to Christ.

Just as there’s an empty tomb, there’s an empty box at Cumorah. And you have to take these witnesses’ words, and then go read the book and see what happens.

If we start to think that the task with the Book of Mormon is to show that it's intellectually defensible, why was there a Restoration? *This is a book that's supposed to change me, bring me to Christ, trigger the redemption of Israel.*

Love is the kind of thing where you have to open a space, and it's vulnerable and it's complicated and it's messy, but you can do the kind of thing that happens in Alma 32 and measure your feelings as they develop. *Faith works like love, not like science.* You have to be carefully attuned — open, listening — not the kind of thing where you just pull out the microscope and the particle collider and see what you can detect. That's not how it works.

I have an *intellectual* testimony as well as a *spiritual* testimony of the Book of Mormon.

We don't read slowly, we don't read carefully, we tend to move too fast. And there's a certain sense in which we're saying to the Book of Mormon over and over, "I'm learned. I already know this. I already know what's going on here." But boy, if we can get to the point where we say, "I am not learned, I don't know what this is saying," then man, *we might actually slow down and it'll teach us.*

That's what it's felt like for me with the Book of Mormon — reading it, studying it, pushing harder and harder, reading closer and closer, asking the hardest questions of it, and then seeing what I can find when I read it in earnest. And it turns out, over and over and over again, I feel like it's sign after sign after sign after sign. But all is sort of a byproduct. What I was looking for was just understanding.

But man, the conviction just deepens and deepens and deepens. *I feel like I've come to the point where the Book of Mormon is the surest thing I know.* It's certainly the window to Christ — the window through which I first saw Christ and the window through which I still view Him.

Christ's solidity in my life is dependent entirely on the Book of Mormon's solidity. And I'm amazed at just how solid it is.

2 Nephi 31–33

Kerry Muhlestein

2 Nephi 31:20 *Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.*

Christ would not be obedient if He weren't baptized. But the emphasis here is that *Christ does His Father's will*. He always, always does His father's will. And so, He humbles himself and witnesses that He'll keep the commandments.

One of the powerful things about baptism is that *we bear witness by our actions. We become the symbol. We become the testimony*. That's powerful for us. It's powerful that Christ did it.

Baptism is definitely necessary. But in a way, baptism is Nephi's tool for showing us we need to emulate Christ. That's the key.

Christ is the exemplar. We have to do what He did if this is going to work for us.

I would say that's the beginning of the doctrine of Christ: you need to have your will swallowed up in God's will.

It's not just about going through the motions; *it's about your heart, wanting to desire what God desires*.

Jesus follows God, we follow Jesus. Therefore, we are following God. That's something Christ has taught so many times in the Book of Mormon and the New Testament.

No one is 100% pure in their intent. That's what this mortal probation is for and what the atoning sacrifice of Christ is for — to get us to that point. We're not there yet. But if we're trying, if we're working on it, that's what He's looking for.

It's in those conversations where we're really genuine with God, no hypocrisy, that I think we have the chance for true change, true sanctification.

The Holy Ghost is the member of the Godhead that can enter into your soul. He volunteered to not have a body until the very end so that *He can interact with us in a different way*. Part of that is His being able to enter into us and carry that atoning power of Christ, His blood, into our souls to really purify us, purge us, sanctify us, all these different words that we use.

Now, isn't it interesting that the one ordinance we do in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost is baptism, which has been such a focal point here. That unity of the three and the witness of the three is incredibly important.

Nephi is telling us what the word of Christ really is. *It's whatever the Holy Ghost is teaching you*. The scriptures are important, but it's because they allow the Holy Ghost to reveal things to us.

In my view, the way Nephi is writing about it, the word of Christ is what we learn from the Holy Ghost as we study the scriptures, as we listen to general conference, as we are listening to things in sacrament meeting, as we're partaking of the sacrament — *whatever the Spirit is telling you, that's the word of God or the word of Christ*.

That's what we have to be doing to endure to the end: following the promptings of the Spirit. Or in other words, as President Nelson might put it, we have to hear Him.

We also know that revelation doesn't always come the same way. It will come to different people in different ways and to the same person in different ways.

If you want to take charge of your testimony, you need to have the Holy Ghost with you so it can bear record of the Father and the Son.

We want to have a testimony of all sorts of things — of the Restoration of the gospel, of the Book of Mormon, and everything else. But primary, foremost among all things, if you need a testimony of anything, it is that the Father lives, loves us, and sent His Son to save us. That's what this is emphasizing.

We have to follow Christ under the fulfillment of the commandments — the commandment to be baptized. We have to have faith, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, be meek enough to follow God, and endure to the end through prayer, which will bring the Holy Ghost. But in this case, the role of the Holy Ghost is to give us hope and love, charity.

To be full of hope and charity, *that* is to be sanctified.

If we don't have the Spirit with us constantly, *we need to do whatever it takes to have the Spirit with us constantly.*

Doing those things that the Spirit tells you to do, that's part of earning it. That's part of the spiritual work that's necessary.

Follow the promptings. You'll increase more direction, more sanctification, more joy, and a stronger testimony of Christ. All of these things, greater charity, all of these things, will happen because of your following the promptings of the Spirit.

We live beneath our privileges of inspiration. We live, I think, beneath our privileges of having the Spirit with us. God is saying, "Ask me. Please just ask me."

The more we have the Spirit with us, repenting and having the Spirit with you, you're taking advantage of the Atonement of Christ. *You're going to be justified and sanctified.*

Easter

Reyna Aburto

Alma 11:42 Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be born again into the presence of the Lord; yea, even this mortal shall put on immortality.

Every person born on earth will be resurrected because Jesus Christ overcame death.

Everything will be restored to its perfect frame.
Not even one hair will be lost.

In the premortal world, the plan was presented. Then we had the Creation, and then we had the Fall, and then we came to this earthly life, to this mortal state, and then we're going to die. We're going to resurrect because of Jesus Christ, and then we will be judged, and then we'll receive a degree of glory. And all of this is called the plan of salvation, the plan of happiness, the plan of mercy, the plan of redemption. The Resurrection is just part of it and is necessary. And for it to happen, we need to die first.

This is such a beautiful passage that is telling us what the role of the Savior is, that *He comes to mend, to give us beautiful ashes, and to give us glory*, even from this mortal state in which we are right now. There is hope. There is hope for better things to come because of Him.

It's wonderful to think that so many were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, and that we can actually read their testimonies and their witnesses that they saw him. And that is the greatest evidence that He is the Messiah, that He is our Savior and Redeemer — that He came to redeem us as part of that beautiful plan of salvation and redemption.

In a way, the Lord is still inviting us to come to Him one by one. He's able to minister to us one by one also.

All of us have experienced or will experience death — someone that we love or someone that we know, even our pets sometimes. We all have experienced loss in a way. We feel that pain, and it's real. And we should not be ashamed or feel guilty if we have this time of mourning, because it is part of who we are. And these are emotions that show that we actually loved the person that has passed away.

When a child gets hurt, then we just put a band-aid, and we want for them to feel better. But sometimes in those situations, I think that it's better not to try to say anything, maybe to hug them and tell them that we love them, that we feel for them, and that we are there for them if they want to talk about it.

We need to let people take their time to mourn and to grieve that loss that they had.

We can actually minister to people without saying a word.

Going back to the story of Lazarus, *even the Savior wept*. Because when He saw Martha and Mary's sadness, they were sad because they loved their brother. And the Savior cried with them. He wept with them. He knew how to mourn. That's why it is a natural thing. It's a normal thing to do.

Yes, we can be certain that the Lord is willing to help us heal from that, and that He has the power to help us. But that doesn't mean that we are going to stop missing the person because it's a big loss. They are not with us. We want to have them with us, but they are not here. And it's hard to wait sometimes, but we have that hope.

Each of us will be resurrected. Everybody,
*every person will receive that gift of resurrection from
the Savior.*

We are trying to help build the kingdom of God
on the earth and trying to prepare the earth for
His Second Coming — that's what should be in
our heart.

Sometimes we think that consecration is just the
time that we spend in our calling, or reading the
scriptures, or praying. But really, *it's how we live
our life.* It's 24 hours a day, even the 8 hours that
we sleep. That's kind of part of that consecra-
tion because we need to take care of our bodies
so we can keep serving the Lord.

Focus on what is important, which is to try to
serve each other, to account for the Savior's
sheep, to watch for each other, and to bring
people to Christ. That's the bottom line of
everything. We are trying to bring people to
Christ, and that's what ministering is — to help
people feel the love of God through us.

I testify to you that just by thinking about Jesus
Christ, about all the gifts that He gave us, and
turning to the scriptures — because that's the
place where we can actually get to know him
better when we read about His life, His mission,
the miracles that He performed — that it can
actually give us the hope that we probably need.

Jacob 1–4

Barbara Gardner

Jacob 2:18–19 *But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—*

To clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

The primary reason for the Book of Mormon is to bring people to Christ.

Sometimes I think even I can become side-tracked from what is most important. And clearly what is most important to Jacob and to Nephi is bringing people to Christ through the sacred — and through these revelations and through these things that will build faith — and help people come into Christ and partake of His goodness.

One of the things I love about God is He's not trying to keep us below Him; He's trying to help us become like Him. And pride is Satan's tactic — Satan, who receives the glory, and all of us in a sense stay below him. That is not the Lord's way. He wants us to all receive what He has. He wants all of us to be heirs to the throne.

I can go with them to all of their struggles and everything else, but really when it comes down to it, I have to help them know that the answer, as President Nelson says, really is Jesus. He is the answer to their problems. He is the only way to have peace in this world. He's the only source of hope. Other things are interesting and significant to a certain level, but nothing compares to the priority of helping them come unto Christ as we study the Book of Mormon together.

It's not like all of a sudden you become a prophet and the Lord just tells you everything. You have to pay the price. So number one, I think, is we have to respect the amount of work that these leaders have done throughout their lives to be in a position where they really have obtained their errand from the Lord. And we have to respect that this comes from a lot of sweat and tears.

Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down on the rest of us. There is, however, a far more common element among us, and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It doesn't matter if it's from the bottom looking up or the top looking down. The problem is the comparison between the two and one person thinking that they are more righteous because they're so humble. That's the irony of humility and pride, is that person is so prideful. The moment we say that person is so prideful, we're being prideful.

The reality is we're all trying to consecrate ourselves and to become unified and become one, just as the Savior was. So the issue is not the wealth. The issue is the motivation, and the desire, and the understanding of who we are as children of God and all of us becoming eventual heirs to the throne.

What am I really standing for? What kind of disciple of Jesus Christ am I really? Do I really think I'm better than another group of people?

And can I not see that I have reason to repent? It's the "Lord is at I" syndrome that we need to have upon ourselves. We could very mistakenly think that we may be better than another person.

Let's speak of Christ. Let's speak of Him as often as we can. Let's talk about the reconciliation that comes. Let's talk of His grace. Let's talk of /his hope. Let's talk of His Resurrection. Let's talk about His perfect ability to give knowledge and to help people repent. Let's talk about Him plainly. Let's talk about Him powerfully. Let's bring people to Christ. Why not talk about Him?

I have repented of stupid things in my life before, and it is humiliating and it is hard. But the hardness does not even slightly compare to the joy on the other side of the difficulty.

I personally believe that one of the reasons that repentance is difficult is because it helps us to recognize the intense tender mercy of the Savior of the world, who suffered all things and went below all things. Our own suffering allows us then to be compassionate and understanding of the Savior of the world. He is already compassionate for us.

It allows us to be compassionate toward Him and toward all people who also suffer. We understand it's worth every ounce of pain to be able to feel the love of Jesus Christ and to be reconciled to him.

Regardless of what decision we are making, the Lord will use us just as He used Jacob in his life. We each have our own errand, and the key for us then is to submit our will to His. The way to be a true leader as Jacob is to receive the errand from the Lord, and then recognize that that errand is personal to us.

The closer we become to Christ, the more we care about the suffering of individuals. And the more we come unto Christ, the more we want them to experience the joy Lehi did as he partook of the fruit.

There are as many varied errands as there are humans on the earth. When we understand God's errand, we will be filled with his power to be able to fulfill that errand just as Jacob was.

Jacob 5–7

Matthew L. Bowen

Jacob 6:12 *For I desire that ye should plant this in your hearts; for after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye shall still walke no more uprightly than the wicked, ye shall be cast off.*

Rather than say, “Those dumb Israelites,” a more profitable thing to do is say, “Okay, well, how am I sometimes like the Israelites that we’re talking about in this given situation?” Like when we talk about the exodus or the constant murmuring, our first reaction shouldn’t be, “Those dumb Israelites. Why don’t they get it?” It should be, “Wait a minute. How am I being like them sometimes?” When I’m honest with myself, I look at my life and say, yeah, I am like that. I do this sometimes.

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This allegory is about the Lord’s people. *It’s about His children.* It’s about how *His will is going to prevail among these children that are contending with Him*, striving with Him.

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There are certain issues and problems that we have in our lives because we continually try to assert our will over God’s will. But when we recognize when we’re doing that and we decide, I’m going to do it God’s way rather than my way, *many of those problems go away and become better.*

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We would want what God wants for us — *especially* if we understand how much He loves us — more than we would ever want to metaphorically start living in a van down by the river through our own choices. When we think about it, that’s metaphorically where we would end up.

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The Lord is good, and He is patient with us. He understands when we get frustrated. He understands.

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He knows what He wants us to become. *He knows what we need to be.*

We have to sometimes remember the Lord knows what He's doing.

The Lord knows how to compensate us for blessings previously denied us. He knows when, and how, and where to dispense those blessings so that we do become what He intends us to become. And if *we'll just open ourselves to that* and, as President Nelson talks about, let God prevail in what He's trying to do with us, *He'll lead us by the hand. He'll answer our prayers, as He did with Abraham, and get us where we need to go.*

Whatever He does, *He always does it out of love.* He's never motivated by selfish, human types of motivation — it's always divine. *Divine love is greater than human love, and divine anger is different from human anger.* It's never out of selfishness with Him. So when He's grieved in the allegory, that's not coming from a selfish place. It's grief *for* us.

We'd like blessings to happen in floods, but there has to be a healthy pacing to it. We need to all *individually and collectively become who and what the Lord needs us to be.*

He's never done with us. Sometimes we might feel like, well, I have sinned so much or I've passed some arbitrary sin limit. But that's not the story here in Jacob 5. *The story here is that the Lord isn't done with us and that He will work with us as long as it takes to get to who He wants us to be and to become.*

As Elder Holland has said, those armies ride with “reckless speed” to aid the seed of Abraham. If we could have the veil parted, we would see that that’s true. *There are more laboring with us. And even the Lord Himself, though we might not see Him, His hand is in it all.*

I hope that we will *see* Christ, that we will connect more deeply to His Atonement and the ways in which He’s seeking to gather us to Him in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. That’s what we’ve been talking about. That’s what Jacob 5 is about. *It’s about Christ’s pains-taking atoning work to gather us to Him and help us to become all that we have the capacity to become. His will will be done. He will continue to work with us. He will continue to completely honor our agency. But we make it so much easier on ourselves, and often others, when we decide to let God prevail in our lives.*

Enos—Words of Mormon

Gerrit Dirkmaat

Enos 1:5 *And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.*

Parents, continue to try to teach the gospel to your children, even if it seems like they are not fully embracing it. *Because at some point they're going to have a question* and the words that you've spoken, the studies that you've done, that will be something for them to grab ahold of the same way Enos did here.

I think the Lord is *always* willing to give us that answer when *we* are ready to cry out.

We are all desperately flawed individuals. I know it seems like that the family next door has it all figured out, and they're having family home evening every night of the week, and every one of their kids has gone on three missions, and they're all married twice in the temple. *I mean, just the reality is we're all sinners.*

God is a God of miracles. God is a God who will use your faith and prayers to move things in a way that will bring eventual happiness. And I believe that God will miraculously change the lives of our children in part because of our faith. The Lord, I think, sometimes says to me, “I’m that good. Like, I can overcome your parenting on your children. That’s how good I am.”

In order for us to fully be able to extend that healing hand to someone else, *we have to be able to know what it's like to actually have our sins, though they're red as scarlet, become white as wool.* Every single person who has ever lived on this earth is a sinner and is going to desperately have to have the Atonement of Jesus Christ to be saved.

Hopefully, ultimately, I can get to a place *where I can extend the same level of mercy and forgiveness that I want my Father in Heaven to extend to me.* When we're talking about someone else who's wronged us, we always want to judge them on their worst day. We take their worst day and we say, "That's who that person is. They are this. This is them." And yet, *when we are on our knees begging God to forgive us, begging for God to accept us into the celestial kingdom, man, we desperately want God to judge us by our best day. We desperately want to say, "I know that I messed up here, and I know I messed up there, but eventually I got it right."* I mean, that's the great part about the plan of salvation — *the person who's making the final judgment call is perfect and not like us, and will extend as much mercy as is possible to be extended.*

The Atonement of Jesus Christ is *so all encompassing that there will be an eventual peace and happiness for everyone.*

The way to make faith unshaken is to focus like a laser on the Holy Spirit testifying to you that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith saw God. The way to have your faith shaken is to allow details of *how* God unfolds His plan to become more important *than* God's plan.

The only reason why you even have a question about who's married to who in the next life is because Joseph Smith is a prophet. *The moment Joseph Smith stops being a prophet, you don't have to ask that question anymore. Because the answer is nobody,* because marriage doesn't exist anymore. It doesn't exist in the next life for any other Christian.

We have to keep a focus on the fact that *the only way you can know anything about God is through the Holy Spirit.* That's it. It's the only way.

We can't turn the Church into an extension of our political/social arguments that we make. We have to do the opposite. Ultimately, for people to be unshaken in their faith, they need to get to a point where *they follow the prophet no matter what*. And if I don't agree, *I follow*. And if it makes sense, *I follow*. And if I don't want to follow, *I follow*. And yeah, that's scary to people because it means, well, I'm giving up my agency. *No, you are choosing with your agency to say, I am going to follow God's representative. Well, what if he's wrong? Well, then God will know that I chose to follow His prophet, and it will be accounted unto me for righteousness. My job is to exercise faith in the Lord's prophet, regardless of the evidence that I have.*

I know we don't have answers to every question, but we have answers to the most important questions: *Who is my Savior? What is His church?* And all the other questions will eventually be answered.

The reality is having faith means *stepping into that darkness because you know the person who's calling you is the Savior*. Knowing the voice, you step forward. And it doesn't make sense and it doesn't equal out. And maybe it seems contrary to everything that we want to do. We see prophets all the time get told to teach and to do things, and they don't even know why. *If prophets themselves don't have all of the answers, how could we possibly expect to have them all?*

I think the Lord would probably say the entire purpose of the creation of this earth is that as sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother, we made an active choice to come to a world that was filled with sin, and sorrow, and sickness, and horror — and some happiness and joy too, sometimes — *so that we could become like our Father in Heaven. The entire point in the creation of the world was so that there would be a fall so we could progress through adversity to become like our Heavenly Father.*

I believe that if God could make us all like Him without us suffering and going through adversity that He would. *But we have to become like God the same way God became God.* And that is a mortal experience where there is suffering and there are trials. *He doesn't force us to not sin, but He provides a way through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. That even though we have sinned, we can still become like Him.* It's wonderful, as Elder Holland has said, to be on God's side.

We're on the winning team. We don't have to wonder whether or not things are going to work out in the end, *because we know they will because of God.*

Live so that when the Holy Spirit impresses you to reach out to someone else who's struggling, who you may not even know is struggling, that you can be that person who's that change point in someone's life and you may not even know it. You may not find out for years, but the Lord knows. *The Lord knows all things.*

Mosiah 1–3

Jennifer Platt

Mosiah 2:17 *When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.*

We're meant to be kings and queens, and *that's the promise of exaltation*. And I wonder how today will even go differently if the three of us were to say, "Let's just keep that focus."

Joseph, for us, is such a mentor in saying, yeah, we each have a work to do, *but we're not left on our own to accomplish it*.

If we have a focus today on discipleship, that's really a mark of a disciple — is if they try to be invisible. I don't want to make this about me, *how quickly can I show you Christ? Is that plain in the messaging?*

If we want to know Jesus, we need scripture.

I think that's the challenge and the invitation of mortality — to be able to say in this moment, in this day, *I'm going to choose to be a disciple of Christ, a peacemaker, a follower*.

When we're looking at King Benjamin, I hope we all consider, "In my life, what does it look like to live my covenants and to take the name of Jesus Christ?"

There's a correlation. My obedience to the commandments is a *direct* correlation to the way I bear the name of Jesus Christ.

You want to get the natural man out of you, *come to Jesus*. And He will draw that evil spirit out.

My children can look out the window at the temple, and they see it from our home, and that's good. It's really good. And I drive past it several times a day. *But am I going inside? Am I thinking about my covenants? Am I really trying to connect myself to God in that way, to always have that recommend and think about it, and to live my covenants?*

What's the pattern? *It's serving God* — applying the Atonement of Jesus Christ in our lives. Sometimes I'm guilty of relying on someone in leadership to serve or decide when, really, *we've all made the same covenant. What would it look like if we were each to say, okay, I've made the same covenants that you've made. Let's all work hard.*

If I really want to be like Him, I'm going to learn to serve people.

Jesus and joy are synonymous.

What a glorious thing mortality is, *that we get this chance to become kings and queens, that we get this chance to practice with each other.*

Come to know God, His nature and His character. That's one of our biggest problems. *Maybe we misunderstand who He is and His love for us.*

When I come to know Him, I want to understand His plan of happiness. I love to invite people, including myself, to *consider the gaps*. When it comes to the plan of happiness, we're never going to plumb the depths and have it mastered.

Mosiah 4–6

Aaron Schade

Mosiah 4:9 Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

I love that concept of peace because it *refers to an end of conflict* — an end to a struggle — whether it be sin, heartache, or discouragement.

There's something about this that's the invitation to come to Christ and allow Him to speak to us and to hear Him.

Everything that they're seeing, everything they're experiencing is telling them that Emmanuel, that God, truly is going to be with us. This setting of what he's going to accomplish: *He's going to raise the dead, He's going to cause the lame to walk.*

God is able to bring us a peace that says, "*You are good enough.* And if you come to me, I can make weak things strong."

When you start thinking of the image and likeness of God, *I think part of what this is saying is it's giving us a hope that we can become something so much more than we are.*

There's nothing that's beyond hope in our lives. And whatever it is we're experiencing, *that pain is something that can be reached.* It doesn't mean that it always will. It doesn't mean that we're always going to have that relief. It doesn't mean that our suffering will always stop. But there's something within us that I think these teachings are trying to give us — a power that says despite my circumstances, that through my circumstances, *there can be some relief.*

God is tenderly watching over us and helping to raise us from the dust, to help us become not just the base self that we are, *but the exalted self that we can become.*

We truly can be healed, *covered in the love of God*. And that creates this new creature in Christ and gives us hope and courage through difficulties.

A significant part of all of that process is that *growing takes time* — developing an understanding of how to recognize the spirit and how to be sanctified through the process of our life — this concept of justification and sanctification. That takes time, and we need to be patient with ourselves.

If we ponder for a second what that means: to take upon us the name of Christ. That we are to become His, that His purposes are our purposes, that He is ours, and we are His. And that's really encapsulated with how chapter 5 ends — *that the Lord Omnipotent will seal you His*.

He cares about us. He loves us. He's patient with us. And He understands that we go through difficult things that sometimes really try us in ways that push us to our limits. And we don't always come out as our best selves through that process. He just says to come to know the goodness of God is long suffering, and to trust in the Lord, and be diligent in keeping His commandments the best that you can in faith. Trusting in God, that's something that can be so difficult to do when we can't always see His purposes, when we don't always understand why we're experiencing something that we're experiencing.

Life can be painful. What's being taught in these chapters is to help us to reach out to one another, to help those who are suffering, to make sure that there's no poor among us. And whatever definition you want to assign to "poor", whether it's poor in spirit, whether it's physical poverty, *it all needs relief*.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And part of what that word “poor” means is that we’re recognizing our complete dependence upon God. To be poor in spirit — those who admit their spiritual poverty, those who acknowledge that without God, I can do nothing, I need God, I need help, and I’m beggarly that way, *I’m poor that way — to have sort of this humility with regard to our own capacities, let’s say, “Only through the Lord can I do this.”*

We’re sort of seeing that reciprocal relationship here in these teachings. We love God, we love our neighbor, we receive comfort in our beggarly pleas, recognizing our limitations. And watching as God fills us with hope, and courage, and relief to then say, “Because I bear that name, *that’s now my role toward others: to love one another as Jesus loved us.*”

There’s no one that’s being pushed to the outskirts of this equation; they’re all being invited into Christ. And the concept of a stranger is to bring somebody in that may not have initially been there, and make them part of who you are — *allow them to experience what you have.*

It’s easy to feel like no one understands the burden I bear. In reality, we probably don’t, especially in some of these scenarios that are so difficult and so challenging. *But the one person who does understand is Jesus. There’s something about knowing that somebody experienced all of that, who truly does understand. And to be able to have that source to turn to peace for is priceless.*

I think that that's what these chapters are about, is a process of life that we try, and we try, and we try and realize *that we don't run out of tries — that we get to keep going, get to keep moving. We get to fall short.* And when we do, we have a Father there who loves us, who cares about us, who welcomes us.

Is there a clear cut answer of what's enough and what isn't? I guess for me, it's just when *I recognize that when I'm doing something for someone else, I'm doing it for the one who helped me through everything — and that is God. Whatever strength I have, then it's Yours. And I'll give it to You the best I can.*

And I wonder if as Jesus runs to us, as God runs to us, *if we could run to Him and be humble like a little child* that simply says, “I want to see daddy today.” And that could be something that really binds us to God through our weaknesses.

Mosiah 7–10

Stephen Taeger

Mosiah 7:33 *I will that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.*

One of the most beautiful ways we can recognize the hand of the Lord in our lives is to look for it in the goodness of others toward us. Not only is it that person, *but it's the Savior, Jesus Christ, working through them to be a blessing in our lives.*

One of the reasons why it's so important to deeply feast upon the Word of God — because as we study the scriptures, not just in a general way, but specifically with meaningful study practices — is that *we will be open to the ways that God can work in our lives.*

The way that we prevent ourselves from becoming overzealous is to play all the keys on the piano, to be balanced, and make sure that we're seeing all the facets of the restored gospel.

If God is really the ultimate source of our life and truth and everything, then it's enough if He commands it.

At the heart of the story of Gethsemane and Golgotha and the Garden Tomb is that *we believe in a God of deliverance* who will save us, who will take us out of addiction and anger and fear. And I don't know if it's in this life or in the next, *but the hero of the story, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a deliverer.*

We believe in a God who works through seemingly impossible situations.

The true story is “I am free to love all people, including my enemies.” Our story determines our possibilities.

Mosiah 11–17

Ryan Sharp

Mosiah 13:28-29 *I say unto you that God sent angels to converse with men, to declare his word unto them, yea, and to make manifest concerning the coming of his Only Begotten Son.*

Yea, and he also sent his prophets, to teach his word, yea, and to testify of his Only Begotten Son, at all times, and in all things, and in all places.

Do I view the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as wise, older men who are, from a secular sense, just organizational leaders or managers? Or *do I really believe they're prophets, seers, and revelators?* What am I going to do with them, with their words, with their counsel? *Do I really believe that they see?*

I have such a strong testimony of the power that one person can make if they turn their life over to the Lord.

Because of the condescension of Jesus Christ, *we can always come back.* There is no sin that's been committed that's beyond the scope of the Savior's grace.

For those who are struggling and those who are hurting, the reality of the Savior's Atonement, because He descended below all things, in these moments *you can experience those arms in this life. It doesn't have to be the next life when we first feel the power of the arms of safety or the arms of mercy.* Whether or not it's unrepentant of sin, we can come to the Savior and truly experience the arms of mercy. Or if it's a difficult trial, we can experience the arms of love and compassion.

The invitation for all of us is, "*I am going to submit my mortal, fleshy, fallen state to the will of the Father and the divine side within me, and thus submit to Him. Put off the natural man and become a saint through the Atonement of Christ.*" And as I do that, I learn what President Nelson recently reiterated, that God can make a lot more out of our lives than we can. And we turn our lives over to Him, and He helps us become the best version of ourselves that we can become.

He suffered all of these things, but He came alive again. And again, that's the triumph of the message of the gospel. That's the hope that comes through the Resurrection. But equally important is He stayed alive. And because He stayed alive, He lives now. And because He stayed alive, the work of redemption continues even now. He continues to minister in His own way. He continues to heal and comfort and strengthen and forgive and all of these things, because He stayed alive again.

The message of Abinadi, the message *for* Abinadi, the message *for us from* Abinadi, *is trust*. *We can trust the Savior*. We can trust that He really is the conquering Messiah, that He conquered death. And because of that, we have hope.

Mosiah 18–24

Melissa Inouye

Mosiah 18:8-9 *And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death;*

What I think is beautiful is that we have both this vertical covenant team with the Lord, but the covenant also involves these horizontal connections to others: *to be one people, to bear one another's burdens*, to mourn with those that mourn, comfort those that stand in need of comfort. I see it as this really kind of beautiful tie between, you know, what's in heaven and what's on earth. What's really beautiful are stories of Latter-day Saints everywhere who are entering into this same covenant.

I find this covenant so universal and also so intimate. Because in order to understand people, to mourn with them, *you have to know them*. And to comfort people, *you have to have love in your heart to give to them for comfort*.

That's the beauty of the global Church, is you see *all these different ways that people are trying to fulfill their covenants*. We also see different ways that people are living the gospel.

Sometimes you can't take away pain from someone, right? You just can't do it. What I think is the next best thing is just *to be a witness*, to just kind of sit with them and say, "This is really hard." And then it gives a person who's in pain or who's going through a hard time just that recognition, you know. "You're not making this up. This is a real challenge, and you're tackling it."

It is so inspiring to me that we're part of a community of people who have gone through really hard things all over the world. And we can learn from each other that way.

Just being there — maybe that’s also part of what it means to stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things and all places. Because most of the time we don’t see God. God’s presence isn’t something that you can easily observe in the environment. *I think at times when you’re going through a really hard thing and you feel like you’ve been abandoned by God — when there are a bunch of people around you who share that faith in God — they, in a way, I’m not saying they’re stand-ins for God, but they’re witnesses for the reality of that power and that presence and that love.*

It can be really frustrating when the King Noah’s of the world aren’t getting their come-uppances. And the people who are just trying to follow Jesus are having such a tough time.

While not a cure-all or a silver bullet for a faith crisis, I think a global perspective is really helpful because it helps us zoom out from our narrow political and cultural background and just see that actually *probably from Jesus’ point of view, politics really doesn’t matter that much. And the most important thing is to be one people and to be witnesses of God.* And sometimes our ideas of what it means to witness that way can come into conflict. But the most important thing is if we can do that lovingly and we can do it in the same room, as it were, we can still be together.

Jesus said, “Love your enemies.” What better place to find enemies than in your local ward, you know, and to learn how to love them.

I think when you’re more humble, you’re more open to God’s power and *more vulnerable to God’s mercy.*

I just have this conundrum as a cancer patient, which is sometimes you just have to accept the hard things of the world. *You have to accept the indignities of disease and the things that are painful.* They're just part of the world.

That's what's so wonderful about the scriptures, is that *they don't always present us with an ideal world.* There's so many mistakes that people in the scriptures make.

We have to remember that *we are the primary sources for the next sacred set of scriptures.* Our life experiences and the things that we go through are sacred in the same way that the experiences of the people that we read about in these pages are sacred, because the scriptures are a record of God's dealings and relationships with people. *When we write about that and how we navigate that relationship with God, it's really important.*

I love hiking in the wilderness, but as anyone knows who spends time there, things can really go wrong. But without being willing to go into places where things can actually go wrong, then we'll never experience the beauty of the world or the beauty of humanity or the beauty of a life in the Spirit. *That's ultimately what we signed up for when we came* — was to have the agency to live in this magnificent world where all sorts of things can happen. Even when we finish one chapter in our lives, we have to keep on going. And we're always going into the wilderness. *We don't know everything.* We don't have a map for how our life is going to go or a map for what's going to happen in the world.

Mosiah 25–28

Jenet Erickson

Mosiah 27:29 *And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to me again, saying: Go forth and declare the word with truth and soberness; yea, and with all diligence; yea, with all the energy of heart.*

We learn the Lord does hear the prayers of faithful parents. *He hears the prayers of His people.* He does intervene, and His will will be done.

This is the book of conversion and deliverance. And Alma is going to teach us what it means to move from physical deliverance to the deliverance that's so personal of each soul coming to know that only through Christ can we be delivered — the collective and personal redeemer who brings deliverance to each of us.

If we're going to take full part in this life, we have to hear the history that has gone before us.

And He's telling us over and over again, "I have the power and the plan to redeem and restore this family, the whole grand family, as well as our individual families in our seasons of sorrow." And our seasons of joy that He will ultimately make eternal joy is the real assurance of the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon is like a 2,500 year story that He will hear our prayers. He will restore the line. Maybe the whole thing that we're developing in this process is learning how to hold on to the hope of unfulfilled promises and develop that Godly capacity in ourselves. *That's who God is. He is ever-seeing where we are not and where we will be. And He sees it with hope and absolute assurance that in His hands it can be brought to pass.*

Doesn't it seem like it's easy in the complexity of life to really wonder, where is God? And we might wonder in this story, this 2,500-year-old story, where is He? And that allegory that we have recently studied, Zenith's allegory, you see this being is actively involved. And we're going to see in this story He will intervene. He honors agency, He honors accountability, but His will will be done.

God honors agency and accountability, and He will bring us where He needs to bring us.

He will bring the world to the place it needs to be in. I don't know how He does it, but I think we can trust it. Alma, his whole testimony, is going to be grounded in *trust in God. Trust in His power to redeem.*

There's nothing we can do that he has not already taken into account. And that's our children. That's all of US. We can trust Him.

I think we rightly recognize the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ as a personal power of salvation and exaltation. *But it's also a communal power.* Throughout the Book of Mormon, we're seeing the Lord save nations and peoples, which are really families. They're family lines that are being saved. And that *the Atonement of Jesus Christ is not just an individual force, but it is national — it's a people, it's a community.*

I think that there's a lot to be said about trusting in God. His will be done. We can trust Him. And if it's not our will, we can know it is His will and it will be okay. But His will will be done.

All of these things are really important: faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost. They happen within a relationship, *a relationship that's established by covenant connection*. It's such a beautiful relationship that the *Lord endows us with His name*. *That's how close He wants to be with us, that we are His as if we were His own, in His own household or in His own embrace, in His own family.*

The word is kenosis. It's a Greek word that captures this emptying out of power that then produces power in a religious sense. And you can just hear this when we are called upon to offer our all to God in a covenant relationship, then not holding anything back, *it opens the door to power.*

The Lord will protect His Church. He will *need* to protect this covenant community. It has to be a stable and protected community.

So often what we might experience as a question is really what's presenting from a deeper question about trust. So often something has felt violated or betrayed. There's been an emotional experience that then we're asking the question seemingly focused on some aspect of Church history or something like that, but really it's belying what's underneath, which is, "I don't know if I can believe. I don't believe this. I can't even hear what some historian might say is accurate facts because what's really at the core is I don't trust." Some have reasons, having been betrayed in some way or a trust that felt like it was not fulfilled in some way. But really, at the core so often is trust or belief.

It is God who is doing this work in the most personal aspects of His life.

There's *no end* to the power of the name of Christ. So beautiful. Be willing to bear that and receive the gifts that come with it.

We cannot know when, but we can know for sure He hears those prayers. God will bring about miracles in our lives that we can't even anticipate all the ways that He will bring about those miracles.

Every single one of us is going to ultimately know who this God is, and we may choose to reject Him. I don't know that very many are going to choose to reject Him in the end, but all of us will know.

Do I need deliverance? I think of all the moments every day when the burdens of the ego, if they will, the fears or the temptations or the anxieties, the worry about, am I being noticed? This is uncomfortable. Life is uncomfortable. And all the moments throughout every day when we need deliverance from a redeemer, and He promises us He will do that. He will do it and the deliverance will take the form of that doctrine of Christ — change as we are born of Him through the process of faith, repentance, renewing that covenant, experiencing the power of the Spirit, and becoming changed. And we will all know ultimate and full deliverance having been reborn through putting our trust in the deliverer, Christ.

It's a story not of perfection. It never was. It was always a story of redemption.

I'm learning to have faith in His redeeming power. I am growing in the ways I need to grow through the very thing that seems so wrong to me — the catalyst for my own coming to know and trust the Redeemer.

The more converted we are, we can't help but want to be part of His saving work.

It's not trust in the book, per se. It's not trust in myself as a teacher. It's trust that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and He will fulfill His promise. When we accepted Him before this life, when we accepted that He would do that, when we put our trust in Him, it was well-placed trust in the most virtuous being imaginable — a being of pure love — and He did it. There's no reason to fear it or doubt. It was done. It is finished. He did the will of His Father, and it is finished.

Mosiah 29– Alma 4

Nate Williams

***Alma 4:12** And thus, having been faithful in keeping the commandments of God, Alma did prosper in the land.*

Every time we open up the Book of Mormon,
we open up ourselves to the influence of Jesus Christ.

I've often felt that if a person can do nothing spiritually except pray, at least they've got some conduit connecting them to God that's making them spiritually have a little bit of life, a little bit of a spiritual heartbeat and pulse going.

An inspired leader that makes an inspired adjustment and being able to be flexible, I think, is part of the power of what the doctrine of Christ can do for every one of our hearts. And keeping us able to be soft and flexible so that when things are changing, we find ourselves being able to be influenced by them and the Spirit and the Lord still.

Sometimes I think we do need to remind ourselves of the need of all of us to overcome the natural man, and even points of anti-civility, where you're not listening or talking in ways that are respectful and healthy with others, but you turn maybe to persecution behavior or you turn to violent behavior as a solution. I wonder if there are some elements of being anti-Christ there.

I think these chapters stir us to ask some really hard questions about what the children of God in the Church of God do with their prosperity. They invite all of us living in quite an abundant, affluent culture. What do we do with our excess? And could some of that be distracting and harmful to us spiritually, and maybe in a harsh way be anti-Christ?

I love that whatever these curses are, they're conditional. This is not something that's foreordained or predestined or punishing long-term children of God. These are things that can all be overcome with any kind of generational attitude where someone chooses to repent.

If I really understand and take those covenants seriously, do I find myself generously giving in a lot of different areas of my life because of the abundance of mercy I find flowing from the Lord into my life as a result of that? And it seems like here, those who are getting it in the Church are those who seem to be yoked with Christ, serious about that covenant and that relationship, and let that spill over into so many generous areas of their life in other ways — in their relationships with all kinds of people — that they might have the blessing to experience or encounter life with.

Your choices do matter, and your choices do bring consequences. And hopefully we can all be wise because I think all of God's children, we want to have a happy life filled with blessings. And there is truly a right way to live and be happy.

Jesus is *fully committed* to helping us overcome any inequality that stands between us and Heavenly Father. He is the great act of one who overcomes inequality so that we can become like Him. There's a big, big gap between us, and He's willing to do everything He can to help us become one with the Father.

Alma 5–7

Frantz Belot

Alma 5:26 Behold, I say unto you, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

Imagine that the Lord will say, “Come unto me.” I mean, what beautiful invitation is that?

The Lord *always, always* wants to help us. Once you realize that your behavior is not well aligned, well guess what? Once you realize and you seek for help, He always wants to help.

We cannot willpower ourselves to those changes. It is Christ that will cleanse us. It is Him that will wash our garments white, because He is the one who will redeem us of those sins that we are committing, as long as we do our parts, which is part of the repentance process.

The Lord says, “*Just put it aside. I’ll be there for you.*”

We have the very best. So we, in a way, although we may be sad about our sins and our mistakes, *should find a way to rejoice that those questions invite us to invite Christ in our lives so that we can experience the cleansing impact and be wanting to sing again the song of the redeeming love.*

To know that the Holy Spirit can testify to me of what is true and that has more impact than any other thing, I rejoice in that — that I can have that testimony from the Holy Spirit.

Can you imagine living in a way where you look forward to every day. Not in the future, not the judgment seat, but every day you look forward to the fact that *the Lord will remit or that He will forgive you. It’s a joyful way of living because if you believe that, that means that you’re also doing the work to repent.*

In a lot of ways, we have to also recognize that even though we may not see the totality of our works, especially when we're trying to do the Lord's will — even in our home, even with our children, and sometimes with people that we love very much — let's not give up. *Good things happen, especially if we feel that the Lord is encouraging us, inviting us, and asking us to help Him in one aspect or another.* I wouldn't worry so much about the outcome because He'll take care of the outcome, and *He will provide blessings because we would have done His will.*

Whether in this life or in the life to come, *this too shall pass. This ailment will be gone.*

It's clear to me that *the Lord expects me to be accountable as well.* He's done His part, but there are other things that I need to do.

That's one of the major “whys” for me to know that He, according to the flesh, knew how to succor Frantz Belot according to his infirmities. I know this scripture personally in my life, how true those words are, because I'm experiencing it even as I'm speaking right now to you all.

But it's remarkable in my mind and heart, the connection with the ability of the Savior to succor His people but to also invite us to repent at the same time.

We're in mortality. Mortality comes with problems. We come with problems. We have shortcomings. It's okay to, at times, stumble; it's part of the journey.

Be patient with yourself. Trust the Lord, do your best, and every day become better and better and better and better.

When I was introduced to the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Mormon, I discovered Jesus Christ in those pages. I started understanding where I came from, my divine identity, that I was a son of God, and that I had a responsibility to live right and to help my sisters and my brothers. Once I discovered that, I became a very different person.

Alma 8–12

Daniel Sharp

Alma 11:43-44 Behold, I say unto you, that the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time;

And now, behold, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame.

Perfect obedience does not necessarily guarantee overwhelming success.

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God does comfort us in our trials, but He doesn't necessarily remove them.

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If we only measured our missions and our success in terms of baptism, I think we'd be missing the point. I think this is an important point, this idea that you can't force other people. You can only control your own self.

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The Book of Mormon was not written just to convince people that Jesus is the Christ. It's that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God.

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Well, in our own day, as we listen to prophets and apostles, they definitely deliver the message the Lord wants them to deliver. Sometimes as members of the Church, we struggle with the way they deliver it and wish maybe they could have done it in a different way.

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God Himself cares enough about you to come down to earth to redeem you. That's the condescension of God.

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What is Christ? He's fully God and fully human.

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This isn't just a human being that's gonna judge us. It is Jehovah, a person with divine knowledge and with eternal experience.

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It's my understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ that He is uniquely qualified to be our judge because He has suffered all of our sins and transgressions and knows us better because of His empathy, His actual earthly experience on this earth. The reason God Himself had to come to earth was so that He could judge us, because otherwise the judgment could never be just. He would never know fully our experiences or whether our repentance was sincere.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is part of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. If "atonement" means to put us at one with God, it is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which puts us back into God's presence. It is an essential part.

In the ancient world, it was common when war was taking place to capture prisoners of war and then they would become slaves to the new owner. They would become subject to the new people and their slaves, but they could be bought back. If you paid the owner the correct price, you could purchase back those people. So the idea of redeeming is the idea that you had someone or something of value that has become a slave to something else. And then the redeemer comes and purchases them back and gives them their value. And this is important in understanding our idea of the plan of redemption.

The plan of redemption is about resurrection, remembering that resurrection is not just overcoming physical death; resurrection is overcoming the Fall of Adam. All of those effects have been reversed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

When you return to God's presence, you will now be judged according to your actions. That's what Heavenly Father wants, is to hold people accountable for their actions. And the action which we need to do is believe in Jesus Christ and repent. Because it's a given — you're not going to be perfect. Those who repent, they will not suffer the second death. But if you have a hard heart, if you refuse to repent, then you are forced to leave the presence of God. You're cut off again from His presence, and that is the second spiritual death.

This is another essential part of the Atonement of Jesus Christ — that a distant God knows all things, the Spirit knows everything, but through His experience, Jesus Christ gains an understanding of us through taking upon Him the sins of His people, their infirmities, their sickness. It gives Him this ability to know them and to judge them.

God has said, if you repent, you'll have a claim on mercy. Therefore, all you've got to do is repent. It's not a complicated system. You've already been redeemed from the Fall of Adam. You will go back to God's presence. It's not a question. Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the Fall of Adam, and because of that we will all stand before God to be accountable for our actions. The justice of God is not trying to punish us for sin; the justice of God is trying to hold us accountable for what we've done. And if what we have done is repent, then the justice of God demands that we be given forgiveness, because God has said that is how it will be

Alma 13–16

Eva Witesman

Alma 13:3 *And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being called according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ, before the world began.*

The ordinances and the powers that come through covenant making were part of the plan. This is the plan of salvation. This is how we access the Atonement of Jesus Christ

I can see that foreordination doesn't mean taking away the opportunity to have agency, or foreknowledge doesn't take away that agency. Our view, our mortal view, is so narrow. We're not understanding the fullness of how powerful agency actually is and how powerful and broad and eternal the view of our Father in Heaven is.

Everyone has the potential if they're righteous and willing to keep these covenants. Everyone has the potential to have access to that same power with God and with one another to create Zion, to gather Israel, to make and keep covenants, to create peace, and the power to do the will of God.

When I am struggling with something, I don't necessarily have to figure the whole thing out or fix it. But what I do need to do is turn to my Father in Heaven for guidance on what's true and what isn't true, and who I am, and whether or not He knows me. He has never failed, never failed to remind me that I am loved, that I am valued, and to give me the patience, in some cases, that I need and the wisdom, in some cases, that I need to be able to work through those hard things and those big questions. And I've had a lot of big questions.

Instead of power hoarding the people who would be the greatest among us, our prophets and apostles are doing nothing but serving us and trying to empower us to get the power that they hold and the keys that they hold literally to as many human beings as possible, which is the opposite of a traditional hierarchy.

The goal is to ordain people to this priesthood and to invite them into that work of community, and of peacemaking, and of meekness, and of service to one another, and righteousness, and forsaking sin.

We need to learn that commandments are actually a blessing that allows us to perpetuate eternally good things without everything crumbling into ugly, horrific destruction.

We also get to witness the pattern of redemption — that it just requires turning to Jesus Christ and having faith in Him, and that repentance process begins in a way that our hearts can be changed. And that's the miracle here.

Owen and I have had miscarriages and one really late-term stillbirth. Turning to my Savior in that moment and experiencing His role as a comforter and His role as someone who could, even in those pains and sorrows, provide me with rest in my soul — rest that I can't even really describe is, I think, what's happening here that President Nelson is talking about: this blessing of our covenants to give us that kind of rest.

Alma 17–22

Brian Meade

Alma 17:11 *Now when Ammon saw their exceeding faith and their diligence in keeping the commandments of God, he was led on to preach the word unto them.*

We need to learn. We need to study the gospel of Jesus Christ by both study and by faith. We need to be willing to pay a price, and we need to be willing to live and act on those things that we know to be righteous and true.

As we study the word of God, as we pay a price, as we search the scriptures, as we search sacred text — and I would include with that the words of modern prophets, seers, and revelators — as we begin to act on those things, as we begin to pray to God and as we communicate with Him, and as we ask for clarity, and as we ask for revelation from Him, as we fast, as we put other things that are really important — like you said, Hank: we put God first ahead of those things — that power comes into our lives through revelation and through understanding, and we can become incredible tools in the hands of God.

Obviously, the Lord is able to bring about amazing changes in a short period of time. Often what I've often found is that meaningful changes happen over a long period of time in my life.

The story of Ammon is a great reminder. 14 years. It took 14 years to have these miracles happen in the lives of the Lamanites. I need to be willing to allow time to operate within the lives of my children and others.

It's one of the beauties of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God is not finished with us and that He allows us to grow, and to repent, and to change. He doesn't give up on us when we haven't figured it out when we're 20 years old, or 30 years old, or 40 years old.

What repentance is, at its core, *is a relationship with God*, and it's about seeing us in our relationship with Him as our Father.

Repentance is when we change the way that we see God. And instead of seeing Him as maybe a second or a third priority in our life, He becomes our first priority and we want to connect with Him. And we seek to draw unto Him because we see ourselves as His children. Then we're willing to be obedient to the things that He asks us to do, not because we necessarily love those things or those things are easy for us to do, but because we know, and we trust, and we love God.

It's through the story of creation, it's through the story of fall, and it's through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we really find out who God is and who Jesus Christ is.

As we begin talking about these important ideas of repentance and as we talk about this beautiful plan of redemption that Ammon and Aaron and others teach to these wonderful people, I think it's important that we remember that each of these things centered on our relationship to God and to others.

I don't think Ammon wants us to focus on him so much as he wants us to focus on God and His incredible mercy and power.

One of my favorite things to do in this moment as I talk of Ammon is to sit and reflect, and say if Ammon were in front of us, if we were able to have a fireside or if we were able to sit down with Ammon, what do you think he would really want us to know about God from his experience?

God is a God of promise, and we can place faith and trust in Him even when it seems that we're up against impossible odds, just like Ammon was in this moment.

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I don't think God wants us to learn *how* He created. Or I don't think He wants us to learn about the *timing* of His creation. Instead, in these creation accounts in sacred texts, *I think God wants us to learn and recognize the "who" of creation and the "why" of creation. We need to recognize that these creation accounts in scriptures are more about who God is.*

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It is all about identity, that as we understand the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we understand our identity as a child of a loving Heavenly Father.

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I want my students to understand one of the most important things that we learn about God in these accounts is that God is all-knowing — that God is somebody who knows all things. A second thing that I want them to understand is the power of God — that God is all-powerful. And then, finally, that God is our loving Father.

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But the invitation that I would give us is to think about some of those things in our lives that are stopping us from having a relationship with our Heavenly Father. What are those things that are stopping us from giving time to Him? What are those things that are maybe getting in the way of stopping us from spending time in His house or in spending time on our knees with Him?

—

Repentance is coming to see who God truly is and who we are as His children, and that we're willing to bring our life back in alignment with God in order to know Him and to follow Him.

How can you stay faithful when it's so hard at times? I took a moment and I thought about it, and I said I stay faithful because I love God and I know God loves me. And I'm willing to stay faithful in hard times.

Be willing to trust in God's timing. Be willing to trust that God is preparing other people in order to help you in this parenting and grandparenting role. And then trust in the timing of God.

Alma 23–29

Lori Denning

Alma 29:4 *I would that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people.*

These are stories that are just like our stories. I want us to look at the stories and say how am I like this?

Read [the scriptures] out loud, because you'll hear it and you'll feel it a little differently.

We can apply these stories to whatever we're working on in our corner of the kingdom.

I think I have a lot more in common sometimes with these people who have messed up and aren't really super successful than the ones who were awesomely successful. If you think about the books of Alma and Mosiah, it's like 99% about people who messed up and the Lord forgave and saved them.

Maybe the people that need to be converted that never fall away are ourselves.

The Lord can change me. Even in the darkest corners — the places I hope no one finds about my worst habits, my worst thoughts, my worst behaviors — I can become righteous. If He could do it to them, He can do it to me.

I wonder how often we take those identities that we're given, right? Daughter of God, child of Christ, member of the Church, or first names or last names, member of the kingdom, and say, "That's my identity." My identity isn't what I do, or my desires, or what I ate this week, or what football team I'm like. My fundamental identity is this: my spiritual recognition to the Lord.

Maybe I'll start signing my paychecks with that.
Just "Lori Denning, disciple of Christ".

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This book changes me. This book changes how I see the world, and it gives me hope. And I get closer to Christ and I know Him better through this book than the others. One book makes me a scholar and the other makes me a saint, And that's why I love it. There is no better book in the world. It's powerful. It's wonderful. It's insightful. It's exciting. It gives me joy. And I know it can do the same for everybody else. It makes us disciples of Christ.

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Alma 30–31

Brent Top

Alma 31:16 *I do not boast of myself to my own shame, but I do boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things.*

A lot of times, we as Latter-day Saints will have friends and acquaintances that are not wearing black T-shirts with big, bold, red lettering saying anti-Christ, but that they're saying things that would diminish the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

There are strong correlations between education level and retaining your faith. Kori-hors today would have us believe that only nin-compoops believe the gospel. But in reality, the more educated a person becomes — we're talking generally, not anecdotally, we're talking statistically — the more faithful they become and vice versa.

The point I'm trying to say there is yes, we need to live the gospel. No, we don't have to do everything on our own.

I have searched and studied. It is not like I am dismissive of learning or knowledge, but I know what I know, and I know what I choose to believe. You can see how Satan is going to try to put young people particularly, but others as well, out on the fringes. Because when they're out on the fringes feeling lonely, you know what happens in wildlife? When those animals that are out on the fringes, away from the body, you can pick them off so much easier — isolate to make them feel like, well, if I'm the only person that believes this gospel, there must be something wrong with me because all of my friends believe this. So, I'm the one that's wrong — not the possibility *that maybe others have not paid the price that you paid.*

In reality, as my wife says, neither a missionary nor any human being ever runs out of time — *they run out of desire.*

There are Korihor philosophies that creep into our lives. Sometimes when we begin to think the same thing that he's advocating, it's, "I've got to do this all myself. I've got to fare academically, intellectually, socially, parentally as a son or daughter. I've got to do everything according to my genius and my strength." *What a terrible burden to carry.* That is the great bondage to think that I am totally dependent upon my own efforts, my own skill, my own genius, man, my own talent, my own good looks. No wonder I feel doomed and depressed if that's how I have to measure up.

How often as a mission president did I hold up the little white handbook, or now the standards book, like this is my sword to try to get you to do something? When, in reality, *the power of the words is what changes missions and missionaries and brings about greater conversion — and that can only come from within.*

Let's also understand the Atonement — not dismiss the expectations of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the gospel commandments, and covenants and ordinances, by having grace be our strength that then becomes a weakness if we're not careful. God loves me. That I know for sure. But I also know for sure that I cannot continually offend Him without there being some consequence. And that's what Korihor is saying to him, and he's leading him along to basically say, "Doesn't matter. *It doesn't matter,*" *when, in fact, it does.*

Living the gospel is not hard. Living with the consequences of *not* living the gospel is hard.

When we have the love for the Lord and we try the power of Christ in our lives and in our actions, in our ministering, that is more powerful than anything else.

I have family members that just think, “How is it possible that Brent and Wendy would do all these things, and they can’t do this, and they can’t retire and do all that?” Could it not be possible that this is what I choose because of what I know and what I’ve experienced? It is not bondage when I choose and I knowingly choose because of the blessings that have come into my life.

As a mission president, as a bishop, as a stake president, sometimes as a parent, they reach a point with their behaviors and their lack of desire where we cannot save them from the consequences. I can tell you, I have witnessed in my ecclesiastical family in my professional life, there are worse things that come as a result of sin and disbelief than not being able to speak or hear or see. While this is maybe a sign of a very graphic nature, *I think it is, in a way, merciful by comparison.*

Think about all the ways you have seen the hand of God in your life. I have extended family members that are not in the Church that think that our family is charmed in some way, that our life is charmed in some way. And they don’t know of the problems or challenges we have, but they look at us and think that somehow all of these blessings and all of the things that have come to us as a family just spontaneously erupted into our lives with no causation. No. There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven, and I have seen it over and over and over again in my life. How can I not believe to be knowing what I know?

I mean, we can mock the Zoramites all we want. We may not stand up on a ramiumptum, but sometimes we blow through prayers as if we think that God has chosen us above all other people of everything, and we don’t need to plead with Him for our souls or for anything else.

We think the word of God is scriptures. Well, it is that, and it is the preaching of the word. But more than the scriptures, the scriptures themselves testify, and Jesus himself testifies that He is the word of God. He is the word. And so I don't think Alma is merely saying, as we sometimes are led to assume by our lessons or talks in the Church, that it was "expedient" — absolutely essential. The word "expedient" is far stronger than necessary. *It is absolutely imperative.* It is essential that they work with the power of Christ.

Let's just be careful and recognize you are enough because you have been bought by the blood of Christ. You are enough. You have the strength to do anything, not just because you're wonderful, but because you have been redeemed — you have been given and you have divine DNA within you.

I've had my share of challenges of heartaches when things don't turn out the way that I think they should. But what warrants my belief is my knowledge that my life is better when I seek to follow Him.

While I have not always been perfect, and while I have not always been what I would want to be in all the areas of my life, I have the absolute assurance that the Atonement of Jesus Christ will make it as though I always have been.

Alma 32–35

S. Michael Wilcox

Alma 33:22 *But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, behold, he will consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain.*

If you think that faith, testimony, is based on emotion, emotion isn't a very stable foundation. And I think a lot of people feel that faith is based on kind of emotional things. That's not a real solid foundation. Faith is based on evidence.

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Because a proud man is always looking down on everything. And in order to find God, you have to look up. You have to recognize that there is something greater than you are in order to find Him.

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It doesn't matter who you are, He will answer. He will speak truth to you — men, women, children — because He wants you to know it.

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Sometimes people think that faith is I have it or I don't have it. And because we use the word "know" in our testimonies so much, it gives the impression that I got it or I don't have it.

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Any more than faith is a perfect knowledge. You're going to *grow* a tree. You don't pull the fruit off it the day after you plant it.

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A testimony is a living thing. That's what I like about the tree analogy — it's constantly growing.

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There is a God who takes an interest in me.

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It's okay to have a mind testimony, and it's okay to have a behavior testimony, and it's okay to have a burning in your bosom testimony. We're trying to provide evidence, and all these, there's different kinds of experience, authority, reason, substance that we put underneath it. Some of it is mental, some of it is behavioral, and it's okay. You just have to know a little bit about yourself. Some people are going to have more swellings, and some people are going to have more enlightenings, and some people are going to have more enlargeings, and some people are going to have more deliciouses. And maybe at different points in your life, one or the other will become dominant.

The tree of life grows. We each grow our own tree of life that we will feed on for eternity.

We're all looking for a fulfilled, happy, joyous life. And Alma would say to you and I, as my mother used to say to me when I was growing up... You were born with the fruit in your hands. Don't go out on some search out there thinking that you're going to find greater happiness or greater joy or greater peace, something more precious, something more desirable out there than you already have. You have the most sweet, joyous, beautiful, desirable, precious, purest thing. Don't waste time. Nurture it. Let it grow in your life. You'll not hunger. You'll not thirst. Your needs will be fulfilled

One of the ways you plant the seed is you make God a friend. You make Him a Father. You talk to Him all the time.

You will find in the life of the Savior healing and understanding for whatever comes to you.

What is it that I need most from Him? I need forgiveness. I need mercy. I do need answers. I need peace. But the greatest peace and forgiveness that He wants to give us is, “Let me take your shame away. Let me take your guilt away. Let me take your sorrows away. Let me take your regrets away. I can do that, but you have to look.”

The Atonement is not something that He did, but it is something that was created in Him so that His mercy would never end.

Something that happened in His life and in His hour that created, I believe, empathy. I can’t come up with a word strong enough — infinite empathy that will enable Him to forgive and forgive and forgive and forgive each of us all the time. An infinite atonement goes on. It’s a powerful word.

If I think of the Atonement as something that happened at a specific time and place, part of my brain says I’ve made it finite. I don’t want it to be finite. It has to be infinite. Meaning, right now, as you and I talk, the mercy of Christ is doing what the mercy of Christ does. It is infinite. It is infinite in space and time and number.

I love the infinite sense of Atonement as not happening once but happening all the time forever.

I want the heart of Jesus. I’m not there, but I want it.

God says to me sometimes, “What’s in your heart today, Michael?” I say, “Well, Lord, I’m sad today.” “Well, pour it out.” “I’m worried today. I have anxiety about my grandchildren.” “Well, pour it out.” “I’m full of joy and gratitude.” “Pour it out. I love to hear of your joys and gratitude.” “My soul is full of guilt today.” “Pour it out.” Pour it out. There’s nothing you can’t tell Him.

The more you succeed in loving, the more you’ll be convinced of the existence of God and the immortality of your soul. And if you reach complete selflessness in the love of your neighbor, then undoubtedly you will believe and no doubt will ever be able to enter your soul. This has been tested. This is certain. This is exactly true. Active love is labor and perseverance and, for some people, perhaps a whole science.

The Book of Mormon testifies again and again and again. You ask for forgiveness, you cry out, you want forgiveness. You are crying out to a Being who, however, whenever, in whatever manner He got it, His soul is filled with mercy. It’s infinite, unbounded, unlimited, unmeasurable — in time, space, and number — and you get it immediately.

If you just went through the Book of Mormon and said, “I’m going to look at all the parent-child relationships and see what I can learn about being a good parent,” I can’t think of a parenting book that’s going to give you more intelligence, wisdom, and knowledge than the Book of Mormon.

Alma 36–38

John “Jack” Welch

Alma 38:12 Use boldness, but not overbearance; and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.

God did not give us this book just to give us another volume along with Homer's Iliad. We've been given this book because it has a special mission to testify of the truthfulness of Jesus Christ. Through this book we will know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the very Eternal Father, and that His Gospel is true.

The Lord does this to you. You do what you're supposed to do, and He'll tell you things that you're needing to know when you need to know them.

The principles of the gospel are all together, dependent upon each other. They are an organ with all the pipes, and you have to have all the pipes playing.

No matter where you are or what your condition might be, this is the gospel of Jesus Christ that is eternal and is true.

That liberation can occur no matter where you are, even if you're in prison.

He wants Corianton to realize that when you die, when it's over, it's not over. There is more to come.

The law of mercy is not that He will somehow just forget what you've done but that you will be given time to repent. And that's mercy, because God will not execute judgment.

He will give you a stay of judgment, and He will not execute that judgment until you have had all the time you are asking for and in His righteousness know that would be good for you.

The Lord loves His children and everyone — no matter their condition, no matter their place in the world, no matter their problems, no matter their successes. He loves all of us and wants us to come back to Him voluntarily — that we choose Him. And if we do, He will magnify us. I promise.

Alma 39–42

Adam Miller

Alma 41:10 *Do good; yea, keep the commandments of God, and live in the light of his glory; yea, walk in the righteousness of his ways. For behold, the wicked shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But sinners who repent and keep the commandments of God shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

Alma is trying to explain how the purpose of the work of restoration is to usher us into the presence of God not to keep us out.

With the Book of Mormon, I'm not especially interested in what the Book of Mormon was — or even with what the Book of Mormon is — so much as *I'm interested in what the Book of Mormon can do*. Rather than understanding the Book of Mormon as a kind of relic of history, *I want to engage with it as a live power*.

His love for us is indestructible and undeniable. You and I may choose to not participate in it or to flee from it. That doesn't change anything for Him.

As sinners, we're prone to misunderstand and misread punishment as if it were God getting back at us for the evil that we have already done. But I think all of Alma chapter 42 is really an attempt here to explain to Corianton the way that punishment as a function of the law, as a function of justice, is a good thing. *Punishment is God responding to our evil with the good that we need in order to become good and stop being evil*.

You'll be judged on whether or not your works were good, but also, and perhaps especially, Alma says *you will be judged on whether or not the desires of your heart were good*.

If I stop trying to achieve what is good for me and instead invest my heart and mind in doing what's good for others, then I will find the very good thing that I was looking for.

This moment of judgment is not a moment when the score card is tallied to see what kinds of good things I did and what kinds of bad things I did, and whether that balances out to any kind of possibility of reward or redemption in the life to come. Rather, it's a moment when the truth about the desires of my heart are revealed. And that, at the end of the day, will decide what is restored unto me.

The problem here isn't that I'm bad or evil by nature. The problem is that I tend to be wrong about what is or isn't actually good. And if I can discover the truth, then surely I will join God and find myself happy to be in His presence again.

It turns out that the very best thing that you can do to experience joy and to be happy is not to save your life but to lose it, which is pretty counterintuitive.

Our salvation is going to depend here not just on works, but on desires. And at the center of the work of restoration is the work of restoring us to our true, natural, divinely given desire for what is good, and the discovery of what that actually is.

That really is what it means to be a sinner: to think that that is who God is, to misunderstand His nature and to misunderstand what He's offering.

God's not in the work of punishment here in terms of retribution. He's only in the work of discipline in terms of an education that we need.

If I think that my salvation is about deserving or not deserving God's love instead of joining in God's work of love, then I'm going to always end up judging myself to be insufficient in deserving it. Then I'll never find it, and I will be my own judge here, and I will condemn myself to not deserving love. But the problem won't be that I failed to deserve it. *The problem will be that I failed to understand that love was a law and not a reward that you deserve or don't.*

In some very real sense, the process of my Resurrection is something that God is anxious to get started right here, right now, in this life. And especially if it's the case that the only obstacle here is not God, but me, then *there is no reason that I can't begin to experience my redemption now by participating with God in His work here and now.*

Restoration is not about God now giving him the evil that he deserves because he's done evil, but that the whole project of restoration as modeled by resurrection is to take what was bad and turn it into what is good — to take what was corrupted and make it incorruptible. And that that is what God is offering.

My journey in the gospel has largely been a journey of discovering my failure to deserve love isn't because I didn't measure up in all the ways that would have qualified me to deserve that love, but because I had misunderstood what love was in the first place. I'd mistaken it for a reward when it was, in fact, instead a law.

More than any other book in all of my life that I have ever read, this book has deeply and undeniably introduced me to God.

I don't know that we have even started to read the Book of Mormon. We have hardly ever given it a chance to speak in its own voice, to tell us what it wants to say rather than are imposing on it what we expect it to say. To that degree, we have really hamstrung the book's ability to accomplish its own mission of introducing us to Jesus Christ.

Even the weakest effort on my part to engage with the book, to read it, to study it, to understand it, to spend time with it, will be rewarded with not just an understanding of the book, but with a first-person, present-tense experience of God — of His love and of His power of redemption. That's what the book promises.

Alma 43–52

David Boren

Alma 48:17 *Never had I known so great joy, because of the covenant which I had made.*

The Lord doesn't just look at us in snapshots.
He sees us with an eternal lens.

I think that's one of the first leadership lessons:
to see others the way God sees them and to see
the best in them and allow them to change.

Sometimes we put our physical preparedness
over our spiritual preparedness. And it's cer-
tainly important to have wheat, and water, and
food supplies, and food storage, and enough
money on hand. But that spiritual preparedness
is going to serve us even better. That should
come first.

When we understand God and our divine na-
ture and connect with Him, we feel joy.

Being faithful is being full of faith, full of belief,
full of hope, and not just going through the mo-
tions, because I can go through the motions and
be pretty faithless as well and not believe.

There is remarkable evidence that we can find
great joy amidst our trials and difficulties. And
that, in many ways, that can actually bring
more joy to our lives.

Some of us look forward to a time in the
future — salvation and exaltation in the world
to come. But today is part of eternity. I firmly
believe that the Lord would like us to find joy in
our worship and in living the gospel today.

The Lord can change us. The Atonement can
change us.

I think there are times in the Church where we can lose sight, or in our families, we can lose sight of what we're really about, why we're doing what we're doing. We need each other. We need to run together to help each other in our struggles. That's part of what we do in this church — we make these covenants, and we run together, and we take turns pulling each other along when someone's hurting.

Forgiveness can really heal. God can help us do that.

We can counsel with each other all we want, but we really need to invite the Lord into our councils.

Those individuals whom we most love, admire, and respect as leaders of the human family are so regarded by us precisely because they embody, in many ways, qualities that Jesus had in His life and His leadership. We can disentangle all the leadership principles, try to list them out, but what would Jesus do? It's probably the best leadership principle I can think of. We'll emulate Him. We will lead righteously.

We are engaged in a latter-day war. And if we will seek to live our covenants, He will arm us with power and righteousness, and we will be able to fight these wars and battles that we have.

If you're having a hard time, *I would testify that the Book of Mormon will bring life to you.*

Alma 53–63

Justin Top

Alma 56:47-48 Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

Sometimes we think that the goal is, if we can just be righteous enough and be good enough, that all of that will go away and we'll be victorious. But the story of the Nephites doesn't end that way. In fact, the only thing that can put an end to this natural man whack-a-mole is when Jesus Christ comes.

It becomes easy to believe that if we're just good enough, then we won't have to struggle anymore. Struggle is a big part of why we're here. But grace is the answer to all that — not just grace that helps us heal and overcome and win battles, but grace that makes up the difference when we don't.

How do these young men who have very little skill, overpower such a greater, more skilled force? *And it's because of the strength of God.*

Grace is anything that is a gift from God. So remember, anything that God gives us on our behalf that works to our good, that's grace. The kind of grace we want is like that we've talked about — the enabling grace that empowers us to overcome, whether it's disease or weakness or whatever — and that is an important kind of grace.

What if the struggle itself is grace? What if one of our whole purposes of being here is to be part of this struggle that stretches us and gives us experience and teaches us to love like God does? So then you start to view the struggle as grace and find God in the struggle.

God's always there, waiting until we can get in this place where we can hear Him and take Him by the hand. That's His grace.

When you view the commandments as grace, rather than this thing I have to do so that I can get grace, then that changes your approach to keeping the commandments because now this is a blessing. God is giving this to us as a way to lift us up toward Him, rather than somehow condemn us if we don't do well enough.

In dealing with the struggles of life, the big question is who are we choosing as our leader? Who are we choosing to follow? That's going to have all the impact in the world because they inspire us. Inspire means "breathe into" and implies to breathe spirit into *us*.

The important thing to remember here is that courage is born in defining moments.

That fire of the covenant is such a key to keep us going through hard times. Remembering our promises, not just what we promise, but the blessings that are promised to us as a result of the covenant.

I don't believe that righteousness and obedience are automatically the same thing. I think righteousness is something that comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ. If you focus too much on that obedience, then it can become like the Pharisees, where you miss out on the relationship aspect. Viewing obedience as part of our discipleship is important, because it leads us to have a relationship with Christ.

God is the master story writer. He creates these incredible journeys for each of us. And you can't ever tell how it's going to end.

The gospel is all about obedience and discipleship, and I think it's important that when we read this story, we don't make the assumption that obedience and faith are always 100% linked to being delivered from whatever the struggle is.

This is what it means to have faith in the Lord, is that *every little thing can matter. Things that we don't even expect can bless our lives in ways we can't anticipate. This is God's grace.*

The scriptures say that all things work together for our good. And *I don't think we fully grasp or appreciate what that "all things" part means, but God is heavily invested in bringing about our story of grace.*

The best we can do is keep trying, stirring ourselves up, and understand that God's grace is there to help us be better, to help us be more graceful and loving to other people. But it's also there to help us when we're not. We don't have to be perfect.

God says, "I'm going to let you struggle with this, because my strength is made perfect in weakness." What an interesting thing to say. Sometimes it's more about the struggle than it is about the outcome for us.

We seek the grace of God, seek to have grace for others and for ourselves. And know that when we don't, the grace still applies for us and is still helping us, pushing us toward a better relationship with Him.

It's okay if you're hardened because of something, *but don't stay there*. Seek the incredible healing, softening grace of Jesus Christ to overcome that.

Struggle and conflict — internal or external — are a normal natural part of life. Though we try and avoid it as much as possible, it's going to happen. How we embrace that, how we receive that and deal with it from a place of moral courage, that's what really matters. And *the most important source for us to seek that moral courage is through our Savior Jesus Christ, the grace of God in our lives*. And we access that through obedience, through faith, and through humbling ourselves and asking for it.

In whatever struggle it is, *if we will reach out* for the grace of God and be willing to receive what He has for us, *we'll find greater courage to face those struggles, and greater insight, and endurance, and strength to get through*, even if we can't get around the challenges that come in our life.

Helaman 1–6

Jenae Nelson

Helaman 5:12 And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.

We often leave our centers — our hearts, our homes — unguarded and we focus quite often on the borders — on the people out there that are having problems, the wickedness in the world. And we're not thinking about how can we guard our center? How can we protect our center? How can we build a fortress around our hearts?

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It's also extremely hopeful in perilous times to think that the work that I do in my own heart and in my own home can make a difference. And it does make a difference, and that's something I can influence.

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In the private times of your life, you can pray, you can ponder, you can meditate, you can draw close to the Lord. And that's the best way to use your private time.

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One of the first signs that you may be doing something you shouldn't be doing is if you try to keep it a secret. I think this is really important, especially for the youth, to know that there's a difference between keeping something secret and holding something sacred.

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Ultimately, *if you don't experience the Lord daily*, President Nelson is telling us that with frightening speed, our testimonies can crumble.

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It's a different approach when we send our kids to the Lord for answers. Ask the Lord versus trying to give them all the answers and trying to make them do the right things.

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The Lord knows what the youth need, but it doesn't work if you're not sending them to the Lord — if you're not having them have experiences with the Lord. Because the whole point is that they're supposed to pray to their Heavenly Father. They're supposed to ask, inquire, and receive revelation on what is right for their life.

Many actions can ignite positive spiritual momentum. Obedience, love, humility, service, and gratitude are but a few. I love this idea, that in contrast to this frightening speed with which we can lose our testimonies, we also have within our power this positive spiritual momentum that we can grow up in the Lord and we can move toward this positive, virtuous life.

We get revelation for other callings. We absolutely get revelation in our calling as a mother and as a father.

We need to focus on the really simple, simple things that will lead our children to know their Savior and to trust their Savior so that when they do encounter the storms of life, they are prepared because they have the Lord in their life.

It's perfectly fine to show up to somebody's house empty-handed but with a full heart, because they will know if you love them, if you care about them. The way that you look at them, the way that you make eye contact with them, the way that you reach out to them, those things communicate "I love you." My advice is that you can never go wrong with love.

You can never go wrong with warmth. If people are coming back and they're not feeling the love of the Savior, then we're not doing it right.

Never give up on people. Never give up on them. The Lord never gives up on us and the certain people in my life that I knew never gave up on me.

In the end, we are all children of God and it's our responsibility to treat each other that way. And the only thing that brings people back, it's not guilt. The only thing that will really bring people back, this leads us right into Helaman 5:12, is bringing people to their Savior through the love of God — bringing them to the rock. That's the only way.

I would say don't discount the angels that the Lord will send into the life of the people that you love who have left the Church. And don't be afraid to be somebody's angel.

This pillar of fire, this incredible witness, *isn't just for the prophets and apostles. We can have those same witnesses and that same light in our life.*

When you don't have your eyes focused on Christ, you're going to miss all of the miracles and the wonder and the incredible work that we can participate in right now in our day.

Where pride is growing in the Church, there's also humility that is growing in the Church.

We need to have this kind of humility, where we recognize that *Heavenly Father is a good father*, and that He gives us all of the good things in our life. We show gratitude. We feel our sense of indebtedness. All of these things can lead and build our humility.

He's too good. You can't ever get ahead of the Lord, because then He will immediately bless you. There's no "getting even" with the Lord, and it's not supposed to be that way. He wants to be in an asymmetrical relationship with us because He loves us. We're His children. That's how it works with a father and his children. He pours out these blessings. Once you have that realization that, wow, God has done so much for me, it prepares your heart to be humble.

All of us make mistakes. We're in this fallen world. We're never going to make it on our own merit, but God gives liberally to us, and that should make us feel so grateful that He's willing to remain in a relationship with us.

Ultimately, we can have faith in a God who has already prepared the way. This is how we have hope in the latter days.

What gratitude does, it acknowledges a sense of, "I'm dependent on God. I need Him. I need Jesus Christ in my life. I'm not making it without Him." That's an encouraging thing, because He wants to see us succeed.

I realized it takes humility to accept the goodness of God in your life.

What we need to do with our kids is we need to make sure that when they're writing their gratitude list, or when they're doing any type of gratitude practice, that you ask them, "Where did that come from? Who gave that to you?" Because gratitude is supposed to be pro-social. What that means is it's supposed to motivate people to build relationships.

As you follow the prophets and the apostles and your local leaders, you will come to know your Savior better, because that's where the covenants, the ordinances, the temple, the power of the priesthood is all contained within the restoration of the Church.

This idea of hope in the darkness comes from trusting and believing in the rock of our salvation, that He already came. He already made all this right. He will come again.

God plays the long game. It may not be our generation, the next generation, or the next generation, but eventually God has a way of healing families.

We can choose a life of virtue, or we can choose a life of vice. The choice is simple.

Because you have a relationship with Him such that you trust Him, you know He's going to come through for you. You have a history of knowing that He has been there for you in the past. You can draw on that and say, I don't know how things are going to work out, but I just know that they will because God has never let me down before.

It is absurd to have hope in times like ours. We're smiling, and we're happy, and we have hope because of who we are founded upon. We're founded upon Jesus Christ, who gives us hope.

He's my fortress. My testimony is so firmly planted on Jesus Christ and His Church because He has rescued me, and because the restored church has been a refuge for me throughout my life. The prophets and the apostles, those are the sure cornerstones.

It's okay that we're weary. We don't have to be happy smiling all the time when there's really hard things going on. I think it's okay to say, like Elder Wirthlin then said, "Mom, I'm having a hard time." But also his counsel and advice is, "Come what may and love it." And the reason why we can love it *is because we know that God is in charge. We worship a loving God.*

He's the healer. He truly, truly has our best interest at heart. He has a plan. He knows what He's doing. If your life is falling apart, He knows it and He has a plan to put it back together in the most beautiful way.

We can be sad in our own suffering. I don't want to invalidate real sad feelings. That's the beauty of a sunset. It's this beautiful burst of color. Right before the dark, it's God saying you don't have to worry. *The sun is going to come up again.*

He's good at his job. *He's good at being a savior.*

Helaman 7–12

Shima Baughman

Helaman 10:5 *For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and I work not among the children of men save it be according to their faith.*

I think changing hearts is always more effective to stopping crime than any kind of public policy.

I believe that all the people that chose mortality are good. We chose Jesus Christ in the first instance. We accepted His plan. We accepted Christ. I know that God loves all of us, regardless of how low we've gone, regardless of how long we've been away, regardless of how dark the night is. He wants us to bring ourselves into that light that He can share with us. Our obligation is to love all of our siblings and to try to be one.

How often do I complain or vent about the annoyances in my life to other people rather than turning to God with them?

Sometimes we might be practicing our religion but failing to be Christians.

It's easy to fall in this trap where I'm trying to go down my checklist rather than echoing Christ or emulating Christ. I think if I don't read of Christ daily, if I don't remember Him and reevaluate often, it's easy to fall in this trap.

Serving people is not always pleasant. The gospel is meant to be uncomfortable.

God is aware of us and loves us. And it doesn't matter what calling we have or what status we have in the eyes of men; it's the eyes of God that matter.

Remembering who you are is key to following Jesus Christ.

I think often times we're quick, hopefully, to thank God after, but we don't thank Him before. To me, it sounds a lot like President Nelson's admonition to expect miracles. He says, "The Lord will bless you with miracles if you believe in Him, doubting nothing." *If we do the spiritual work to seek the miracles, expect them to come, be grateful for them before they come, that's the kind of faith that we're aiming for.*

When our hearts are broken and they're ripped open, there's an open wound, *we're completely open to the spirit of God* and we can change. And we can have this dependence on Him and we realize where we come from.

I had this profound realization of how much God loves His people, all of them, including those in prison. So I love this little nugget that Mormon saved in here, that they're converted while they're in prison.

Is it wrong to congratulate yourself when you did something good? It is not wrong when you do it when you're doing God's will and when you give Him the credit rather than yourself. And I think that's such a great example where the Spirit tells Nephi, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." That's what we want. That's the kind of congratulation we want.

I actually think when God warns us, it is such an evidence of His love. If He didn't love us, He wouldn't warn us.

Are we willing to have this same sort of miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ allowed for people in our lives, in our criminal justice system, in our daily interactions with people who have harmed us? *How willing are we to let people repent and change if they're willing?*

There's no healing power in having that person suffer behind bars. That might be helpful for them to be held accountable. But for you as a victim, *you have to go to God, and Jesus Christ can solve those wounds better than anyone else we know.*

It's not like the Atonement of Jesus Christ works, check, and then we're kind of moved on. *I think sometimes when you've gone through hard things, it's a difficult process and it takes more time than we think.* And I think it's okay to allow yourself that time to heal.

Working through prayer and trying to allow the Atonement of Jesus Christ to work in you is okay. We shouldn't beat ourselves up if we aren't at the point of complete and utter forgiveness.

When you're trying to do God's will, He opens doors for you.

If we had no health challenges, if we didn't have difficult people in our lives that confront us, if we didn't have any stress, we'd become weak, soft people that are distracted by the shiny things that we see in our earthly experience. And we'd lack the opportunity to gain godly traits.

It's a beautiful thing to remember the miracles of God.

Who are better guides for us than Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father? There's this beauty of allowing us to come to repentance and having it done grace for grace.

That's why I have a smile on my face, because *I know that the answer is always Jesus Christ*, and it's also the answer for criminal justice. It's also for all of the wounds and the horrible things that we go through that we inflict on each other. That is our answer. That's where we have this hope that we're not going to sit and wallow in depression *because we know that Jesus Christ has conquered all and He can continue to redeem these unredeemables. Because nobody's unredeemable. We can all come to Jesus Christ.*

The lower you sink, the more powerful your conversion, oftentimes.

It's not an exaggeration to say that *the Book of Mormon has changed my life*. Without the Book of Mormon, I would be in Iran, you know, desperate to get out, having no freedom, no ability to worship my Savior. So I am so indebted to this book, and I feel like the more I study it, the more I want to be like Jesus Christ.

There's just so much goodness in this book and I've been so grateful. And I've actually noticed my happiness this year as we're studying it more intently than when we kind of move along with Come, Follow Me. I think the power in the Book of Mormon is real. It is a power that is unlike any other book of scripture in that testifies of Christ so often.

When we remember Him, we're better.

Helaman 13–16

Sheri Dew

Helaman 14:30 *Yea, verily I say unto you, the time shall come that the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.*

There's something really crucial in reading the scriptures, not only for what we can learn from ancient prophets, but also to say, okay, how does this apply to me?

It's amazing to study the lives of the prophets and apostles, and to watch the Lord tutor them and get them ready for the hour when they are ordained a prophet, seer, and revelator. I think as you study their lives, they look better. They look even better than you hope they will. You can see the Lord's hands.

I think the Spirit tries to speak to hearts and minds because you actually can't convince yourself in your mind of something that doesn't feel right in your heart.

When we talk about learning how to decipher and understand the promptings of the Spirit, how to speak the language of revelation, it's both an intellectual and a heart thing. For me, it is the “does that feel right” that puts the capstone on it. I can reason it out, but if it still doesn't feel right, you go, yeah, I don't know.

The Lord's ways aren't man's ways — we hear that phrase all the time, but we shouldn't gloss over it like it's a slogan or something. It also means today that a prophet's ways are not always what everyone on Facebook thinks it should be. I mean, can you imagine what YouTube influencers would have been howling at Samuel up on the wall?

Repentance doesn't have to be this big thing sitting in front of the bishop. Usually, it isn't a big thing sitting in front of the bishop.

If you have wealth, or high intellect, or fame, or celebrity, or a claim of some kind, you can be tempted to think, “Well, I’m one of the gifted ones. How lucky am I?” In that sense, you’re not thinking, “God gave me everything I have. Everything, *whether it’s a physical asset, or it’s my health, or it’s opportunity, or it’s people who have mentored me or helped me, or whatever — that all came from Him.*” It’s flipping between, “No, no, no, I did this all myself,” pounding on the chest, as opposed to, “I’m so grateful for these gifts God has given me, and what does He want me to do with them?”

Can you think of anybody you would trust more than a prophet of God who has been prepared by God and is being directed in this Church by the Lord Jesus Christ, whose church it is? I think about this over and over, and I think, okay, is there a more important voice of authority in my life than a prophet of God? And I can’t come up with anyone.

A prophet is not going to be allowed to lead the Church down a side canyon that ends up being where the Lord doesn’t ultimately want the Church.

I don’t think prophets seeing around corners says they can see everything coming. I do think they see things before we see them, and they can see trends. I do think they can, and sometimes I think they do, see around a corner. And that’s why they’re a prophet.

Well, the application for us should be powerful to say, “What can we learn from these verses about what the people were doing, about what this prophet taught and tried to bring about? And how could it help us as we prepare for the Second Coming?”

If you look at the description of every single antichrist — Korahor, Amalekiah, Sherem, Alma the Younger before he repented, and so on and so forth — every time it talks about the power of language they use to deceive the people and lead them away, and almost every time it uses the word “flattery.” Going back to our framing about what we can learn from Samuel the Lamanite that is very applicable today, wow, what is flattery? *It’s saying what people want to hear.* That’s what it is. *How often do we get caught up to-day with trying to figure out what’s even true?* Flattery is a tool of the adversary.

There is something really profound in trying to learn from the past and say, “How can I inform our today so that we can better help in the gathering and we can better prepare for what lies ahead of us?” Because the Savior is going to come again and all of us should be in a mode of preparation.

If someone is intent on knowing if a prophet is a prophet — was Joseph Smith a prophet? Is President Nelson a prophet? — I think *that’s a prayer that will get answered.*

The Savior is the central point of the plan of salvation, which is why the Savior is the central point of the temple, which has to be, I’m assuming, why President Nelson keeps saying *please go to the temple, please spend as much time in the temple as you can. Because it’s all about Jesus Christ,* and it feels like, in kind of a nutshell, he’s trying to tell the people who will listen. And maybe it’s because he knows he won’t have much time on the wall. He’s trying to tell them *this is the plan, and the Savior’s at the heart of the plan.* Isn’t it God the Father who determined that the Savior would be the central piece of His plan? That we would need a Savior to help us, strengthen us, allow us to repent, help us have strength we do not have on our own. We would have to have a Savior.

Prepare for General Conference in a very intentional way, expecting to have questions answered. And even ask the Lord if it would be possible for you to have another witness of the Spirit that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints truly is led by a prophet of God and actually 15 prophets, seers, and revelators. If you don't know, if you can't quite believe that — there are things that prophets have said that disturb you, that upset you, that you just can't find it in your heart to believe at this point — *I would invite you to very seriously approach the Lord and ask Him to guide you in your feelings, in your heart and in your mind, and seek to have a witness of the Spirit that there is a prophet on the earth.*

To those who don't yet believe we have a prophet, I would invite them to ask, to *get on their knees however many times it takes, to say, "Lord, I want to believe, help me thou my unbelief."* Because when you really believe that you have the anchor of a prophet on this earth, *it changes the way you look at the world.*

I know, I absolutely know, we have prophets. And I can tell you from experience that the closer you look at them and their lives, the more it's clear that we do have prophets and that God has been the one preparing them to lead us. I know that's true.

3 Nephi 1–7

Craig Manning

3 Nephi 5:13 *For behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of Him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life.*

Truth is critical in your life to have mental health and mental strength. This is why I love the gospel so much.

I'm a convert and I joined the Church because of truth. I a member the Church because I choose to be, because there's so much truth in the gospel and it's the foundation of life, from my perspective.

If three witnesses, or translating that to having three data points, *if that's good enough for God, that's good enough for me*. Three witnesses is a pattern of truth, and I love that. That is logic.

Have faith in the gospel and be confident, but stay humble.

If you're always in a learning mentality — always learning from every situation in your life, always learning and becoming, becoming like Christ, right? — the ultimate level of happiness is who we are and who we're becoming. If you have a learning mentality, there's no fear, because you don't look at life as a threat.

The biggest thing I've done in all these years of working in sports is teaching people to stop comparing and stop competing with others, and compete with yourself and build your own skills and your own competency.

Lift up your head. We're trying to help people transform and be the best version of themselves. You've got to teach them truth as best as you can.

The more I'm deliberate with my words, in my prayers, in my communication, wow, the Lord just opens up and He gives the answers if you're precise and accurate with your language. When you really ask with precision and exactness, the Lord answers. When you're vague in general, the Lord can't answer that. He can't do it for us. It's against His own laws to do it for us. He can't take our agency away, *so we've got to pray with precision and exactness. And when you do that, the Lord answers.*

The more specific we are with our communication with the Lord, the more specific His answers are in return.

If you focus on the things you're grateful for, it's occupying your mind and creating good energy for something that's very stable and very real, not fake.

If you consistently teach truth, and you consistently try to be as real and as honest as you can be, you will earn the trust of people. And I don't know which apostle said that, but God loves all of His children equally. He does not trust them all the same. To me, consistently teaching truth and consistently speaking truth, I think we earn trust if we do that.

When you build around truth, it's not about us; it's just about truth. What it does is it neutralizes the ego, and it neutralizes this need for people to make things personal. That's why we said from the beginning: truth is independent of us.

Which path are we going to go down? Are we going to go down the Savior's path? Or are we going to go down the adversary's path?

Humility is giving credit where credit is due. It's giving credit to the Lord, but it's not putting yourself down.

None of us should feel bad if we are a little aggressive at times or a little overly passive. That's normal. That's why it's a constant work and process and a constant learning as we talked about learning earlier.

Christ, He was never aggressive, but He was firm and steadfast. He found the balance, which is in the middle.

We're not trying to fight other people. We're not even competing with other people. We're trying to be the best version of ourselves.

It's okay to influence and try to persuade through language and kindness, but not to try to control people — not to try and always tell people what to do. And at a higher level, give people space to be free to choose for themselves, but still occupy your space. It's a balance. It's not easy. That's why no one's born this way. It takes work.

In the NBA, it's moving to the right position. It's positioning, constantly putting yourself in a good position, which I think is the gospel. Like, constantly put yourself in good places — good thoughts, good places, good people — all the time.

If you have self-control, you have agency. If you give your control away, your focus of control, the science calls it, you're giving your agency away.

Being aware of these God-given gifts that we've been given, and understanding what those are and how are you learning truth so that you can become the best version of yourself? We don't even know who that is. There's no end goal there.

That's what the journey is. Being a disciple of Christ and constantly learning. To me, sometimes we think the gospel is some destination we're trying to get to; whereas instead, it's a constant journey with the light.

If there is an end goal, it is peace for me. I have so much peace living the gospel of Jesus Christ in my life. I know truth is what negates fear.

If we will allow the Lord, He will mold us, and sculpt us, and will evolve us as a human being. In the end, we're doing all of this work to help others, but we're the ones benefiting from all of this because we're becoming as we learn in this life. That could tie us back to the learning again. The more we learn, the more we become and the more we take that knowledge and wisdom with us.

Who are you, and who are you becoming? Becoming like Christ is the highest level of happiness.

The becoming never ends. We're always trying to become like Christ to the day that the Lord takes us to the next life.

3 Nephi 8–11

Eric Huntsman

3 Nephi 11:10-11 Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning

Have faith and joy because when that's over, whether you're there in the flesh or you get to have a ringside seat on the clouds when Jesus comes again, we will all have our own 3 Nephi 11 experience.

Can we hear the voice of the Lord speaking to us and preparing us for part 2, for 3 Nephi 11, when we will, in one form or another, in one place or another, have the same experience as all those people at Bountiful?

Well, what is Christ? We have that wonderful little saying in Matthew 7: The wise man builds his house upon the rock. *Christ is the sure foundation.* And in this moment of His death, the very foundation of the world, if you will, is broken up,

We come to a knowledge of Jesus by reading scripture and what our mothers, and fathers, and missionaries, and friends, and teachers taught us. But at some point, we have to have a land Bountiful experience *where Jesus appears in our lives.* And whether it's symbolic or just by the power of the Spirit, or one day, in a very real sense, the veil will be pulled back and He will be in our lives.

So often when we do have a loss in our own lives, there are those dark hours, days, sometimes weeks afterwards where we feel alone. Where is the Lord? And you have to wait for that understanding and that comfort to come.

We've come to know Jesus well from the Gospels, and in the Book of Mormon. We've come to expect things from Him from the prophecies. But He's still going to be *that Jesus that defies expectations.*

When I used to teach this, I'd say you've got those "Big Bang" conversion experiences, but most of us have "steady state" experiences. I'm using models of the universe where your testimony grows slowly over time. I'm actually the oscillating model of the universe. I've had these little explosions, these little "bangs," as well as the constant one. But it's really interesting because... when you have some fire immersion experiences in Bountiful, we're going to see some symbolic representations of the baptism by fire.

Jesus represents the best of both genders. He's loving, and He's nurturing. I think that's empowering for female saints, female disciples, *to see themselves reflected in Jesus*. And it's not that He's the strong priest or leader, He's the nurturer, He's the carer, He's the one who loves, and there are strong women.

The sacrament is not only commemorative looking back to His sacrifice, I would argue it's anticipatory looking forward to that great messianic banquet after the Second Coming. Just as the risen Lord is appearing to the Nephites, the Lord Jesus after the Second Coming is going to be with us.

You need to let people grieve, and the best thing you could do is just put your arms around them and say you're sorry. Let the Spirit guide you when it's time to start saying more.

So often we say we want to be more like Jesus, and then the Lord allows us to have the trials and the heartaches and the disappointments that will make us more like Jesus. What's our first impulse? Lord, take these away. I don't want them.

Everything we're going to read in these rich chapters of 11–27, you need to picture yourselves as if you were at the land Bountiful. That He is speaking to us.

It's not like they're necessarily making a choice to close their ears, but because of where they are in life or choices they've made up to this point they haven't been able to hear the voice of God. But you need to be willing to do that. We have to be willing to use our ears to hear the word of the Lord.

I think of these people saying, "Hosanna, blessed be the name of the Most High God." I think of what we will shout, sing, and feel at the Second Coming.

It's not looking back to Jesus' triumphal entry, the last week of His life, *it's accepting Him as our King in our lives now* and shouting, "Save us Lord, now."

You just wait till all the mess our world is in right now is over, and Jesus is appearing and the heavens are being unveiled like a scroll, and everyone sees the face of the Lord at once, and we know, wow, finally, finally it's over.

It's natural as a human being to think in terms of group identity and institutions, and of course, the Church is divine. It really is about Jesus Christ. Now, this is His church. It provides us the covenants and the structure and the direction, but it is here to bring us to Christ.

Once again, not just the past, which is 3 Nephi 11, and not just the future, which is the Second Coming, but using this as some type of a different scale we should seek for in our lives now. We recognize Him as our King. We recognize Him as our wounded God. We recognize Him as our Lord. We recognize Him as our friend. Are we shouting Hosanna? Are we shouting Hallelujah? Or singing it? Or whispering it? Is this what we're looking for after those days of darkness that we talked about in part 1, when there's been such hard times and the Lord unveils Himself in our life now?

Revelation comes when we are looking for it.

Baptism is how you come to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Like a birth, you become His.

We're not gaining anything if we use the correct name of the Church or if we talk about Jesus Christ and it almost doesn't bring a lump to our throat to say Jesus Christ. He's as real to us as He was to these people who felt the wounds in His hands and His feet and His side, who fell at His feet.

This is about feeling and experience. *I believe the more and more people come to know Jesus Christ, they will get through their days of darkness,, and they will be there for other people, and they will perform the ordinances like baptism that we see here. And they aren't going to be performing ordinances because it's something you've got to do to get into a certain kingdom. It's like, wow, let's take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. Let's go to the temple, make covenants to be closer to the Lord.*

3 Nephi 12–16

Brad Wilcox

3 Nephi 13:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shaall be added unto you.*

Between the justice and the mercy, we see a Christ who offers us a choice. We have a choice as to how we are going to be received by Him — with justice or with mercy — and He gives us a choice.

Without justice, there is no order. And without mercy, there is no hope. But without justice and mercy, there is no choice. There's no freedom. And where there is no freedom, where there's no choice, then there's no growth. There's no change.

He says “come and repent” because it's through the process of repentance that good people get better. It's through the process of repentance and coming to Christ that we use our agency to choose to have Him reach into our hearts and change us.

No one has used the word baptize more than Jesus Christ. Isn't that something? You want salvation? Get baptized. You want salvation? Then renew that baptismal covenant. He's saying, “This is how you use your agency to choose my influence and power in your life. You get baptized. You renew that covenant relationship.”

In the Bible, we typically see baptism presented as a cleansing. But it's in the Book of Mormon that we see baptism as more than just a cleansing. It is how we enter a covenant, how we enter a covenant relationship with God and Jesus. And that is where we find salvation, is within that relationship.

He needed to enter into a covenant with His Father so that He could choose to receive His Father's power and His Father's grace, which gave Him the power to be able to perform the Atonement. Yes, He needed that covenant relationship with His Father even though He didn't need the cleansing that the rest of us need.

He said, "blessed are the meek," as we meekly return to the sacrament table every week, then we are welcoming Him again and again and again, day after day after day, Sunday after Sunday, weakness after weakness. We are meekly turning to Him for His strength, for His spirit, for His grace, because that's how we can be changed.

This sermon from Christ isn't good advice for the world. This isn't just an ethics course. This isn't something that everybody should cross stitch and put on their wall because it's good advice for everyone. This is Jesus teaching His doctrine. This is Jesus teaching us how we can enter into a covenant with Him. And through that covenant relationship, we can be made holy. We can be exalted.

I've heard teachers before say, "These are the steps of repentance," and I've heard others compare the Beatitudes to the gifts of the Spirit. And those are all wonderful insights. What if Jesus is giving us more? What if He's actually giving us the first principles and ordinances of the gospel? What if He's teaching us His doctrine and, more importantly, teaching us what can happen to us as we live the doctrine of Christ?

Remember that the Aaronic Priesthood, which is power to baptize, is power to overcome. The Aaronic Priesthood, that gives us the keys of repentance, gives us the chance to be able to administer and partake of the sacrament. Those are the keys of overcoming. But then, in the Melchizedek Priesthood and the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, we find the keys to become more like the Savior.

There've always been rules. There've always been dress standards. And I hope that we can realize that this is Jesus inviting us to care about whether we're living the standard, whether other people are watching us or not, whether there's supervision or not. This is between us internally and God. It's not just a matter of, "Will they let me in the testing center?" It's a matter of, "Am I going to be governed by these principles that truly will allow my heart to become more like Jesus Christ?"

If we have until the Resurrection, then we can calm down and we can take a deep breath. And we can realize that this is perfection at a distance or, as Elder Holland put it, "be ye therefore perfect eventually." Eventually. It's only through His grace, through His help, that we can be perfect. It's not something we can do on our own. That's why He wants us to enter a covenant relationship with Him, so that we have access to His grace, so that we have access to His power that He can't give us until we choose to enter that relationship and choose to receive it by taking the sacrament.

There's something that connects us to God and connects us to heaven as we pray. And it's in that relationship, that's where we start understanding why we pray. It's not to get what we want, it's to build a relationship that's so personal and so strong that we can trust God even when we don't get what we want.

He will empower you to keep staying in your covenant relationship. God can deal with weakness very differently from how He deals with rebellion. And [insert your name], as long as you're not being rebellious, as long as you're not throwing your papers up in the air and saying, "I'm out of here. I quit. This is ridiculous. It's too hard to even try." As long as you're not doing that, then trust. Be confident in God's care, and trust that within that covenant relationship that you are renewing. Every time you partake of the sacrament, you are learning how to overcome. But that's going to take some time.

Wow! No wonder Jesus taught prayer more than anything else. He taught prayer because He wanted us to have that connection.

When we're praying and somebody says, "You're not going to get what you pray for, so why are you praying for it?" Or, "What if you don't get what you pray for?" Then you say, "It's not about getting what I'm praying for. It's about knowing a guy. It's about knowing God. It's about knowing Jesus, in whose name I pray. It's about building this strong relationship with Them." Because it's through that relationship that we will one day not only be able to enter heaven, but we will be able to become heavenly.

Christ said, "I am the bridegroom. The Church is the bride." When we're in that relationship, then He can expect something more of us than He does of anybody else. And we can expect something more of Him than we do of anybody else because of that relationship.

What would I say to somebody who's overwhelmed? Hang in there. We're playing prelude music. Right now it's prelude music, but one day Jesus is going to come.

It's not that God doesn't want to give all of His children all of His power. It's that He can't until they use their agency to welcome it. And that's what we're doing when we enter into that relationship, that covenant — we're welcoming his power. Because He's not going to force it on us. He's not going to force blessings on us. He's not going to force happiness on us.

We have to choose it.

I have written books that I hope have been a product of inspiration, and yet nothing touches the Book of Mormon.

This book not only stands, but it stands stronger and stronger. The more it is under the magnifying glass, the more we realize that anybody who blows it off and says, “Oh, Joseph Smith just wrote that. Joseph Smith just wrote that.” *I know not just as a believer who has gained a witness of the Holy Ghost, but I know as a writer that Joseph Smith did not write this. If he could, where is volume 2? Where is volume 3?*

I bear testimony of the book, but I also bear testimony of the doctrines in the book. Those were far beyond the Christianity of Joseph Smith's day. They were far beyond what Joseph would have known as a Christian in his day. And I know that the Jesus who is revealed in the book, this Jesus who is coming to the rest of the world, I know that He is real and that His help, His grace, His power, is real. And here in these very chapters we've been looking at, He's inviting us to welcome His power into our lives.

That is the Jesus that we find in the Book of Mormon — a Christ who gives us His power, His grace, His goodness, His strength. Where much is required, *much is given*.

Enduring to the end is the process of processes. Because we're not just enduring to the end — the end of the youth conference, the end of the mission, the end of life — no. *We're enduring to our end*. Be ye therefore perfect, even as Christ and Father. *We are enduring to our eventual end, and that is to become like Them*.

3 Nephi 17–20

Matt Townsend

3 Nephi 17:7 *And it came to pass that they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at Jesus' feet, and did worship him.*

There is a powerful equation for what creates joy, and it's in this communion. It's in our relationships, and especially when our relationships are turned to God.

Sometimes I get surprised by the fact that we all, as saints, have so many blessings, but we're still going through this horrible veil of tears. We forget *that the Savior left us a gift* — that we need to trust in Him to deliver in our trials, in our afflictions.

When He says “come follow me,” He means that He knows where the quicksand is, and where the thorns are, and the best way to handle the slippery slope near the summit of our personal mountains. *He knows it all, and He knows the way. He is the way.* If we're gonna start and head forward, we have to remember that He's got the plan.

Our memories and our feelings are deeply tied. The things that we feel more strongly, we remember more thoroughly, more completely, which is, I think, an eternal principle. Imagine that we can unleash the Spirit and the feeling of the Spirit throughout our life. *We might actually be able to retain more, become maybe a little more omnipresent, maybe a little bit more omniscient, a little bit more omni-remembering*

We don't turn to Him just on Sundays during sacrament, even though that's a major turn. We turn always. Especially when we need Him. We turn when He bids to us. He might bid to us by just us walking in our bedroom and seeing the scriptures there. That's a bid. Now do I turn to the scriptures and open them? And how do I respond to the bid?

For all of us that are ministering, *don't assume it has to always be verbal*. Don't assume when you're struggling in your marriage that it always has to be a talk. What the Savior does is He starts turning to everything that's important to the people. And, one by one, starts ticking off through action and service all of their needs. And there is some verbal interspersed there, but *it's not the verbal that's the key. It's the feeling that's the key*.

Whenever you see tears in a child of God, it's a bid to be held. It's a bid to be loved. It's a bid to be supported. It's a bid to be cared for. It's a bid to get your attention. When you no longer see tears, that's a scary bid. That's a scary thought.

The neat thing about the Spirit is *when we feel the Spirit, it heals our lovability*. It heals our capability. It heals our belonging. It heals our safety.

He's healing because He's becoming for us the ultimate source of peace, which is why we have to trust Him that He'll bring the peace. We also have to turn to the bid, and *we have to trust that when we bid, He is turning even if we don't feel it*.

One other thing that's really interesting that they are finding out about attachment is if you have a hard time attaching to people and feeling safe with others, you also might have a hard time feeling safe with God because you might only understand God through how you understand other relationships. *Our covenants are about our relationship with God, but it might be the covenants that actually can help us heal that continuous relating to Christ and to the Father in a way that helps heal the multi-generational issues that a lot of us are facing*.

He's not just our judge. He's also this loving entity, this Being that we see that is dragging us along and doing everything He can to get us to believe in the Savior.

All of the pains of loneliness that we all feel, all of the difficulties that we all suffer, all of the illnesses and the sadness and the pain, *it's etching away a space. And that space will eventually, when we turn to God and turn it spiritual, and turn it in a connected, at one moment with Him, the Lord will then create a space of joy. And the joy will then feel and fill, fill that cavity. And we will feel peace.*

We've lost people that are on the other side of the veil. As you sit and struggle with, "How am I going to make it through this world? And how am I going to always remember the Savior?" Maybe what we could also do is remember those that have gone before. *They're still praying for our little ones. I want you to now watch what God does for your little ones that you probably aren't even aware of.* But He's got the ministering angels circling around them. There's fire. There's love. *Both sides of the veil are working at this moment, even while most of us sit there, not even knowing half the time what's going on.*

3 Nephi 20–26

Ross Baron

3 Nephi 22:13 *And thus they became perfected in Christ, and did not taste of death; and they did go forth ministering unto the people, and did bring thousands to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

When He comes, He introduces Himself in 3 Nephi 11: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ,” then immediately says, “whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.” *Immediately, He upholds His prophets and apostles.*

Sometimes we talk in the Church about being united, about being one. But it begs the question, one or united in what? *What are we united in?* Football teams are united. You can have a club that’s united. Wicked people can be united. We have to be — and I think this is super important — *Zion is one heart, one mind. We have to be one with Christ and with Christ’s servants, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.*

We close the mouths of the prophets. The prophets will speak the word of the Lord. But *if we don’t give heed, if we don’t act, then they’re not going to speak.*

We’re not just some church that’s going to do humanitarian aid, which is great. *We’re going to do the work for the salvation and exaltation of every single one of God’s children.*

When I go to the temple, once I’ve gone for myself, now I go do proxy work for others and I’m doing vicarious work. I am literally walking in His paths. I am not metaphorically doing it. *I’m a little Savior.*

We are being taught literally the ways of God, and we get the opportunity to imitate Him. And *the more we imitate Him, the more we become like Him.*

No temple, no Zion. No Zion, no Second Coming. No Second Coming, no millennium.

Joseph Smith never built a chapel in his entire life. He never did, not interested. Not that they're not important, don't get me wrong, *but he built temples.*

What's the greatest evidence that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in the Sacred Grove? The truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. *That* is the greatest evidence.

You want your home and your marriage established, then it's got to be done in righteousness.

We are being purified *so that we can do God's work.* And when we do God's work, we become more like Him to be able to abide the day and stand when He appeareth.

I wonder how many times we have an experience and then upon reflection, we're like, 'surely the Lord was with me during that and I knew it not'. And if we don't record those events, *maybe we'll never know, or at least not in mortality.* Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.

If you somehow think in church or the prophet or whatever, or the spirit, the scripture study that it's pinching your collar a little bit, that you need to change, and you're like, 'I don't need to change'. No, *that's an attitude we have to avoid.*

3 Nephi 27– 4 Nephi

Rebecca Clarke

3 Nephi 28:10 *And thus they became perfected in Christ, and did not taste of death; and they did go forth ministering unto the people, and did bring thousands to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Living the gospel of Jesus Christ helps us enter into the connection with God and with each other, and *those relationships are going to be what makes heaven “heaven.”*

We don’t come knowing *how* to be connected. Our parents teach us that, but more importantly, *the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that.*

He emulates how to be in a relationship, how to be connected, and then, *He encourages us to stay connected to Him and to be connected with each other.* We long for that connection. When we’re young, *it’s a matter of survival.* When we’re older, *it’s a matter of our happiness.*

The name of the Church contains the components necessary for our salvation and exaltation. It indicates where our most important focuses should be: on our relationships. *First, we need Jesus Christ, and His authority and power, for our salvation. And second, for exaltation, we need each other.*

Christ has told us that we are better off and we’re going to be happier *when we recognize that we aren’t the ones in charge of setting the terms, because Heavenly Father can see so much more clearly and further than we can.*

He is saying here (3 Nephi 27:14) that the reason He did it was to draw all of us to Him. *He came to relate with us. He came to connect with us.* This was not only out of obedience, but the result of that obedience was a relationship.

This is the resurrected Christ they were looking forward to: *a flawless Christ*. But when He comes, *He comes with evidence of His woundedness*. One of the first things He does is He shows the people that He's been wounded.

Christ says *sit shoulder to shoulder with other imperfect people*. Come into communion and be part of that community.

Other forms of community life and relationships do contribute to healthy outcomes, *but nothing really touches religious participation*. Being spiritual is good. Being religious is good. But being both spiritual and religious is exponentially powerful.

I love that “one-by-one” element. It’s so like Christ. This is a practice that we can use and apply in our relationships.

I picture Christ asking me that question, “What is it that you desire?” and how I might answer. I know basically what I desire. *I’m answering that question every day with how I live*.

We can look at the three Nephites as modeling *how much more power we have when we are connected to Jesus Christ*.

We see that *nothing* can stop God from keeping His covenants or promises with us.

As we talk about happiness, *we need to allow other people their agency*. We can't step into this place of saying if they would just do exactly what I asked of them, then I would be happy.

We need to *allow* for seasons of life to be more joyful or less joyful than others. Some things are just plain hard and we have to get through them.

We're not supposed to continually forecast the bad weather, and only the bad weather. *There's good weather, too. Just like we can forecast sorrow and look for the sorrow, we can focus on forecasting more happiness in our lives.*

We do see that conflict is inevitable, but *contention is a choice*.

When we set people up as competitors or rivals, speak of them in terms of less than, we start to lose our happiness.

When we are seen and we are loved for who we are, which is something *Christ does perfectly for us*, it doesn't mean He wants us to stay in a state of imperfection. He doesn't want that either. But He loves us for who we are. That can be really motivating to us in relationships when we are *seen*.

Contempt, the antidote is love. You've got to change your mindset. Just like you can be taught to hate or learn to hate, *I think you can learn to love.*

Bread reminds me of what Christ did for others while He was here on earth. It has mortal significance. Christ multiplied bread to feed hungry people. He broke bread to be in communion with His friends. He shared this with His fellow men. *When I partake of the bread, it gives me a chance to re-evaluate my Christ-like relationship with my fellow men and women.*

I see the most supreme and healing relationship advice in the scriptures and in the Book of Mormon in particular, because it reveals to us so clearly the nature of Jesus Christ and how He interacts with us.

Mormon 1–6

Larry Nelson

Mormon 1:15 *Therefore ye shall be humble; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.*

Just as kittens grow up to be cats and puppies grow up to be dogs, children of Heavenly Parents, as we're taught in the Family Proclamation, have the divine potential to grow up to be like Them.

Every time we read the Book of Mormon, it can be a brand new book because we're at a different place in our own development.

The Lord will use all personality types in his work. Many of us may have a singular stereotype of a leader who is dynamic and funny and extroverted, who can speak effortlessly and vibrantly to a crowd. But in reality, *there are many ways to lead*, to fulfill any calling that you may be given. You don't have to try to be somebody else. *Be you.*

There's no one way to be a leader to fulfill a calling. *The Lord can and will use all of us with all of our strengths, those inborn, those nurtured. He will use all of those in His service.*

In this setting of such awfulness, war and wickedness, Mormon chose to do the one thing that would allow him to rise above his circumstances: *He let God prevail in his life. He developed his testimony of the Savior.*

There are things about our environments, about our nature, that we don't will away. But we can choose to act rather than be acted upon by them, and Mormon is showing us that the best way to do that is to let God prevail in our lives.

Our most important role as parents is to help children cultivate a relationship with our Heavenly Father and the Savior on their own. We can't force, we can't protect, we can't bubble forever. *We've got to help them choose to let God prevail in their lives.*

Mormon is showing that spiritual strength supersedes physical military strength.

We've reflected and learned that it isn't learning, that is the problem; it's being learned and proud.

There's no need to get defensive or angry. Make it a matter of personal prayer, pondering, and reflection. How am I in regard to violence? And this applies to the extent that we may delight in our weapons of war, literally and metaphorically.

For me, at least, it's a disrespect to my grandfather and every other service woman or man who fights to keep violence from my doorstep *for me to then let it in other ways that I don't carefully and prayerfully reflect about* — to see if I need to make a one-degree course correction.

We have to begin with having a good spiritual strategy and asking ourselves these questions: What do I delight in? *What are the weapons of war in my life that I need to lay down?*

The effect on our hearts of choosing anger and vengeance has a far worse impact on the darkness that fills our heart and the developmental trajectory than the actual act did.

This image of catching the stone and choosing not to throw it back is powerful, it stops the back and forth. *It stops the bruising not only to the other person, but to us. It allows healing.*

Be proactive to do what it takes to develop love for others and express that love. *It requires that we look at ourselves.*

There are things about our nature and there are things about our nurture that we can't change. *But when we choose to let God prevail and let the words of the Book of Mormon affect all that we do, we can act rather than be acted upon. We can be changed. We can rise above the challenging nature of our circumstance — become like our Heavenly Father.*

Parenting is what we do to establish the atmosphere in our home where relationships can flourish.

Mormon 7–9

Sheldon Martin

Mormon 9:27 Behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things; yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.

Go from “what is this story” to “*how does this impact my story?*”

That moment of looking and talking, and trying to understand and listen, and hearing someone, it is becoming a little bit of a lost art, but it’s spiritual. We’re designed to be connected.

I don’t know if it comes through the Holy Ghost all the time, but I think many times it does — that there’s a feeling of connection that is really important to us as God’s children.

We worship a God who is *acquainted with grief*. He didn’t have so much faith that He went *around* the garden of Gethsemane. He went *through* it.

We cannot ever go lower in our grief than the God that we worship, where He went.

In a lonely world *I can still be a disciple of Jesus Christ*, and that is going to be my best option. It’s going to strengthen me regardless of situation or circumstance.

It actually is true kindness and good that we are honest with ourselves — that we not just work to overshadow challenges, or that we try to cover up. There’s this real honesty to read this chapter and to say, “Is it I? Am I like this?” No, the Lord still loves me. He’s still encouraging me. I’m not off the team, I’m on the team. I just have to get better.”

This world is beautiful and complicated and so wonderful. Yet the Lord states, “This is my work and my glory: to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” *The earth is a thing, it’s not the work.*

Be interested in other people. You’ll feel more connected... Instead of trying to rehearse what you’re going to say, *why don’t you find out why everyone else there is really interesting?*

Moroni wants us to know, *“I am going to show you a God of miracles, and He is still a God of miracles.”*

He’s a God of miracles. He has to be, because *all of humanity needs a miracle.*

When you’re feeling alone or other things, it’s like, “Wait, where’s the God of miracles? I need Him to show up now.” *Some of the miracles I think that I have experienced in my life are looking back and recognizing moments when He’s growing me, but I really wanted Him to do something else.*

I love this idea that He shows up in miraculous ways as we look at the whole world — shows up in miraculous ways when I look at my own life — but ultimately He shows up in death, in that *there is no sting*. The ultimate miracle is He was crucified, He died, and He rose again.

So instead of seeking after the miracle, maybe a better verb might be to *observe* them when they happen... That idea of *observing* them when they happen but not “seeking after and then I will believe” could be a good way to speak of miracles.

I don't ever want to be less and less astonished
by the amazing, miraculous things that God
is doing.

We're all imperfect, we're trying, and be patient
with each other. But I love Moroni's message:
Don't condemn the work because there's some
imperfect people who get involved at times.

Whatever the experience you're having is
unique, but there are others who have had
experiences that you can draw strength from.
I think Moroni is one of those, and Mormon,
they're some of those people.

Ether 1–5

George Pierce &
Krystal Pierce

| ***Ether 2:12*** *Wherefore, go to, and I will
lead thee forth.*

Krystal Pierce:

By the time we get to this point in the Book of Mormon, we're like, "I'm almost done. I just gotta get through a couple of chapters, and I'm going to speed read through this." *This is an entire civilization, the rise and the fall.* I love this idea of giving honor and respect to all of these people who gave it to us. What can we learn from them?

I love the growth from, "Please take the burden away," to, "*Help us survive the burden. In fact, help us thrive through the burden with the hope there's something better on the other side.*" Because we know sometimes those burdens, those hardships, aren't taken away from us, and we're praying, "Help us get through it."

I like to think of the Tower of Babel as *anything* that obstructs your view of the Savior or Heavenly Father. *Anything* that gets in the way of your relationship, that's your tower of Babel.

A Tower of Babel of mine is control and trust. Not doubting when Heavenly Father says, "You're meant to do something or you're going to receive blessings from things," *and to think that His time might be a little bit different than my time.*

The tower isn't always pride. Sometimes it can be the opposite of that and thinking God doesn't care about me, or He loves somebody else more than me because I have so many hardships or because my life isn't going the way I want it to. And so, *self-doubt can be just as destructive of a tower as pride can be.*

Sometimes we too think that there's a trade-off program: If I do this thing for God, then He owes me something back. And yet, it's a misunderstanding of covenants because *a covenant is I promise to do this, He promises to do that.*

I love how He says, "You're going to come up with an idea. You're going to come back to me, then I'm going to help you out because you understand me. You know what I am capable of. You know that I will help you."

He's never going to stop trying to get us to be like Him.

Problem-solving is a godly attribute. *God's trying to teach us how to be like Him.*

Faith is not knowing everything perfectly. If everybody was able to see the plates, *where's the faith?*

He's constantly trying to pull us up, whether we want to talk about His level of divinity or pull us out of the deep, the dark, the places where we're at, and *we just have to let Him*. If we open up and we let Him do that, then we can do amazing, incredible things like the brother of Jared did.

George Pierce:

He's the leader, not us, and He knows what's best. So it's about trust, and faith, and trusting that He does know what's best for us, even though sometimes we like to think that we know what's best because we're in the middle of the situation.

He's at a higher level than us. And yet, He cares for us and He loves us. God is both above the system, but yet He's close to us and He cares for all humanity, no matter who, what, where, when we are in time and space.

We're told several times throughout scripture that *nothing is too hard for God*. Nothing is impossible. He has unlimited power without any sort of mortal needs.

The application for us is to take a page from the brother of Jared. Sometimes we just need to ask a simple request — “This is what we'd like.” — with the understanding that God knows what's best for us.

Even though we think about God's real covenant relationship with the House of Israel, time and again in scripture, He's shown that He's the God of *all humanity*.

Even then, in the days of Isaiah, He's trying to teach the people that: “You may not like the Egyptians, the Assyrians, other people, the Gentiles. Guess what? *They're just as important in the plan of salvation and just as important to me as anybody else.*”

That's part of the beauty of the text for me, is that it all makes sense *academically, archaeologically, anthropologically, sociologically, linguistically, and then it makes sense spiritually, that it is truth.*

Ether 6–11

B.J. Allen

Ether 8:19 *Wo unto this people who
are so stiffnecked and do despise the
words of the Lord!*

“The Lord caused the stones to shine in darkness.” It wasn’t the Brother of Jared, it wasn’t anyone else, *it was the Lord*. The Brother of Jared comes to the Lord with his weaknesses, but Christ is the one who makes his efforts sufficient. It’s such a beautiful example of the way that *Christ can compensate us in our life*.

Jesus is not a reluctant Messiah here. He’s not looking for ways to be angry at the brother of Jared. He’s not looking to say, “Oh, really? This isn’t really that great of an idea. I’m going to do most of the work.” He understands the brother of Jared is doing the best that he can.

Our weaknesses become an *opportunity* to use the grace of Christ.

He’s always compensating us to make our efforts sufficient for the miracles that we seek now.

Stop worrying about everything that you’re not, and *start focusing on what Christ can make you*. He called you here, His grace is sufficient for you, and He’s going to make you who you need to be as you turn to Him.

Doubts are not a result of weak faith, they’re a result of *growing* faith.

He doesn’t just magnify our own abilities, but He compensates by making our efforts sufficient.

You may feel like you're not a great gospel teacher, but the Lord will compensate for what you can't do. And we can liken this to anyone with a stewardship who's trying to offer light to others, like the brother of Jared. *As you turn to Christ, He will make your efforts enough.*

I'm doing the best I can and I just have to rely on the Savior to make my efforts enough, because that's what His role is.

The only being who can teach you the exact way you need to be taught for your understanding is God.

Not keeping commandments brings terrible consequences in a natural way. It's not that God won't let you be happy when you are not obeying the commandments, *it's that life won't let you be happy. God knows what will make you happy, God wants us to be happy, and He gives us commandments to help us to be happy.*

It's okay when people don't agree with you, or sometimes that they say something mean to you. But we don't fight division and contention with division contention — we fight division with *compassion*.

That's a theme of the Book of Mormon, is the prophets telling us, "Look, we don't want you to focus so much on evil, but we want you to know enough about it so you know how to avoid it and you can recognize when it's coming."

Yes, we live in a time of wickedness, but we also live in a time of abundant righteousness. And Christ has compensated us for living in a fallen and difficult world by offering so many blessings, not only as a church but also as individuals.

It's almost as if God knows that we're mortal. We're not always going to feel faithful all the time, we change in the moment our emotions change, and He's saying, "Look, remember when you're going through a hard time, remember how I helped you through that other time. *When you forget how you feel spiritually, remember that other spiritual time that I gave you.*"

It shows us that when you're righteous, *the Lord blesses not only individuals but also countries and economies as a whole.*

I just love this idea of being a protector of the prophets. Even if you're the last person on earth who's going to believe them, you can protect them, independent of anyone else.

He can help us beyond our own. And no matter where you feel you are in your life, in regards to faith or obedience or anything you want to do better, *Christ's grace is sufficient for you. You are enough because Christ is enough.*

Ether 12–15

Doug Benson

Ether 12:6 Faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

We can't have faith in God until we understand His character.

I will suggest *ministering is being like Christ* — saying hello to people, being kind, having charity, and making space for people.

The idea is to *let yourself be a tender mercy*.

“The natural man is an enemy to God.” That is true. But then we also read in Corinthians that our body is a temple... This is a common thing, that everyone has this weakness, and it's not necessarily a curse. It was given to us by God.

Why do we have that weakness? Well, because *without that weakness, we wouldn't have a vehicle to become like our Heavenly Father*. We wouldn't be able to build the characteristics necessary to be with Him.

We can have a weakness that is both detrimental to us and a positive to us. That's not a foreign thing in the scriptures. You can either partake of the fruit and you shall die, and I also want you to multiply and replace the Earth — and they're both true.

We don't want to ignore our emotions. That's where we go back to this idea that weakness is also strength... Anger protects us, fear protects us — we need those emotions.

So the dual prophecy is, “I will actually change you now in small ways, small and simple things, line upon line, precept on precept. You’ll become a little bit better here and there as you follow this process, and then I’ll resurrect you. Then your weak thing will no longer be a weak thing; it will be perfect and immortal.” *That’s the promise.*

I’m not perfect, *and* I’m good enough.

I like the term or the phrase “putteth off the natural man.” He doesn’t say “get rid of the natural man.” He doesn’t say “eliminate the natural man.” He doesn’t say “don’t have it.” He says, what you need to do is put off the natural man — become submissive, meek, humble, patient, and full of love.

The only way around “difficult” is through the comfort that you’re not doing it by yourself.

Oftentimes we think about God as ever-present, meaning that God is always around us. But I like to think about it that *God is always in this moment.*

Charity is a gift of the Spirit that we have to seek out and almost apply for. In Moroni, he talks about, how do you get charity? *You pray for charity, because that’s where grace comes in.*

He has suffered everything. He knows me better than I know myself. If I’m praying for charity for myself, who is going to be able to give me that gift more appropriately than the Savior?

Anger and love can coexist. There's opposition in those things, but there is opposition within, meaning that we don't necessarily want to get rid of either one of those. They can both coexist: Don't eat the fruit, multiply *and* replenish the Earth. Justice *and* mercy. You're saved by grace *after* all you can do.

You can start today.

Moroni 1–6

Shalise Adams

Moroni 3:2 *This is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.*

I think loneliness is something we have to approach and deal with, and I think it's appropriate to sit in that grief or that feeling for a time. But I think the first thing that we learned from Moroni is that *we can't stay there*.

Sometimes we have to sit in a place where we're uncomfortable for longer than we wish. And it would be easy to give up and to say, "I don't want to do that anymore," or, "I can't," or, "Why me,?" or, "I'm tired." Moroni chooses to do something different — *he chooses to be productive and to be serviceable to people that he doesn't even know*.

I love that [Moroni 2:2] starts with calling them by name. I love that their name is something that's important. When we call somebody by name, it makes them feel loved... *It's important too that then in turn, we call Him by name*.

This book starts with a lot of uncertainty... but also a lot of testimony. My favorite part about that is that both can exist. You can have uncertainty and maybe not know what your next steps are — Moroni is pretty honest about not knowing what comes next — but also the testimony is there.

Our testimony of Jesus Christ makes everything else *bearable* and everything else *easier*.

We stand in holy places because that's where we're safe.

Receiving the Holy Ghost can happen, but the person conferring that gift has to be involved enough with the Lord that they ask for His help first.

If an important guest is coming to your home, how do you prepare for that? The Holy Ghost is no different. *We have to make space. We have to have Him feel comfortable. We can't be doing things that cause that gift to leave.*

I think we have to be pretty intentional about creating time and space to hear God's voice, or to hear the Holy Ghost. And we have to carve out time so that it becomes clear and familiar, and a usable tool. It's not something we can put in a drawer. We have to take it out, and use it, and be familiar with it so it can be effective.

I feel like because of this gift, because of the Holy Ghost, I don't always feel alone. I have a gift of the Holy Ghost to help me tackle life and to be a companion, so that I don't have to feel the weight of singleness hanging over me.

What I love about [the sacrament] is it's the same for everyone here. It's the same across time. We are sharing the same auditory experience with those across the world but also those across time, hundreds of years before us. And I think that's beautiful.

As we ponder what might be the very most important to the Lord, we might ponder the thing that He asks us to repeat the most.

It doesn't matter if you're old or young, or rich or poor, or you've been a member for your whole life or you're brand new to the Church. *No one has an advantage when it comes to being blessed by the Savior or coming to feel His love.*

What do you do when you remember somebody that's passed? We put up pictures. We talk about them. We do things that they liked to do so that we can remember. *Are we doing that in our lives with the Savior?*

I was reminded how important it is for us to come to heal our souls — how important it is for us to all be healed as only the Savior can do with our spirits and our hearts, even though our bodies may not function the way we wish them to.

We don't take the sacrament because we were perfect the week before, we take the sacrament because we weren't.

I don't think "numbered" necessarily means a tick on the board. We're not trying to get to a certain number. It's more about we number you so we know where you're at — *so that if we don't see you, we can find you.*

That's exactly what the Church is about. It's about us finding healing for ourselves, and then going and getting someone else and saying, "Come. This is where you will find what you need."

Sometimes we're the ones that need to be taken care of, and sometimes we're the ones that do the caring. And it's okay to be both.

The church is a beautiful place where sacred things happen. But when we combine it with testimonies of one another, that's where the power comes. That's why we need a church.

That promise of return is pretty limitless — as often as we wish. *We mess up every day, but we can come back every day, and that's awesome.*

I don't think me being single is a problem to be fixed. It's not something that anybody needs to be concerned about. Just involve me and help me belong where I'm at. And let me offer what I have because that might be something different than somebody else has.

Moroni 7–9

Mark Ogletree

Moroni 7:47 *But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.*

When the Savior came, after He left, universal peace was over. But personal peace, He said, is something that each of us can have in our lives.

A great metaphor that I think about is Ukraine. Here's a temple that hasn't even shut down in a war zone, with missiles flying over the top of it, being completely protected with members still going in there and doing ordinances in a war. Incredible contrast that we have today.

When we do things for the wrong reasons, if our intentions aren't pure, then it's almost as if we didn't do it in the first place... If we pray, without real intent, it's as if we didn't pray. *It doesn't profit us anything.*

I think what Mormon's asking us here is, let's get our hearts right, let's get our hearts pure, and let's make sure we're doing things for the right reasons. Otherwise, we lose the Spirit a little bit in our lives, and we become frustrated and sometimes bitter a little bit when we're serving and helping.

I always like to think, okay, *if Satan is quadrupling his efforts to destroy us, we have to at least quadruple that back in goodness continually if we're going to match that. But of course, we want to do more than match it.* In order to stay out of his grip and his grasp and his influence, it's going to have to be more than quadruple. We've got to multiply that exceedingly so to speak. We need more goodness in this world today from us as members of the Church.

We better judge, but of course, we want to do it righteously. And that's what happens in these verses now — we are taught how to judge in a righteous way.

Seek for that light. Seek for the Savior. Lay hold upon every good thing, and then we will always be standing on holy ground.

There is a light within all of us. What a great gift! We're all going to be resurrected, and we all have the light of Christ. It's a great gift that our Heavenly Father has given to all of us to navigate our way through this world. Everyone has the ability to determine if something is right or wrong. That's how I see it.

Christ never challenged anyone. He invited. The idea of persuading is soft, right? It's gentle. It's to persuade versus clubbing someone over the head. I think it's a wonderful word where the Spirit works on us, and there's this gentle persuasion.

We can't just ask for anything. It has to be good, and it has to be right. But the Lord's going to grant that to us if we're on the right path, if there's purpose to it. *Miracles are wrought today.*

We can't talk enough about angels in the Church. It's one of the most underrated doctrines, I think.

We should pray and seek for angels, but we should be angels to those around us. We want to be angels.

Hope is also faith. It's also optimism. *It's expecting things to happen.* In other words, we can have hope in a lot of things, not just eternal life. We can have hope, great hope, in this life.

If those promises don't happen in this life, then they're sure to come in the next. Heavenly Father promised you those things, knowing what would happen to you at this little stage of your life where you've had some mess ups.

We can't qualify for the celestial kingdom if we're not meek. Meekness now gets the award of the year for the most underrated Christ-like attribute that's almost forgotten, over and over again.

By obtaining charity in our lives, this pure love of Christ, the love that Christ has for all of us, that's what really matters. That matters, really, more than anything else. *He really cares about how we treat others.*

We're not about just having children, it's not just about replacement rates, it's about loving children — *it's about nurturing children, it's about leading them and laughing with them.* If we're going to be full-fledged followers and disciples of Christ, then we need to follow Christ's example of how he loved and valued children.

Another great indicator of our spiritual progression is how we treat children and how we treat other people's children as well. It's one of the great marks of discipleship in my mind and something that we can't lose.

“Be faithful in Christ.” And just think, he’s saying this in a context of a war-ridden wicked society. That, “Guys, hang on to Christ. Hang on. He’s our only hope. We can make it if we hang on to Him.”

The church continues to march on, and march forward, and build with momentum and steam, because it’s true and it’s led by living prophets *and by the Savior Himself.*

Moroni 10

Anthony R. Sweat

Moroni 10:32 *Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.*

Nephi from the get-go is wanting to say, “*Let me show you how merciful God is.*” There’s something to pondering on that truth — that *God loves His children*, and He continually reaches out — that He so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son. *And He wants to save us, and redeem us, and exalt us, justify, and purify.* That seems to be what He wants us to really ponder in our hearts.

This book is teaching you that truth — of a merciful God who *reaches*, and *reaches*, and *reaches*, and never stops reaching.

The Book of Mormon seems to be shouting to us: *God is ever reaching to you as a child of the covenant.* You are not ever, ever cast off. It’s almost like Moroni is wanting us to think about that concept very deeply.

To every woman and every man who has come to know God, *get to know His character.* Because once you get to know His character, you can really have faith, and you can have hope, and you can have charity.

God has wrath for the rebellious who reject and fight against Him, *but His mercy knows no end to bring His children to Him, and to forgive, and to lovingly guide.*

Instead of saying, “Hey, give us a sweet and sour, like something positive, something negative,” I changed it to “sweet and Savors.” I said, “Just tell me something sweet about how you’ve seen the hand of God in your life.”

God reaches out through His Holy Spirit and, in essence, He whispers, “I love you, and I’m with you, and I’ll help you. *Ultimately I will redeem you, and I will recompense, and I will strengthen,*” and He gives all the promises through Christ. That’s the way we ponder on those mercies, even in difficulty.

Instead of asking, “How do I feel?” Ask, “Did this point me to Christ? Did this help me to understand the Savior, His teachings, His ministry, His mercy, His grace better? Did it make me love God?” And then the second thing we should start to ask is, “Did I start to have certain gifts of the Spirit manifest in my life as I read this book?”

This is a spiritual gift to deeply trust in the Lord, even in the most trying of circumstances, resulting in spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.

There seems to be a broader thing that he’s teaching here, that he’s saying, “As you’re pondering and reading these things, pay attention to the fruits that are produced in your life, not just a feeling.” *We can’t reduce the Holy Ghost down to feeling*

A litmus test is instead of only asking what am I thinking and feeling, ask this central question: How is this leading me to *learn* about, and *rely* upon, and *love*, and follow Jesus Christ and become more like Him?

I do think there’s something here where the Lord has to say, “Hey, when you’re exploring the tender mercies of God, you’ve got to lay every weapon of war down and be willing to accept the truth — even if it’s contrary to what you had supposed.”

What we need to do is instead of getting disheartened, encourage them to stay in these beautiful powerful words of this Book of Mormon. And over the process of time, *it will swell in their hearts. It will enlighten their minds.* It will become sweet and they'll taste, and they'll have their own experience where they can say, "Yeah, I do know that this is true."

If you want a litmus test... If something is a gift of the Spirit, ask yourself this question: If I lose the Spirit, do I lose the ability?

I could have all of these experiences or these gifts, these miraculous divine interventions in my life. But ultimately, *if they don't lead me to have faith and hope and charity, then I am nothing.*

I like to define faith as trust-based action in Christ. Hope is a personal assurance that God will fulfill His promises to us through Christ. Charity is having a loving relationship with God through the grace of Christ. *They're all centered in Christ, but one of them is trust, one of them leads to hope in the promises, and one of them leads to love.*

The reason why we sometimes confuse charity with loving other people and doing charitable actions is because the moment Lehi ate the love of God (the fruit), what did he want to do? He inherently wanted to share it.

The reason why I believe charity is the greatest of all the gifts of God is *because charity is the greatest gift that changes us to become like God.*

Heaven isn't so much a location *as it is an ability*, or heaven is a *capacity* more than a *locality*.

Faith, hope, and charity will lead me and you unto the fountain of all righteousness, to the tree of life. Fear, doubt, and pride will lead us right into the filthy waters of hell and the great and spacious building.

Really, the whole book is people having faith, acting in faith, receiving promises in hope, and then, what's the pinnacle of the Book of Mormon? Jesus coming and them tasting the love of God and charity. *The whole book is faith, hope, and charity.*

This book has levels and layers and construction and purpose that's beyond the random ramblings and writings of an illiterate man.

Our testimonies are based on things more profound than the construction of a chapter, but when you see a construction like that that's deliberate and purposeful, it can really reinforce what the Lord's already taught you — that *this is really being written by somebody who has a deep purpose to bring you to Christ.*

Me and you, plus covenants bound to the Savior, Jesus Christ, *that's what perfects us.* That's what *sanctifies* and *exalts* us.

We have covenant confidence in *His perfection*, not our own.

If someone says, “Do you think you’re going to go to the celestial kingdom?” Let’s respond with confidence in Christ, not in ourselves.

I like to call the Book of Mormon the book of salvation *through Christ*, and I like to call the Doctrine and Covenants the book of exaltation *through Christ’s house* in the holy temple.

The Lord calls [the Book of Mormon] a marvelous work, because some synonyms for marvelous are things like fantastic, remarkable, awesome, breathtaking, fabulous, and wonderful... Could you imagine the Lord saying, “A phenomenal work is about to appear amongst the children of men, a fantastic work.”

Christmas

President & Sister
Meredith

Alma 7:10 *And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.*

Sister Meredith:

Spiritual sustenance. It is my oxygen, it's my lifeblood, it's what feeds my spirit. And I've missed days, and those days are not as good as the days that I do it. So I try to prioritize it, preferably in the morning. That's not always possible. *We do our best, right?*

This is just before the Savior's to be born. Yet again, here He is focusing on other people. It reminds me of when He was on the cross and He was worried about His mother. He was focusing on others. I really appreciate that. It really truly is His work and glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, and He came in the eleventh hour before these sweet Christians were about to be put to death.

Putting off the natural man is like the weed killer, and becoming a saint through the Atonement of Christ is like Miracle Gro. Both of those elements are necessary to have that healthy grass grow. I thought that was a really fun way of visualizing that and remembering that we really need both parts of that.

This is why President Nelson is talking about joy — that's what Christ focused on.

Usually when the phrase “my joy is full” or “I had fullness of joy” is mentioned, it is associated with people coming unto Christ. But what really moved me was that we have this record of how Christ's joy is full *because people are accepting and receiving His Atonement. They're receiving the gift that He's given them.*

As I think about the Book of Mormon, I ask myself the question, how can I be a living witness? How can my life be a testament of Jesus Christ? How can I bring the Savior's fullness of joy? Because I'm choosing to follow Him. I'm choosing to be a lifelong disciple of Christ. I'm choosing to receive the Atonement, to repent daily like our prophet's invited us to do repeatedly, to think celestial, to let God prevail. How do we align our will, our purpose, our intent with that of the Father and of the Savior? I love the imagery of wanting to bring the Savior joy, bring Him a fullness of joy — and I think that's how we do it.

Ammon finds himself in a really precarious situation with the servants of King Lamoni. They're all worried for their lives, and [Ammon] finds joy in that situation *because he recognizes this as an awesome opportunity to share the truth with them.*

I can't even imagine what that must have felt like to hear the Savior *praying for you to the Father.*

First, *we need to point our rising generation to the Savior in all things.* Second, we need to point them to living prophets and apostles. And third, we need to model that living the gospel of Jesus Christ is joyful. It doesn't mean that we're spared trials and adversity. Think of how often the Savior said to His disciples, "Be of good cheer." It was often in the midst of really terrifying things for them.

The reason that His yoke is easy and His burden is light is because — I've always thought of that as light versus heavy, but His burden is light — *He is the light. His yoke is easy. It's weightless. He's already done for us what we need, so when we yoke ourselves with Him, He shares that power with us.*

President Meredith:

I'll also note that *the Savior is the Great Compensator*. There are lots of titles for Jesus in the scriptures. That's not one of them, but it's one that I firmly believe in. When we strive to be diligent and if we have those days where life just gets in the way and we're not able to do what we want to do, I think *the Lord compensates. He's anxious to bless us.*

I think this year of study in the Book of Mormon has been a journey of discovery of things and places that I felt like I had been before. That's one of the wonders of scripture — *that if we continue to peel things back, we'll continue to learn.*

"Are you happy?" And I said, "Well, yes, I'm happy," and she said, "Well, when you're in front of the saints, remind your face."

[David A. Bendar] teaches us that this enabling power, this grace of Christ helps us to receive strength and assistance to do good. To be a little bit better today than we were yesterday. To be a little bit better tomorrow than we were today. To be able to endure the tough things that come with the journey of mortality.

Elder Kearon said to both the newly called general authorities and their wives, "We need leaders in the Church who will love the people, lift the people and witness of the name of the Savior." And I thought to myself, if that's the charge, if the charge is to love and to lift and to be a witness of the Savior, then I can do that. But I can do that only because of the enabling power, that grace of Christ.

“He shall come into the world to redeem His people.” This is the testimony that Amulek leaves with Zeezrom. And we don’t quite know what exactly it was that turned Zeezrom’s heart, but I have to believe that it was this witness, this testimony.

Because of the Atonement of Christ, we know how it ends. We know what’s in store for all who simply strive to be disciples of Christ — not who’ve achieved perfection, but for those who strive to stay on the covenant path, and repent daily, and think celestial, and all those things.

The Atonement, *it’s more than just for becoming clean. It’s also for becoming stronger and again, doing things that we’ve been called to do that perhaps might feel overwhelming.*

That is what I take away from the Book of Mormon: The hope of His glory, and of eternal life and the rest, and the grace of God. The Father, and the Son abide with me when I am in the Book of Mormon.

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