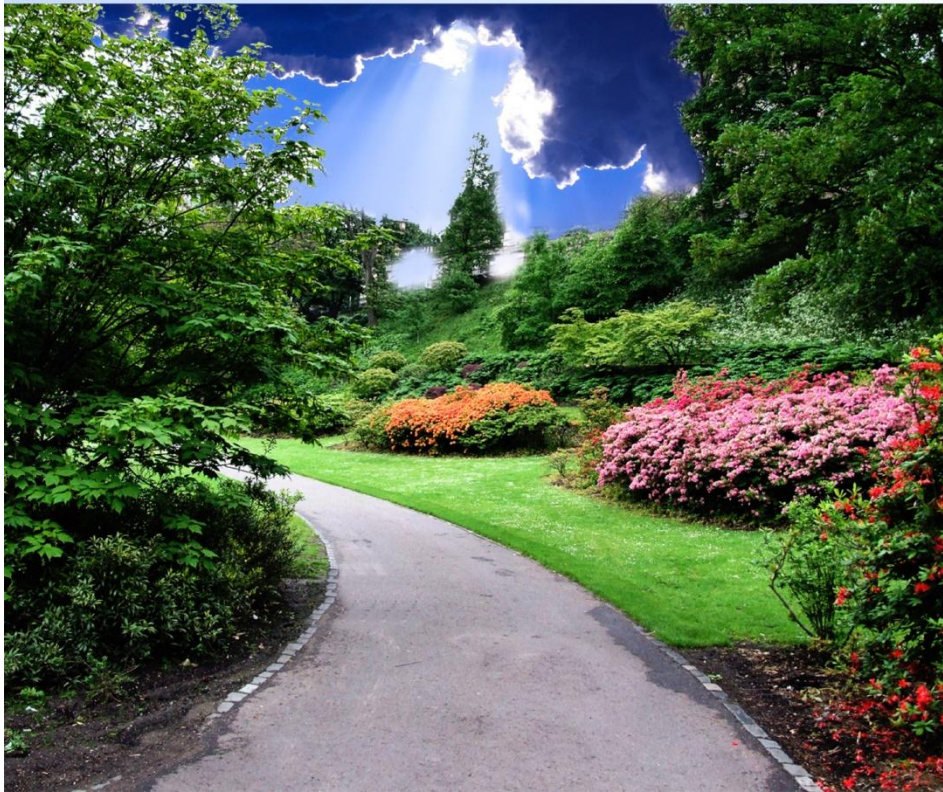


# *Revelation-*

## *The Path to God*



# REVELATION- THE PATH TO GOD

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*By Anonymous*

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## Foreword

The purpose of this work is to help those who so desire, to understand the preparation necessary to have their calling and election made sure. Although being good and doing our duty are essential to happiness and the fulfillment of gospel requirements; to receive the revelation that will put you on the path to God, there is a certain level of understanding and mindset also required. On this quest for further understanding, it is imperative that any new understanding or revelation you receive is credited to the Lord. To believe it is the wisdom of a man would cause you to have faith in or idolize a man instead of receiving by the Spirit. Some of the concepts herein cannot be received or understood but by the Spirit and if you give credit to him then you will search that same source for further enlightenment as new ideas may come to you.

The opportunity is available to you (if you are ready and open) to recognize the Spirit more readily in your life and be taught new concepts by listening to the Spirit teach; even more than his testifying of things you already know to be true. As Joseph Smith articulated, “Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of.” (JSH 1:74), so it is with all material inspired by the Spirit. Anything taught by the spirit of truth can be perceived by the spirit of truth and the Holy Ghost can bear witness to or help one to understand the true meanings and intensions of words given.

As you will soon learn, Joseph taught that a prophet is an inspired teacher and one who bears the testimony of Jesus (which is why the scriptures speak of there being many prophets among them and not just one, “And there were exceedingly many prophets among us....” Enos 1:22). Also, Jesus taught “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.” (Matthew 10:40-41). There is a difference between the Prophet and Apostles of the church, who are special witnesses of Christ as well as revelators and seers; and a prophet. To be a prophet means you have an actual testimony of Christ and his ministry and you receive and teach by the Spirit (not your own speculation or ideas), and that which you teach can be corroborated by scripture, the Prophets (capitalized

meaning of ‘Prophets’ for this work: leaders of the church in any dispensation) and the Spirit. Therefore, to receive a prophet’s reward is to receive that same inspired message given to Prophets and to become a prophet yourself (not the president of the church). Though we now sustain the leading apostle as the Prophet of the church, prophets in scripture have always taken a secondary position to the apostles, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets...” (1 Corinthians 12:28) “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets...” (Ephesians 4:11) “We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets...” (Articles of Faith 6). Therefore, the apostles (including the leading apostle or president of the church) lead the church, and the prophets teach the church.

President Spencer W. Kimball said of people who dismiss messengers:

“Various excuses have been used over the centuries to dismiss these divine messengers. There has been denial because the prophet came from an obscure place. ‘Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ Jesus was also met with the question, ‘Is not this the carpenter’s son?’ By one means or another, the swiftest method of rejection of the holy prophets has been to find a pretext, however false or absurd, to dismiss the man so that his message could also be dismissed. Prophets who were not glib, but slow of speech, were esteemed as naught. . . .

“Sometimes people let their hearts get so set upon things and the honors of this world that they cannot learn the lessons they most need to learn. Simple truths are often rejected in favor of the much less-demanding philosophies of men, and this is another cause for the rejection of the prophets....

“The trouble with rejection because of personal familiarity with the prophets is that the prophets are always somebody’s son or somebody’s neighbor. They are chosen from among the people, not transported from another planet, dramatic as that would be! . . .

“Of course, rejection of the holy prophets comes because the hearts of people are hardened, as people are shaped by their society. ...

“Prophets have a way of jarring the carnal mind. Too often the holy prophets are wrongly perceived as harsh and as anxious to make a record in order to say, ‘I told you so.’ Those prophets I have known are the most loving of men. It is because of their love and integrity that they cannot modify the Lord’s message merely to make people feel comfortable. They are too kind to be so cruel. I am so grateful that prophets do not crave popularity.” *Ensign*, May 1978, pp. 76–77

There are subjects and concepts written in this book that some, at first, may find offensive or in total opposition to their known ideas of gospel doctrine. Hopefully, by the end of this work you will understand, or at least be open to understand, how these concepts could help you to perfect your life and come close to the Glory of God. Nevertheless, this work is not sanctioned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and therefore, is not required that any should believe or adhere to its admonitions. Should you find yourself diametrically opposed to the insights and concepts written herein, then you are free to discount them; but know that by doing so, you may also be limiting your ability to receive certain revelations.

In making the statement above, there is another verse to consider, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7). It is one of the greatest principals of the church to perform missionary work, to bring those of the world into the church and assist them while on the path toward God. It is the mission of this book to assist people in the church, on the path toward God, who have learned all the church and Prophets are permitted to teach, to find the path to God or the path known to the Prophets. In essence, it is to help worthy and diligent members to learn the hidden mysteries promised to all saints who desire to come unto him. It is not to teach those mysteries but to teach you how you can know them for yourself.



## Introduction

“Deny not the spirit of revelation, nor the spirit of prophecy, for wo unto him that denieth these things;” D&C 11:25

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;” D&C 11:13

Joseph Smith said, "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (Teachings p339 under 'The Kindom of God'). He also taught "But if ye are not led by revelation how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Words of Joseph Smith, p345). Furthermore, he also taught, "Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a Prophet." (Teaching p162 under 'No Salvation Without Revelation').

In helping us to understand the importance of communing with God, Joseph stated, “Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to *them*, can never give *us* a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God.” (*History of the Church*, 6:50). He also said, “The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search unto and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God.” (*Teachings*, p. 137).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “Religion comes from God by revelation and deals with spiritual things; and unless and until a man has received revelation, he has not received religion, and he is not on the path leading to salvation in our Father’s kingdom.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1971, pp. 100–101.)

Within the scriptures, and the words of the prophets and apostles, are many hidden mysteries. Just as Jesus taught in parables, whereby only those enlightened by the Spirit would understand, so nearly all of his mysteries are hidden whereby only enlightened souls will understand them. “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;” (1 Peter 1:13). It is time faithful followers of the gospel awaken to 'the further light and knowledge He promised to give us.'

Hopefully you will realize it is not just a blessing but a responsibility of faithful members of the true and living church to receive more; more than what the scriptures have given, more than what the prophets have shared. This is an effort to help you realize you can receive greater intelligence directly from the Lord as the prophets have before you; and remove you from 'the path toward God' (which is the purpose and work of the scriptures and church) and give you the faith to enter the path *to* God, by putting you in touch with Him or to help you realize you can learn directly from Him. Lehi received the vision of the tree of life, but Nephi had desires to see it for himself and gain further understanding of its true intent and meaning. We too can seek to receive the same revelations prophets before us received, and discover further light and knowledge from the Lord himself (see Alma 5:46).

This work is not intended to replace the scriptures or the Prophets or to supersede anything they have said, but only to help you understand that once you have learned all the scriptures and Prophets have taught, you may then be ready to receive the further light and knowledge He promised to give us and enter His presence.

Although revelation and the path to God is acme to this work, lest any entering this path should become entangled in self-piety, righteous pride or sanctimony, let him/her be reminded; it was after Sidney Rigdon saw the Father and Son with Joseph (see D&C 76) that he fell and became an enemy of the church and Joseph. Also consider these words of President Joseph F. Smith:

“It is a wicked and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign. Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church, and I will show you members of the Church who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths. It is not by marvelous manifestations unto us that we shall be established in the truth, but it is by humility and faithful obedience to the commandments and laws of God. When I as a boy first started out in the ministry, I would frequently go out and ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until he made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and until doubt and fear had been absolutely purged from me. He did not have to send an angel from the heavens to do this, nor did he have to speak with the trump of an archangel. By the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of the living God, he gave to me the testimony I possess. And by this principle and power he will give to all the children of men a knowledge of the truth that will stay with them, and it will make them to know the truth, as God knows it, and to do the will of the Father as Christ does it.

And no amount of marvelous manifestations will ever accomplish this. It is obedience, humility, and submission to the requirements of heaven and to the order established in the kingdom of God upon the earth, that will establish men in the truth. Men may receive the visitation of angels; they may speak in tongues; they may heal the sick by the laying on of hands; they may have visions and dreams; but except they are faithful and pure in heart, they become an easy prey to the adversary of their souls, and he will lead them into darkness and unbelief more easily than others.” Gospel Doctrine, p.7.

With the quote above, also bear in mind D&C 3:4 “For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.”

As Joseph Smith’s humility attests, having your calling and election made sure does not make you better than other men. It only gets you there faster, so don’t think of yourself as more enlightened, more powerful or more righteous when the Lord has manifested himself because you do not know how powerful, enlightened and righteous your neighbor is and you have yet to endure to the end and can fall from grace as some have before you. It is not those who receive revelation and miracles who come first to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:4), unless they also are filled with charity and fulfil the will of the Lord with all meekness and humility. It is with solemnity of Spirit, humility of soul, purity of heart and unadulterated intent whereby we begin, and continue, on the path to God.

## Three Methods of Scripture Study

Once we have found the path toward God (become a member of the church) it becomes the implicit objective of every member to learn, and ultimately live, all that the Prophets and scriptures have taught, before we can expect to venture on the path to God. It is paramount we study the scriptures because they are, in some respects, our 'Liahona' in life. Alma teaches "...Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction." (Alma 13:20). He later postulates this point to his son when he stated, "...some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone far astray because of this thing..." (Alma 41:1). Although we are taught and instructed time and time again to study the scriptures, few seem to grasp what is the true intent of the phrase 'study the scriptures'. There are primarily three levels of study engaged in by those so inclined:

1- To say we have read them. This level of study will offer familiarity with the text and give *some* new philosophical cognition, but will limit your capacity to absorb the greater wisdom and enlightenment found within.

2- To prove our own beliefs. The weakness of many studious individuals is that, as they learn, they tend to seek only to prove their current beliefs. They therefore inadvertently search only for those points of scripture which give evidence and strength to their position or perceived notions of what the gospel means, or who God is and what he expects of man. In this attitude they miss much of what the Prophets have to offer. This is why there are now over 2000 Christian religions in the world. A person reads a few verses of scripture, discovers something new and thinks he has rediscovered God or his message. He then begins to promulgate his findings on uneducated and unsuspecting neophytes, deceiving them into becoming his disciples. Even among members we have differing beliefs and opinions though the scriptures teach us to have a unity of the faith. We don't realize we have closed our minds and forgot that, as it states in the 13th article of faith, 'we believe all things'. We are then reduced to defending what we currently believe or the teachings of others we respect, instead of looking for the further light and knowledge that could be ours.

3- To understand all of God's will and do it. 2 Nephi 28:27 "Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!" Most of Joseph Smith's revelations came because something was missing or he read something in the scriptures that didn't fit with what he had been taught throughout his life or was generally accepted by the learned ecclesiastical minds of his time. For instance:

“Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—

“Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

“Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

“For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.” D&C 132:1-4

Joseph wanted answers to questions of things that didn't fit within his perceived notions (“The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.” Proverbs 27:7) and therefore he (we) has (have) received many glorious doctrines and greater enlightenment. Would it not then be our vantage to follow his lead and study as he studied? He sought to know and understand all of God's words and works, and not dismiss those things that seemed harsh, wrong, inconvenient or didn't fit within his perspective of the gospel? (“For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.” (2 Nephi 28:30). Is it time yet that we should cry unto the Lord as the Psalmist? “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (Psalms 119:18). If we can accept hard to understand principles or doctrines, as nothing more than ‘potentially valid’, then we could seek divine intervention for further explanation (after we have done all we can to understand with the tools and resources at our disposal).

An anecdote to consider: Though “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2 Timothy 3:16), not all of the written word is necessarily scripture or inspired—sometimes prophets were giving their own opinions and it takes the Spirit to help us understand what is true and what is opinion or conjecture:

“Now, my son, I do not say that their resurrection cometh at the resurrection of Christ; but behold, I give it as my opinion, that the souls and the bodies are reunited, of the righteous, at the resurrection of Christ, and his ascension into heaven.” Alma 40:20

“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” 1 Corinthians 7:12

“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” 1 Corinthians 7:25

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” 1 John 2:18

Remember too, when Nephi saw the vision of the tree of life; he was given further understanding than that which his father received; and said of his father’s vision: “And I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness; and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water.” (1 Nephi 15:27). So it may be with all visions; the prophets who received those visions may have missed something; and like Nephi who noticed that which his father missed and received a greater understanding, so we could also see the same visions and find things others missed; and we may be called upon to reveal these points to others (Alma 26;22).

# The Scriptures Are Limited or Missing Valuable Pedagogy

One of the greatest mantras of Mormonism is ‘hold to the rod’, meaning; study your scriptures and live by their principles. The content therein contains sage advice and prophetic wisdom having weathered the tenure of several millennia and will continue to do so for at least another. However, the scriptures are limited to that only, which is permitted for us to have at this time, ‘to try our faith’. Mormon had this to say about that which Christ taught the Nephites:

“And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;

“But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.

“And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people;...” 3 Nephi 26:6-8

We have many elucidating and truly wonderful words Jesus taught the Nephites, but what about the other 99% of ‘the greater part’ of his teachings, referred to, which we don’t have?

Jesus taught a group of people for 3 days who did not eat or drink but listened to him continuously:

“Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.” Matthew 15:32

Choose any one of the four Gospels which share, supposedly, all of Christ's teachings, and you could read it in a few hours. What did he teach the multitude for three days?

John said:

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” John 21:25

John also testifies, from his own record, that we have only a small portion of what Jesus taught the people.

There was a special record, directly from the Lord, given in miraculous form, referred to:

“...and it was that same Aminadi who interpreted the writing which was upon the wall of the temple, which was written by the finger of God.” Alma 10:2

God wrote his message, on a wall, with his finger? and yet, this message was not revealed to us? This was not a casual experience frequented in any age, so why was it omitted?

What about the comparison of the Bible to the brass plates:

“...The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass, save there are not so many;...” 1 Nephi 13:23

When Nephi saw the Bible go to America, it was similar to the words on his brass plates, ‘save there were not so many’. So why were the rest of the words not given to us by Nephi?

Jesus told Nephi toward the end of his visit to the Nephites:

“Write the things which ye have seen and heard, save it be those which are forbidden.” 3 Nephi 27:23

Paul gave a specific instruction:

“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” Colossians 4:16

Paul obviously felt his words to the Laodiceans were important enough that the Colossians should read them also... so where are they? Had its contents been something already known to the Colossians, would he have instructed them to read it? Were his words to the Laodiceans lacking significance for us?

Of the Nephi who lived during the time of Christ’s visit to the Americas, it was said:

“And he did minister many things unto them; and all of them cannot be written, and a part of them would not suffice, therefore they are not written in this book. And Nephi did minister with power and with great authority.

“And it came to pass that they were angry with him, even because he had greater power than they, for it were not possible that they could disbelieve his words, for so great was his faith on the Lord Jesus Christ that angels did minister unto him daily.

“And in the name of Jesus did he cast out devils and unclean spirits; and even his brother did he raise from the dead, after he had been stoned and suffered death by the people.” 3 Nephi 7:17-19



What a marvelous testimony depicting the power of Nephi's words, yet we have virtually none of them. A similar declaration is spoken of Stephen in Acts 6:8-10, yet we have but few of his words as well. This is true also of John the Baptist in D&C 93, and, of course, Zenos and Zenock referred to several times in the Book of Mormon? Great men with great knowledge and testimonies, of whom thousands followed; the words of which, we have none.

We also have the words of the Lord, given us by Nephi:

“For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written.

“For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.

“And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews.” 2 Nephi 29:11-13

Where are the records from the lost tribes of Israel for the Nephites and the Jews? It may be argued that this is in reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Those records may be in part, but the Dead Sea Scrolls do not represent all people from the east, west, north and south, and the isles of the sea. It may also be argued that Jacob considered or called the Americas, or the land where he was living, “...an isle of the sea.” (2 Nephi 10:20), but the scripture says ‘isles’ and Jacob’s isle is already represented in ‘the words of the Nephites’. Therefore, there are yet other records from the isles of the sea we are still to receive. Remember, Jesus told the Nephites:

“And verily, verily, I say unto you that I have other sheep, which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about whither I have been to minister.

“For they of whom I speak are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them.

“But I have received a commandment of the Father that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold and one shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them.” 3 Nephi 16:1-3

Therefore, if he visited these other people and they were to write for the Nephites and the Jews, where are those records?

Moroni also testified of his limited writings:

“And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

“And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing.” Ether 12:39-40

There too, are a host of books referred to in the Bible wherein the writers thought they were of significance to reference, imbued with knowledge, which we don’t have:

“And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is it not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.” Joshua 10:13

“And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the acts of Solomon?” 1 Kings 11:41

“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.”  
1 Chronicles 29:29

“Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.” 2 Chronicles 12:15

“And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.” 2 Chronicles 13:22

“Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?” 2 Chronicles 9:29

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.” 2 Chronicles 20:34

“Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built upon high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.” 2 Chronicles 33:18, 19

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.” Jude 1:14

Please note: This is not a full representation of the many verses which testify of missing records and books.

The Prophet Joseph Smith also wrote:

“Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.” History of the Church, 6:50

Therefore, study what we have but know there is much more to be given.

# The Prophets And Apostles Were/Are Limited In What They Can Teach

If we can accept the fact that our recorded scriptures are limited, can we also accept that, although we have received many great revelations from the Prophets and Apostles, they too have been limited in what they were permitted to reveal? Even now there are many people living today who have received heavenly sapience, which they cannot share or find the words to convey.

“And many of them saw and heard unspeakable things, which are not lawful to be written.” 3 Nephi 26:18

“And the mysteries of the kingdom ye shall keep within yourselves; for it is not meet to give that which is holy unto the dogs;” JST Matthew 7:10

Many of the prophets saw and heard unspeakable things, which could not be written, as we will see in the following verses. To begin with; Moroni testified that when he speaks by the power of the Spirit, the words placed in his mouth are powerful and elucidating; but when he attempts to commit them to paper, his words tend not to flow with the same grace, power and fluidity:

“Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words.” Ether 12:25

Paul desired to teach the people more, but they could not bear this deeper understanding. And, due to the weakness of the Corinthians, we too have not received the deeper knowledge which Paul possessed:

“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” 1 Corinthians 3:2

Like Paul, John also would have taught more were the people ready for the information he possessed, and again, we are without that knowledge:

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” John 16:12

Joseph Smith, too, was limited in what he could teach the people:

“And I command you that you preach naught but repentance, and show not these things unto the world until it is wisdom in me.

“For they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish.” D&C 19:21-22

Here is a powerful testimony to the fact that marvelous words were spoken by Jesus, which were not written:

“And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.” 3 Nephi 17:17

Alma also taught the people things which cannot be written:

“And now it came to pass that Alma returned from the land of Gideon, after having taught the people of Gideon many things which cannot be written,...” Alma 8:1

Words were given to babes, which were too marvelous for us to receive:

“And it came to pass that after he had ascended into heaven—the second time that he showed himself unto them, and had gone unto the Father, after having healed all their sick, and their lame, and opened the eyes of their blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf, and even had done all manner of cures among them, and raised a man from the dead, and had shown forth his power unto them, and had ascended unto the Father—

“Behold, it came to pass on the morrow that the multitude gathered themselves together, and they both saw and heard these children; yea, even babes did open their mouths and utter marvelous things; and the things which they did utter were forbidden that there should not any man write them.” 3 Nephi 26:15-16

If the Lord could give such words to babes, to teach adults, is it not reasonable to conclude that God would desire us to know the same, if we would but humble ourselves as they did, had faith as they had, and the desire to receive more of his enlightenment?

The Spirit stopped Nephi from teaching elevated levels of knowledge and understanding, which he possessed. This caused him to mourn because he was remanded from sharing further enlightenment, due to the fact, they would not search the knowledge they had been given thus far:

“And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be.” 2 Nephi 32:7

Once again, we too are left without this greater enlightenment possessed by Nephi.

If Paul was able to see into the third heaven, as well as Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and others, then why not us?

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

“How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” 2 Corinthians 12:2,4

They each spoke of their weaknesses, which many of us have; Paul even went to so far as to have the Christians killed, but after repenting and coming unto Christ, having his eye single to the Glory of God, great things were manifest unto him. However, he did not teach all that he saw or heard. Therefore, we too can repent and change our lives, having our eye single to His glory and receive a vision as Paul did.

The three Nephites were given a commandment not to tell of the things which they saw and heard:

“And behold, the heavens were opened, and they were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things.

“And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard;

“And whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them like a transfiguration of them, that they were changed from this body of flesh into an immortal state, that they could behold the things of God.

“But it came to pass that they did again minister upon the face of the earth; nevertheless they did not minister of the things which they had heard and seen, because of the commandment which was given them in heaven.” 3 Nephi 28:13-16

Nephi testifies he wrote but a small portion of the wondrous truths he saw:

“And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard; wherefore the things which I have written sufficeth me; and I have written but a small part of the things which I saw.” 1 Nephi 14:28

So how much more is there for us to see and hear? Remember also that Nephi saw the same vision his father saw but in Nephi's vision he was added upon, or given a greater understanding over and above that which his father saw and heard. It could then be said,

should we prepare ourselves and ask to witness the same things the Prophets viewed, we too could receive the revelations they did and also be added upon.

Nephi also declared:

“Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night-time.

“And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.

“And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.” 2 Nephi 4:23-25

What a wonderful experience, again withheld from us... until we are ready for it.

And not just the great prophets but the people who listened to the words of King Benjamin, after he request their views on the words he spoke to them, they replied:

“And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things.” Mosiah 5:3

Alma explained:

“And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.” Alma 12:9

Here it is said for all to understand and believe, ‘It is given unto *many* to know the mysteries of God’-- then why not you? Is it possible for you to receive His mysteries as well? Yes, when you have proven to the Lord you are ready to give heed to and diligently follow those new revelations and mysteries he will reveal to you. “Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.” (D&C 132:3). But before we can receive these new mysteries (new to those who have not received them yet), we must first show we are willing to give heed to and diligently follow that which we have received thus far. This is, in part, why only the very basics of the gospel can or will be taught at general conferences. Additionally, it is televised throughout the world so speakers must watch what they say because the deeper things of the Lord (the meat) is not for the world and could be used

against the church. Regardless of the reason at the time, we still are left without the greater knowledge of the Lord, known to his Prophets and Apostles.

Again, this is only a small portion of the many statements by Prophets revealing they had seen and heard far more than what they have disclosed or were disallowed to share. God reserves these things for those who prepare themselves to receive.



## Things We Don't Teach, Haven't Learned, Don't Know

So far we have observed there are scriptures and important information missing from our sacred texts; we have also read many examples of the Lord limiting what the Prophets could reveal. Thus we are limited in what we know and we are aware there is additional information available to us beyond that revealed by the scriptures and Prophets.

Earlier it was explained, there are three levels of scripture study. This chapter is meant primarily to show there are many things written in the scriptures, which people have read several times (maybe over a lifetime), but have never noticed because they have yet to move beyond searching only for those things which support their current beliefs (the second level of scripture study). This is the final section orchestrated to humble us; to help us realize we are yet lacking much knowledge intended for or available to us. We can begin to receive this understanding once we begin studying the scriptures at the third level and strive for the path to God. This section is an attempt to help us open our minds to the fact that there are many things right in front of us we have missed or don't understand, as was indicated to the Prophet Joseph Smith by Moroni, "He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here." (JHS 1:41). Note: This chapter and the two previous were given in preparation for you to receive revelations and the enlightenment that may follow. You must first realize there is more to discover, learn and abide by, before you can begin to receive the further light and knowledge He promised to send us. It would behoove us to have a heart and desire such as was depicted by Abraham:

"And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers." Abraham 1:2

Within this chapter you should find some, many, or all of the topics new and confusing, inconsistent, or wrong depending on the level of your education (literary or from on high) and the level of your judgementalness. There should be something here for everyone, something you haven't known or understood, or doesn't fit within the realm of what you have been

taught or discovered thus far. The purpose is for you to seek answers from the Lord on these points and obtain the beautiful revelations that will come (if you are ready and truly desire to know the answers to their subject matter). But remember, this is only a sampling of information whereby you could receive revelations:

## Judas

John refers to Judas as a devil and perdition. Many members of the church readily agree with John's synopsis of Judas' character due to his betrayal of Jesus. Could it be that John was being a bit harsh? If what John said were true (that Judas was a devil and perdition) then why would the Lord tell Joseph Smith the following:

“And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, and it hath gone forth in a firm decree, by the will of the Father, that mine apostles, *the Twelve which were with me in my ministry at Jerusalem*, shall stand at my right hand at the day of my coming in a pillar of fire, being clothed with robes of righteousness, with crowns upon their heads, in glory even as I am, to judge the whole house of Israel, even as many as have loved me and kept my commandments, and none else.” (Italics added) D&C 29:12

Jesus also stated to his 12 apostles that were with him in his ministry:

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Mathew 19:28

Jesus said this while knowing Judas would betray him and kill himself. Mormon also observed Judas was one of those who would judge the 12 that Jesus chose among the Nephites:

“And I write also unto the remnant of this people, who shall also be judged by the twelve whom Jesus chose in this land; and they shall be judged by the other twelve whom Jesus chose in the land of Jerusalem.” Mormon 3:19

There were none other than the named 12 apostles chosen by Jesus who were with him in his ministry at Jerusalem, which included Judas. Is Judas a devil and perdition as John states or will he be clothed with a robe of righteousness and a crown upon his head as Jesus told Joseph Smith?

Something else to consider, could Judas be considered perdition when he never had the gift of the Holy Ghost?

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

John 16:7

“(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:39

It wasn't until after Jesus was resurrected that he gave the apostles the Holy Ghost:

“...came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

“And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:” John 20:19-22

Please note: This topic could engender a two hour discussion, should one attempt to discover and reveal all the evidences to support either side, but since most members tend to agree with John's appraisal you are left with the task of searching it out and deciding for yourself. Should you chose to embark on this journey of discovery, here is a suggestion by which you could judge; there are two angles to approach this subject, one would be John's, and the other Christ's. If you truly desire an answer, although the scriptures are divided on the subject, if you pray with an open mind, not just to receive a yes or no answer but to know the Lord's mind on the matter, the revelation you may receive could open your mind to an entirely new way to perceive the world, the gospel, and the Lord's saving grace toward all his children. For, if he permitted Judas to enter into his glory after betraying Jesus and killing himself, then what hope have we, of his grace, toward us?

### **Who Created Evil?**

People generally attempt to excuse this next verse, thinking Joseph Smith would have retranslated it to something else had he finished his work of translating the Bible. Others would cry blasphemy and attempt to explain it away to protect their personal beliefs. It may well be that this verse is true as it is written; and, should you receive the revelation which provides this understanding, your life could be filled with joy and rejoicing-- you could become a changed person. The additional verses are given to hopefully help you realize there is a question here that needs to be answered:

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.” Isaiah 45:7 (God created evil?)

“The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” Proverbs 16:4 (God made the wicked for a day of evil?)

“Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols.

“Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;” Ezekiel 20:24-25 (God gave statutes that were not good, and judgments they should not live (even as he does the many religions of the world today?))

“But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? ...” Job 2:10

Seek the Lord’s mind in understanding these verses because the answer is quite elucidating and beautiful.

## **Abraham’s Sacrifice**

What goes through our mind when we think of Abraham being called upon to sacrifice his son? We have sat in on many lessons telling this story and explaining it as a tremendous test placed upon Abraham causing much sorrow and distress by having to kill his child. Yet, through his faithfulness he would fulfil a command of God, by sacrificing his son, taking him to his death simply to be obedient. Is there something missing in these lessons? Where is the mention of the fact that Abraham was already told (before Isaac was born) the covenant made to him whereby he would be a father of nations and the priesthood would continue down through his progeny, would be through his son Isaac? Did Abraham really expect to bury Isaac that day?

“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

“But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” Genesis 17:19,21

Was Abraham to believe God is a liar? If Abraham already knew it was incumbent upon Isaac to bear children and the priesthood was to be perpetuated through him; then where lies all the distress of killing his son? In fact, Abraham was thinking that God was going to show him a miracle by bringing Isaac back to life; having no doubt his son would not remain dead. Again, this has always been in the scriptures but it is never quoted:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

“Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead...” Hebrews 11:17-19

Thus Abraham’s trial was whether or not he believed and trusted the Lord would raise Isaac from the dead to fulfil his promise; not whether or not he would sacrifice or lose his son.

Note: This is mentioned only to demonstrate that we do not always pay attention to all the scriptures but misinterpret (at times) to make our own point or defend our own beliefs; but should we study further or seek understanding to all scripture, the truth of these matters will be opened to us.

### **Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy**

We have heard the prophets and read the many scriptures quoted, telling us to keep the sabbath day holy; that it is a day of rest from our worldly labors, so we abide the day. However, many people error because they engage in the faultfinding of others who, as they judge, have broken the sabbath; not living it to the extremes they have chosen for themselves. Another way we sin, in this respect, is through our righteous pride. We think we are more pious or holy than those who watch TV or do other things inconsistent with our own view of what keeping the sabbath day holy means. We say we shouldn’t shop because that is making shop owners and clerks work. With this logic in mind we should not then drive to church because the potential for an accident means, police, doctors and ambulance drivers must work; we should not turn on a light or use hair dryers because people at the electrical plant must work so church should be by candlelight and without heat or air conditioning. How many security staff, TV station personnel, etc., must work during General Conference? Where does it end? This is what the Jews did, who created more evil and guilt for themselves when they stipulated that walking more than 50 paces constituted working on the sabbath.

The Lord, who gave us this commandment, also stated:

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:”

Mark 2:27

It is within your liberty to live the sabbath day to whatever extreme you choose but when you become judgmental or jealous of others who do not live it as you, or if you become

sanctimonious because you think you are better than they for the sacrifices you make, do you not become the greater sinner? Remember what the Lord said about forgiveness:

“Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.” D&C 64:9

Therefore be careful; for your sanctimony may be condemned more than the person watching TV on the sabbath; for, of this sort are they who, like the Jews, would condemn the Lord who healed or went into the field and plucked ears of corn for his disciples to eat on the Sabbath day.

Jesus also quoted from Hosea, a few times, the verse “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” (Hosea 6:6). He desires your mercy and love for those who break commandments more than he desires your sacrifice. Also, of they who are putting on the show of righteousness, telling everyone they will not, but in reality, wish they were watching the big game, Moroni stated, “For behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.” (Moroni 7:8). Don’t let your sanctimony and judgementalness destroy the good you are striving to accomplish through your sacrifice. Let your mind be haply engaged in the duties of the sabbath and let no evil, judgmental or jealous thought distract you from your holy venture.

The purpose for this section is to help you realize the potential for seeing, even a very basic commandment which so many people revere and strive to abide by, in a new light or from a different perspective. By so doing, it could open your eyes to potential errors in your own thinking or ideology and help you to be more compassionate, less judgmental and more open to viewing life as Jesus did (in the case of the adulterous woman and eating with publicans and sinners). Judgmentalness will allow us to continue on the path toward God but will keep us from the path to God.

### **Will Wicked Rulers Live in Glory?**

To envisage King Harrod, King Noah, Pharaoh, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Governor Boggs and various other rulers of ignoble notoriety, housed in glory in the next life, may appear to some repulsive, reprehensible and entirely out of character with the Lord’s will; yet Isaiah states:

“All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.”  
Isaiah 14:18

Again, should you receive the revelation explaining this, or understand how this is possible, it could enshroud you with great joy and shouts of praise over the goodness of the Lord and His plan. Yes there is more to learn and receive from the Lord but without revelation you will not learn how some awkward statements spoken of are possible. (see Jacob 4:8).

## **Did God Give Strong Delusion?**

Along with the scripture above, stating God created evil (Isaiah 45:7), we also see a few other passages, which many would rather they were removed from the scriptures because they don't fit within their perceived notions of God's will or plan.

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

“That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (God gave them strong delusion so they could be damned?)

“But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.” Jacob 4:14 (God delivered them many things which they cannot understand, and did it that they may stumble?)

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” Romans 9:17-18 (God setup Pharaoh and hardened him so he could show off his power?)

“And also that God hath set his hand and seal to change the times and seasons, and to blind their minds, that they may not understand his marvelous workings; that he may prove them also and take them in their own craftiness;” D&C 121:12 (God blinded their minds, that they may not understand his workings?)

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;” Romans 1:28 (God did this, they did not do it themselves?)

“I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

“Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.”

Alma 29:4-5 (God will give men evil, death or remorse of conscience?)

Does God do things we consider evil, wrong, and against the words of the prophets... or doesn't He? Instead of trying to explain away those verses, seek the Lord's mind in these things and the revelation you could receive may liberate you and bring you closer to Him and help you to perfect your soul and conquer the devil.

### **Why Couldn't Esau Repent?**

We are taught we can be forgiven for anything but murder and denial of the Holy Ghost. In fact, it states in Matthew 12:31-32:

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

But what about Esau? It was Jacob who by deception (pretended to be Esau) obtained the blessing of Isaac, making Esau a servant to Jacob. Also, it was Jacob who should have had compassion on his brother and given him food when he was starving to death; instead he required that Esau sell him his birthright for a bowl of pottage, “And he [Isaac] said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?” (Genesis 27:35-36). Esau was the one who showed much love to his deceptive brother Jacob when they met again after many years and Jacob sent much of his treasure before Esau, to appease the assumed, and possibly well deserved, anger of Esau; yet Esau accepted none of Jacob's offering but frankly forgave all that Jacob had done (until Jacob pressed upon him to take the treasures). Yet we see that when Esau repented sincerely in tears he could not receive forgiveness.



“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”  
Hebrews 12:16-17

Why wouldn't Esau be blessed and Jacob cursed when Jacob was the transgressor and Esau did as his father requested? Remember, this is intended to get you to research and pray about these things so you can receive revelation and instruction. This book is not intended to be the revelation, which is why the answers to some of these thought-provoking topics are not given. It is your questioning and confusion that will cause the Spirit to reveal truth to you.

### **Will Satan Be Bound In Chains For 1000 Years?**

A young returned missionary sat in Sunday school next to his mother where he heard a highly educated elderly high priest teach that Satan will not be bound in chains for a thousand years; but we will bind him through our personal righteousness and not allow him to tempt us anymore. Such a doctrine seemed absurd to this young man and he turned to the book of Revelations showing his mother the passage referred to (Revelations 20:1-3), revealing the error of the high priest. After all, Satan being bound in chains was a reprieve he looked forward to, which would make life so much easier, being the blessing of the millennium-- so he thought.

It was a few years later when this concept was suddenly revealed to the young man. Once it was revealed he saw many instances of this concept in the scriptures and understood a new level of responsibility and personal power. Here are some of the references:

“And because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth.” 1 Nephi 22:26

“And Satan shall be bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men.” D&C 45:55

“Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time....” 2 Nephi 30:18

“ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...” James 4:7-8

“Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved.” Ether 8:26

Members seem to continue in their idol loving ways (striving to accumulate property, prestige and worldly treasures), fulfilling the desires and demands of the adversary, while waiting for Christ to come and miraculously transform everything-- as if we couldn't do anything about the evils of our day ourselves. In actual fact, the Lord is waiting for us to prepare ourselves by overcoming Satan and living the celestial law before he will come:

“Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now.

“But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

“And are not united according to the union *required by the law of the celestial kingdom*;

“And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; *otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself*.

“And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.

“I speak not concerning those who are appointed to lead my people, who are the first elders of my church, for they are not all under this condemnation;

“But I speak concerning my churches abroad—there are many who will say: Where is their God? Behold, he will deliver them in time of trouble, otherwise we will not go up unto Zion, and will keep our moneys.

“Therefore, in consequence of the transgressions of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

“That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.” (Italics added) D&C 105:2-10

Those verses laden us with the onus of responsibility to realize that we must overcome evil ourselves and prepare for the coming of the Lord by eschewing Satan out of our lives now, and strive to live the Lord's celestial law. We cannot wait for Christ to come and fix

everything, "...otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself." (verse 5 above). Remember too, the Lord professed to the Nephites:

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying he came again to the disciples, and said unto them: So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews; wherefore I could not show unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief." 3 Nephi 19:35

"For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith." Ether 12:12

"...and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity." 3 Nephi 8:1

Would one truly expect the Lord to cast out Satan without his people showing any faith to overcome and strengthen themselves against him? Wouldn't such an act also take away our agency? (D&C 29:39). Wasn't it Satan's plan to force us to be righteous... not God's?

## What About The Word of Wisdom?

Is the word of wisdom a principle with a promise or a commandment?

"A Word OF Wisdom, for the benefit of the council of high priests, assembled in Kirtland, and the church, and also the saints in Zion—

"To be sent greeting; *not by commandment or constraint*, but by revelation and the word of wisdom, showing forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—

"*Given for a principle with promise*, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints." (Italics added) D&C 89:1-3

It clearly states it is not sent by commandment or constraint, and is a principle with a promise. What makes this even more questionable; when Joseph Smith retranslated the Bible, he gave as the proper translation of Colossians:

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

"Which are after the doctrines and commandments of men, who teach you to touch not, taste not, handle not; all those things which are to perish with the using?

"Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting the body as to the satisfying the flesh, not in any honor to God." JST Colossians 2:20-22

Does it not appear that he is telling us it is a doctrine and commandment of man to teach you to touch not, taste not or handle not, and that this is not in any honor to God?

It is also stated in Romans 14:13-14

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”

The question is: Are we creating a stumbling block for those who do not keep the word of wisdom and judge them as bad or evil for partaking of substances not permitted in the word of wisdom? Are we in danger of judging others and being judged because of our thoughts about the word of wisdom? Are these substances only unclean to us because we say they are unclean?

Further, Jacob condemned the Jews because they were not satisfied with the laws set out by God and felt to improve upon them by looking ‘beyond the mark’:

“But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.” Jacob 4:14

Have we moved beyond the mark with the word of wisdom so the Lord changed it into a commandment because we desired it? And, does the word of wisdom cause us to judge others taken in its grasp; thus causing us to stumble by our judgementalness and sanctimony? Jesus turned water into wine and yes it was the best wine of the evening. The people of that time knew the difference between wine containing alcohol and grape juice; and for them, the best wine would have included alcohol. Jesus gave wine to the Nephites when he visited them and also plans to drink wine when he returns:

“For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.” Luke 22: 18

“Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim;” D&C 27: 5

Maybe he will do this because wine has medicinal properties for us as well:

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” 1 Timothy 5:23

Please note: This is meant to get you thinking and receive revelation by asking questions of the Lord when the scriptures speak of things which go against our traditions. This is not meant to promote arguments against the word of wisdom. It is meant to help you realize that if it is a commandment in the church now, we should know which Prophet was authorized to make it so and we should also receive divine instruction of its validity or a personal testimony that it is so.

### **Is Christ’s Atonement For Everyone?**

We are taught that Christ’s atonement is for everyone or that he died for everyone. Christ’s resurrection was for everyone in that, because he was raised from the dead, all men can now be raised from the dead and be reunited with their bodies. However the resurrection is not the atonement, but only a portion. The atonement also includes Christ having power to exercise mercy over judgment. Thus we are taught that Christ paid the penalty for all our sins, but this is not so. Christ paid for the sins of all who never heard of a Savior or the gospel in any sense; thus cannibals are forgiven for killing and eating people, etc. He also paid for the sins of those who knew of the Savior and sinned, but repented of those sins. In other words, the atonement is not for everyone; it saves those who are ignorant of the Savior and also those who repent. However, if you have a knowledge of the savior and don't repent of your sins, the atonement will have no effect and cannot save you:

“Now Amulek saith again unto him: Behold thou hast lied, for thou sayest that I spake as though I had authority to command God because I said he shall not save his people in their sins.

“And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.” Alma 11:36-37

“And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.

“And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.

“And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption.” Alma 34:14-16

“... for behold, my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.” D&C 29:17

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,” Hebrews 10:26

“For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned.

“But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God! For salvation cometh to none such except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Mosiah 3:11-12

“For there are many promises which are extended to the Lamanites; for it is because of the traditions of their fathers that caused them to remain in their state of ignorance; therefore the Lord will be merciful unto them and prolong their existence in the land.

“And now behold I say unto you, that if this people, who have received so many blessings from the hand of the Lord, should transgress contrary to the light and knowledge which they do have, I say unto you that if this be the case, that if they should fall into transgression, it would be far more tolerable for the Lamanites than for them.

“For behold, the promises of the Lord are extended to the Lamanites, but they are not unto you if ye transgress;...” Alma 9:16,23-24

“And he shall come into the world to redeem his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else.

“Therefore the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death; for behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God, and be judged according to their works.” Alma 11:40-41

“Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” D&C 19:15-19

This final quote by the Lord himself states it most plain above all that if we do not repent we must suffer even as he did, which he describes as the agonizing anguish he suffered in the garden of Gethsemane. Therefore, it is imperative that we, who know the truth, repent lest his saving grace should have no effect on us and we should endure that which Christ himself suffered.

### **Does Worldly Prosperity Equate to Blessings?**

“Let them repent of all their sins, and of all their covetous desires, before me, saith the Lord; for what is property unto me? saith the Lord.” D&C 117:4

Too often you hear members talk about the Lord blessing them with wealth, prosperity and worldly treasures, and they quote a few scriptures that give evidence of this fact. Yes, it is agreed the Lord promises he will bless and prosper His people when they obey His will and live His ordinances, but it also states:

“But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin.” D&C 49:20

He also states:

“...but I cannot deny my word.” D&C 39:16

Are we to believe that the Lord can deny his word by blessing one man with things of the world greater than another? By so doing, would He not then cause the ‘blessed man’ to sin according to D&C 49:20? Would not this say He would bless you with sin if He were to give you more than another? Would it not be equitable to note that when he prospers His people, he prospers His *people* and not just certain individuals with wealth? “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35). Yes the individual may prosper but isn’t that prosperity then to be used to help prosper the rest of His people? “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.” (Jacob 2:17). In their commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants, Smith and Sjodahl said, “It was well, therefore, for the members to

obey counsel and not seek to build themselves at the expense of others; should this be done they would lose the reward.” (D&C Commentary, p. 860).

If I am a skilled farmer who can easily turn 100 acres of land into enough food to feed hundreds of families because tractors (inherited from my father) are able to accomplish much work; yet another man with 100 acres but having no tractors will work so much harder to feed a lesser amount of people because he is unable to work so large an area on his own; are we then to believe, it is the Lord’s economy to say the harder working individual, who could only bless a few individuals, is less righteous or deserving of blessings because he was not able to produce as much as a man with a tractor? That is the way of the world, but is it the way of the Lord? “

Members of the church are in great error to believe there is some holiness in those who have achieved or possess greater than others. Money or prosperity is not a reason to judge the righteousness of a person; otherwise, what would be said of Joseph Smith, who was told he would never be rich as to things pertaining to this life, or Jesus who gave up his riches to live a paupers life? (2 Corinthians 8:9). Just because many of the General Authorities were men of great achievement and possession before they came into their position does not mean their money had anything to do with them ascending to that call. There are some General Authorities who were not so well propertied. All show of money and possession, by the wealthy, means only that they were shrewd or talented men, or knew the right people in their vocation or industry who could help propel them to such status. It also means they have so much more because they gave so much less, than others (according to Jesus’ observation of the widows mites):

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

“And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

“And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” Mark 12:41-44

There are many people who have obtained money, land and possession who did not deserve it or were blessed by the Lord though they did not deserve it:



“Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

“Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.” Deuteronomy 9:5-6

“That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?” Job 20:5

“Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

“And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” Malachi 3:14-15

“Yea, and I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the sword.

“But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared; now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you; then ye shall be smitten by famine, and by pestilence, and by the sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent.” Alma 10:22-23

Thus we see that just because people have money, power or property, does not mean the Lord was rewarding their righteousness (“And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.” 2 Nephi 28:21). His treasures are spiritual not temporal and He will bless us temporally to the extent of providing all we need or which is expedient for us, not that we may have more than everyone else to consume it upon our lusts.

We also have records of people who were deserving of blessings but didn’t receive them:

“Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.” 1 Samuel 29:6

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

“O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.” Psalms 22:1-2

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

“Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

“For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked;...” Alma 60:13

It may be the rich are to be pitied more than venerated or revered, especially if you look on the many scriptures which describe the potential fate of the rich, of which, I will quote but one:

“But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

“Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:24-26

It is not the intent of this work to condemn the rich but there are literally dozens of scripture verses, that could be quoted, which do, and few that discuss the Lord prospering His righteous people with worldly treasures. But, with regard to the premise of this book (receiving revelation) and how the accumulation of wealth pertains to the intent of this work; it is meet that you should draw your own conclusions as to the meaning of this verse found in D&C 70:14:

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld.”

## **The Law of Tithing**

We tend to believe that 10% is all the Lord requires of us; and those who live in countries where the government exacts an excessive amount of taxes, will pay only 10% of their net amount after taxes. People are comfortable with this law and content themselves with this version of the Lord’s intended obligations to Him, so they can pay their trivial amount, and maybe a small portion more— (to be generous) and believe this is the new law of consecration. Thus they can go on living a higher standard of living than that of their brethren. Jacob speaks of this situation thus:

“And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that

of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.” Jacob 2:13

Joseph Smith being told previously the people should be tithed, but following the law of consecration wherein the people were to give substantially, he asked the Lord how much the people should be tithed. The answer he received we now have as section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The historical notes also bear significance, so it is quoted here in its entirety:

“Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8, 1838, in answer to his supplication: “O Lord, show unto thy servants how much thou requirest of the properties of thy people for a tithing.” HC 3: 44. The law of tithing, as understood today, had not been given to the Church previous to this revelation. The term “tithing” in the prayer just quoted and in previous revelations (64: 23; 85: 3; 97: 11) had meant not just one-tenth, but all free-will offerings, or contributions, to the Church funds. The Lord had previously given to the Church the law of consecration and stewardship of property, which members (chiefly the leading elders) entered into by a covenant that was to be everlasting. Because of failure on the part of many to abide by this covenant, the Lord withdrew it for a time, and gave instead the law of tithing to the whole Church. The Prophet asked the Lord how much of their property he required for sacred purposes. The answer was this revelation.

“1–5, The saints are to pay their surplus property and then give, as tithing, one-tenth of their interest annually; 6–7, Such a course will sanctify the land of Zion.

“Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church in Zion,

“For the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion and for the priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my Church.

“And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people.

“And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord.

“Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.

“And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept

thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you.

“And this shall be an ensample unto all the stakes of Zion. Even so. Amen.”

We are now left to wonder why we pay only 10% instead of all our surplus property and then 10% of our increase as was required by the Lord “...and this shall be a standing law unto them forever.” (verse 4). When will the people choose to live the principles he has set forth for us that we may live a Zion lifestyle wherein there shall be no poor among us (“And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.” Moses 7:18)? When will Zion be built up with a people prepared, living the celestial law so the Lord can receive Zion to himself when he returns? (D&C 105:5). Some claim our stakes are Zion throughout the world but as it says in verse 6; if we observe not this law then it shall not be a land of Zion unto you.

Even if the church is not exacting all your surplus, could you not take it upon yourself to; instead of buying big fancy cars, houses and jewelry or saving an excessive amount of money, to instead, start a new business to provide work or better incomes for members? In this you are not just giving up money to the poor but you are creating a synergy that will prosper the poor perpetually if you let the profits from that venture then go on to create others (instead of giving a fish, teach a man to fish).

The idea here is, are you simply grateful to the Lord for providing so much security and wealth for you and your family, or are you seeking the will and revelations of the Lord in how he desires your excess to be utilized to bless others?

Remember, the purpose of bringing up these principles is not to condemn people or call anyone evil but to help those who desire to walk the path to God, to understand the essential mindset required to enter His presence. Focusing on the pursuit of worldly treasures over the desire to live a godlike life will hamper your ability to receive various revelations from the Lord.

## **Who Are The Wicked?**

In the scriptures the word ‘wicked’ has two meanings, the Lord’s and the prophets’. Generally speaking the prophets use it as we would, meaning people who are evil and perform sins or works of the devil. The Lord’s meaning is quite different.

The Lord often uses words or phrases with double meanings. Just as the Lord taught Joseph one of his mysteries being a play on words or double meaning with regard to ‘eternal punishment’:

“Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment.

“Again, it is written eternal damnation; wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name’s glory.

“Wherefore, I will explain unto you this mystery, for it is meet unto you to know even as mine apostles.

“I speak unto you that are chosen in this thing, even as one, that you may enter into my rest.

“For, behold, the mystery of godliness, how great is it! For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name. Wherefore—

“Eternal punishment is God’s punishment.

“Endless punishment is God’s punishment.” D&C 19:6-12

Even so, as ‘eternal or endless punishment’ does not mean it will last forever, the Lord has also given a double meaning to the word ‘wicked’. Wicked to the Lord could mean evil people, *or* anyone who has not accepted the gospel. Wicked in the second case does not necessarily mean they are evil or bad people. Joseph Fielding Smith explains this in his notes on the subject found in *The Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith*.

Joseph Smith stated, “There will be wicked men on the earth during the thousand years.” (*Teachings* under ‘The Rule of Christ in the Millennium’ page 276.) In the footnotes President Joseph Fielding Smith stated, “The Lord in this scripture speaks of those who have not received the Gospel as being under the bondage of sin, and hence “wicked”. However, many of these people are honorable, clean living men, but they have not embraced the gospel.” He also states in another place, “If they refuse to come unto him, then he calls them wicked and they are under the bondage of sin.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:53).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained it this way: “The end of the world is the end of unrighteousness or of worldliness as we know it, and this will be brought about by ‘the destruction of the wicked.’ When our world ends and the millennial era begins, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Lust, carnality, and sensuousness of every sort will cease, for it will be the end of the world.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 848.)

Thus, we see a new meaning with regard to the use of the word ‘wicked’ in scripture. In Joseph Smith Matthew we read:

“...what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?” JSM 1:4 (or end of the worldly).

With this new meaning of the word ‘wicked’ in mind, we now understand that, as stated by the Prophets, there will still be people of other religions living at the beginning of the millennium. By accepting the meaning expressed by president Joseph Fielding Smith, the destruction of the wicked will mean that all other religions will eventually fall by the way side and all will believe and follow the truth as it will be taught by Christ himself. In other words, the destruction of the wicked does not mean the evil people will be killed or annihilated, but actually means the good and honorable people, who remain after the plagues and calamities have destroyed the evil people, will ultimately accept the gospel. In other words, you might say the destruction of the wicked is the destruction of ignorance, which means truth will prevail.

Whenever you read the word ‘wicked’ in the scriptures, especially when it is used by the Lord, imagine that he may only be referring to people who have yet to accept the gospel, instead of thinking he is talking about people who are evil; then many verses may take on a new meaning for you; especially with regard to the importance of missionary work.

## **We Are Saved by Grace**

A favorite passage quoted by many protestant religionists:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

Members tend to argue this verse adding ‘after all we can do’ from 2 Nephi 25:23. However, the verse in 2 Nephi is being taken out of context because Nephi is referring to the law of Moses. He is speaking in reference to the fact that although Christ frees us, we still need to do the works of the law (of Moses) because of the commandments.

“And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses.

“And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his

people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.” Mosiah 13:27-28

It does not mean we are saved by works just as the law of Moses saved nobody. This verse in Ephesians is accurate as it stands. We are saved by grace and not by works. “...for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins.” (Alma 5:21). Had it not been for Christ’s atonement, nobody could have been saved and it is only because of his grace, in offering to endure the pains of all sin, and loving us enough to forgive us, that we are saved.

We quote various verses in James 2 in order to defend our cause that we need works to be saved yet James 2 never says works will save us but is referring to faith when he asks “can faith save him”. James is never talking about salvation but that you need works to justify your reward and not faith only. Therefore, we error in trying to discount Ephesians because we *are* saved by grace but we are judged and rewarded according to our works, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” (2 Timothy 1:9). Being saved means we can go to a kingdom of glory, but that salvation does not specify which kingdom. The Telestial kingdom is a kingdom of glory and salvation from outer darkness (“Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.” D&C 132:16-17). Thus, by his grace we will not spend eternity in outer darkness, but it is our works that will determine how far we may progress in the higher kingdoms of glory. Therefore, our argument is wrong and should extend it to, ‘we are saved by grace and rewarded according to our works.’

“The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God,

“And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation.” D&C 138:58-59

## Faith To Be Healed

Faith is a principal used commonly in our daily lives. When the phone rings you have faith that someone will be waiting to speak to you so you get up and answer it; you turn the key to your car because you have faith it will start; you walk to the store because you have faith it will be open. However, in all these instances there have been evidences that it might not be so. There have been times when we answered the phone and nobody was there, turned the key and it wouldn't start, went to the store and it was closed. Therefore, we don't know with certainty these things will follow our expectations so it is faith that moves us to action or to react in the manner we do. Still, more times than not, these things work the way we expect them to so we have faith.

Our Heavenly Father expects more from his children than the simple feats of faith where evidence is replete and could be considered knowledge. He expects us to have faith in the inordinate (“For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove—and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith.” Ether 12:30) such as the people of King Benjamin, who had faith that the atoning blood of Christ could be applied to them, and they could receive a remission of their sins, even before he came upon the earth:

“...O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

“And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them.” Mosiah 4:2-3

What tremendous faith to believe they could have their sins remitted when Christ had not even paid the price yet, even more so because he had not yet lived. That was an inordinate show of faith. Now we know Christ lived and died and paid for our sins so for us a remission of our sins does not require as much faith. However, Heavenly Father still expects us to show an inordinate amount of faith toward him and his principals.

When Christ, his apostles and even Joseph Smith went about doing the works of the Lord, they healed people-- now we tend to bless people. Joseph once told the Elders to go heal the people who were sick, but when they returned they reported the people were not



healed, declaring only that they had blessed the people. Joseph was angered because he told them to heal the people, not bless them. He then went and healed the people himself.

“Brother Joseph, while in the Spirit, rebuked the Elders who would continue to lay hands on the sick from day to day without the power to heal them. Said he: "It is time that such things ended. Let the Elders either obtain the power of God to heal the sick or let them cease to minister the forms without the power." Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret Book, 1985, page 254

The woman who spent all her money on doctors (who couldn't heal her), once she had faith to be healed, touched only the hem of Jesus' robe and was made whole (Mark 5:25-34). Of Asa it was recorded:

“And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.

“And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.” 2 Chronicles 16:12-13

This could have been gout, diabetes or a number of other diseases but whatever it was, because Asa went to the doctors to be healed instead of the Lord, he died. The Lord never told us, neither can you find any reference of scripture requiring us to have faith to bless--only faith to heal. Although there are dozens of scriptures and examples of faithful people being healed, because of one scripture set aside to those of little faith, “And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food, and that not by the hand of an enemy.” (D&C 42:43), we tend to rely on blessing our sickly members instead of healing them. We put the onus of faith for healing on the sick, who are weakened by their sickness, instead of having the faith ourselves to heal.

“And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed;

“And to others it is given to have faith to heal.” D&C 46:19-20

In the early years of the church, even women had the faith to heal and did so. They blessed their children and animals and those they blessed were made whole. It was these faithful people who (even without the priesthood, in the case of women) went about healing others; and it was these people who were told they lacked in faith, which culminated in their losing the law of consecration and many other blessings. If even their women went about with the faith to heal and were told they had little faith, then what about those of us who will

not even attempt to heal but only bless? When will we begin to show our faith to heal and stop relying solely on doctors or the sick to have faith to be healed? It is termed ‘the power of the priesthood’ for a purpose... to exercise that power to perform miracles when directed by the Spirit. If the members in the early days, who did not have ease of access to so much training by the leaders of the church as we have now, were healing and yet condemned for their lack of faith, how much more will we remain condemned who show but little faith by only going to church and living the simple admonitions we are given now, and not performing his miracles?

“...for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.” Moroni 7:37

“...They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey;” Alma 37:41

“And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief.

“And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one. For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God.” Moroni 10:24-25

Will we continue to bless without faith and bless that doctors will heal us or will we begin to exercise our faith and power in the Lord to work his miracles on our behalf?

“For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom;

“And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

“And to another, exceedingly great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

“And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles;

“And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things;

“And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits;

“And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;

“And again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues.

“And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.

“And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.

“And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.” Moroni 10:9-19

It is promised that all these gifts are given to us and the only thing that can stop them is unbelief. Even when Christ visited the Nephites he could not heal them until they had faith to be healed “...for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.” (3 Nephi 17:8). As he also mentioned about the Jews, “So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews; wherefore I could not show unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief.” (3 Nephi 19:35). We are to have faith and heal others that we may show forth his strength and power in the priesthood to heal, and not to simply bless without faith (“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” 1 Timothy 4:14). How does such a weak use of his priesthood power fit in the magnifying of one’s priesthood calling?

“And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned;

“And these signs shall follow them that believe—in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover;

“And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth.” Mormon 9:23-25

Here Moroni confirms; had we the faith to heal and believed in Christ, doubting nothing, he could confirm all his words through his Spirit. It is not that we need signs to believe but if we believe, signs would follow. Therefore, if you do not see the signs of the Lord working miracles around you then there is a need for increased faith in you and those around you, because they will follow his saints who believe and are anxiously engaged in his work.

There are varying degrees of faith. There was the woman who no doctors could heal, who had so much faith that she was healed by the simple touch of the Savior’s robe. Then you have the man who was blind who did not fully recovery at the Lord’s first attempt to heal him, whereby the Lord gave him further evidence before he had faith to heal:

“And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

“And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

“After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.” Mark 8:23-25

Thus we see the power of the priesthood is in the faith of the individual exercising it as well as those receiving of its blessing. Have faith to heal and say the words the Spirit directs even if the person lacks the faith to fully heal. You may be required to do something further as Jesus did before the man was healed. Jesus didn't give up because he knew the man could be healed and did something more to increase his faith to be healed. Do you ever ask a person if they believe they could be healed prior to giving a blessing? Do you do anything to try and increase their faith before a blessing?

A young missionary, serving in Ireland, met a man in Dublin with a severe speech impediment who asked for a blessing to help him with something he was suffering. Because of his impediment the missionary could not understand the infirmity. A few missionaries gathered around him and he gave a blessing. He felt the Spirit fill his soul with greater power than he was accustomed to during such occasions, whereby he said he felt constrained to speak His words. It was the first time he had blessed in this manner, but because of this impelling influence the missionary told the man, “In the name of Jesus Christ be healed.” He then felt impressed to further bless him that if he would do this and this, that his tongue would be loosed and he would be able to speak as other men. When the blessing was complete the man quickly arose rejoicing that he was healed from the ailment he had been experiencing. This missionary found out nearly two years later, the blessed man did as he was instructed in that blessing and his power of speech was given to him with such clarity that he had received a call to serve a mission.

Finally; after Jesus prayed for the Nephites and they were overcome with joy by his prayer (3 Nephi 17:17), he showed them something significant... the great love and tender emotion of a God, felt by the humble show of faith:

“...Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

“And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it...” 3

Nephi 17:20-21

Thus, we see that faith is not just a principle of power but a show of love and trust in our Lord. Your show of love and trust fills His soul with love and compassion even to the point He may weep with emotion on your behalf. It is this increase in faith, coupled with worthiness, that will help you to receive the revelations you need to embark on the path to

God. Healing others is a beautiful way to increase your faith and improve your ability to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit.

### **Will Evil People Have Praise of God?**

Some members look forward to the great reckoning when all their vengeance and retribution will be fulfilled by the Lord in showing the billions of people, in the world to come, the minute or trivial problems that were inflicted upon them by the wicked. They forget that many of these wicked people have been blinded by the evils of the world. Some of may have been so convinced their response was the best thing to do at the time, that they felt obliged to treat you bad because of the given situation. There may be those, too, who have desired to repent and wanted to become a friend, but because of their actions against you, are afraid to approach you, fearing your potential retribution. Timothy confessed:

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” 1 Timothy 1:13

What about the Timothys, Pauls, Alma the Youngers, sons of Mosiah, or you out there, who have endured the repentance process? Are we still to seek retribution for their evils perpetrated against us, who treated us poorly while not knowing the Lord or having received a manifestation of this Spirit? Jesus taught:

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

People blinded by the cloak of the adversary, who teaches them justice means evil can be inflicted for evil or for righteous intent; do evil works because they think it is the best path to take under the given situation, knowing no alternatives than that taught by the world. Before coming to the grace of our Lord and entering the waters of baptism, there was a young man who lived a life of violence and hurt many people because he was trained to do so by his father and felt compelled to solve his problems in this manner. When he learned of Christ and his alternatives to violence he was relieved and removed violence as an answer to volatile situations. What people didn't know (while he was inflicting his retribution), after beating up a child, he would go home, enter his room, then cry because of the damage he had done. He didn't want to hurt others but only did as he envisaged he was required to do. When shown an alternative, he repented and stopped his violent ways. Will the Lord still condemn him for the sins he inflicted when he knew no better, even though he had repented?

“...ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls.” Alma 17:11

We want revenge, the Lord wants joy. The Lord desires forgiveness we hope for punishment. The Lord wants love, but we are selfish, self-centered and full of self-indulgence. We are called to be patient in long-suffering while the Lord works with those who would inflict evil upon us, until they realize the error of their ways and come unto him. With patience and the willingness to endure the afflictions of men, he promises rewards. “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.” Proverbs 19:11. One must consider; how will they learn remorse, humility, guilt or whatever may be the lessons meant for them in this life, if the Lord were to stop them from hurting or afflicting us?

Even among our own members the Lord uses people who do evil works, at times, to fulfill his bidding and take upon them the responsibilities of the priesthood. Elder Bruce R. McConkie once stated that when called to be a general authority he had to repent of the many things he did as a lawyer. Of Newel K. Whitney the Lord said:

“Let my servant Newel K. Whitney be ashamed of the Nicolaitane band and of all their secret abominations, and of all his littleness of soul before me, saith the Lord, and come up to the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and be a bishop unto my people, saith the Lord, not in name but in deed, saith the Lord.” D&C 117:11

Brother Whitney had a few problems he needed to repent of when he was called to be a Bishop and of Peter the Lord said:

“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Luke 22:32

Peter, though called as an apostle, still needed to be converted. The Lord also said of the apostles living during Joseph’s time:

“And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name’s sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, and be ye faithful before me unto my name.

“And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.” D&C 112:12-13

If the men of the highest echelons in the church need to repent and be converted then is it not incumbent upon us to seek our own repentance and desire forgiveness? Several years ago

a man shared a story of a time his family were in a restaurant having a great time following a spiritual day they had experience at the temple when, then, Elder Thomas S. Monson came into the restaurant. What a glorious end to a perfectly spiritual day, they thought to themselves. However, when the father of the party approached Elder Monson, this father thought Elder Monson's reaction was rather indignant toward the family for accosting him when it was his time to relax and have a moment to himself. This family was so put-off by this exchange that he said, if Elder Monson ever became president they would leave the church. One can only hope those feeling dissipated before he became president and they have since forgiven him. We are all still human and subject to all manner of weakness and temptation.

What we don't understand is; the Lord wants us to forgive others not for him or for the guilty accused, but for you. When you forgive, the culprit no longer has power to harm you. While you are holding to all your desires of revenge, you are continually being hurt and harmed by the ill will and anger festering inside you. Instead of the guilty person being blamed, one would have to realize; you are punishing yourself by maintaining all that anger, hate, vindictiveness, etc.

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 19:18

Elder Marion D. Hanks said:

“What is our response when we are offended, misunderstood, unfairly or unkindly treated, or sinned against, made an offender for a word, falsely accused, passed over, hurt by those we love, our offerings rejected? Do we resent, become bitter, hold a grudge? Or do we resolve the problem if we can, forgive, and rid ourselves of the burden?

“...But not only our eternal salvation depends upon our willingness and capacity to forgive wrongs committed against us. Our joy and satisfaction in this life, and our true freedom, depend upon our doing so. When Christ bade us turn the other cheek, walk the second mile, give our cloak to him who takes our coat, was it to be chiefly out of consideration for the bully, the brute, the thief? Or was it to relieve the one aggrieved of the destructive burden that resentment and anger lay upon us?

“...In every case of sin this is true. Envy, arrogance, unrighteous dominion—these canker the soul of one who is guilty of them. It is true also if we fail to forgive. Even if it appears that another may be deserving of our resentment or hatred, none of us can afford to pay the price of resenting or hating, because of what it does to us. If we have felt the gnawing, mordant inroads of these emotions, we know the harm we suffer. . . .

“It is reported that President Brigham Young once said that he who takes offense when no offense was intended is a fool, and he who takes offense when offense was intended is usually a fool. It was then explained that there are two courses of action to follow when one is bitten by a rattlesnake. One may, in anger, fear, or vengefulness, pursue the creature and kill it. Or he may make full haste to get the venom out of his system. If we pursue the latter course we will likely survive, but if we attempt to follow the former, we may not be around long enough to finish it.” Ensign, Jan. 1974, pp. 20–21

Another thought: The labor of the Lord to forgive a repentant person will come easier when we can forgive them as well. Remember, you also have hope for forgiveness of your own failings. With respect to this hope, you may ask yourself, should the Lord forgive you or cater to the revenge desired by those you sinned against? “He who is without sin....”

Remember the parable of the prodigal son? Yes he did evil, but he repented and came back to his Father who frankly forgave him and loved him. The Father then had to go to the older brother who was, in some respects, the victim of the evils of his younger sibling. This loyal son would not be comforted or enter the presence of his Father and experience joy with other friends and family, because of his vindictive feelings toward his brother who offended him. The Father had to explain to the righteous son that it was good his sibling came back and we forgive him. He then assures his righteous son of his reward, that all he has left is now his. If, like the righteous son, you remain angry against those who have offended you, how will you be able to live with them in the kingdom of your Father after their repentance? This may be the punishment of the Lord-- not to destroy and bring shame upon his children but to glorify those who were worthy of so much more. The realization of sinners, that they could have been blessed as you have, may be punishment enough.

“And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.” D&C 88:32

Remember this parable of Jesus:

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

“And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

“But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.



“The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

“And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

“So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

“Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

“Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” Matthew 18:23-35

This parable teaches us that as the Lord will frankly forgive us because of his love and compassion, he expects us to do the same for others.

Does our Heavenly Father joy in the punishment or destruction of his children? No, “...As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...” (Ezekiel 33:11). His method is not to cast his children into a lake of fire and brimstone but to reward them all. Those who are willing to live according to his will or will be patient through their afflictions, will receive a greater reward. Wouldn't you be happier if, instead of punishing your children, you only had to reward them according to their faithfulness? As it states in D&C 88:32 above, God will reward all of us with all we are willing to receive. If you are not willing to receive afflictions then you will not receive the rewards of those afflictions. If you are not willing to endure the sacrifices of your time, talents, money, etc., for your service to others, then you will not receiving the rewards for those sacrifices. If you will not endure privations, injustice, malice, evil speaking

against you and all the evils this world can inflict upon you, you will not receive the rewards associated with that endurance.

Another verse, often overlooked, bears insight into the Lord's ideals, which many will not believe:

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” 1 Corinthians 4:5

Let us break down this verse starting with, ‘bring to light the hidden things of darkness’: Here the Lord's mysterious works are manifest in that; the time for judging will come, and when it does, the Lord will bring to light the things hidden in darkness or those things held in secret. Could it be, this will be a means of healing and helping others to forgive easier when they see those who were revered as holy had problems as well? Also, of those who did evil, find that others who did evil were forgiven; thus they can feel assured their sins can be forgiven also? “...and the truth shall make you free.” Yes the hidden evils may be shown but he will also show the hidden good or acts of righteousness. Remember when the Lord taught us how to pray and give alms? He said to do these things in secret and your Father would reward you openly, “That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:4). The Lord will show your secret works of righteousness as well as the secret intents of your heart.

Continuing with the next part of this verse: The Lord will also ‘make manifest the counsels of the hearts,’ meaning; the Lord will show everyone what your true intentions were. Many people suspect others do what they consider to be evil, out of spite, selfishness, pride or any other negative motive they can associate with a negative act. Even good deeds can be judged as evil when one believes the good deed was performed in hopes of a prosperous or selfish return. However, when you conduct an honest appraisal of why you do certain negative things, even evil people would reveal good intentions for the evil things they did. Even David understood the difference... how that, only some people offend purposefully, “...let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.” Psalms 25:3. Everyone can recall a time when they thought they were doing a grand gesture of good for someone, only to find they have unleashed the anger of this person because the outcome somehow hurt or went against the receiving person's expectations. (“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.” Proverbs 16:25”). For instance: A child wants to be helpful and make her mom happy while she frantically prepares

a dinner party. The child desires to surprise mommy by baking cookies while she showers and dresses for the party. The child's mind is filled with a joyful fantasy that she is being very helpful and this act would induce much love, gratitude and a big hug from mommy. Instead, mom walks into the kitchen to find a huge mess just before her guests are to arrive and reacts 'accordingly'. Another evil with good intentions may be; if one would steal food to provide for someone starving or malnourished. Further, there are some personality types who believe there is more good and integrity in telling a person he or she is fat and ugly. They believe someone needs to tell them the truth so they will do something to become more healthy and better looking in order to feel better about themselves. We, on the other hand, would judge this person as tactless, cruel and insensitive. Whatever the case may be, most people, when asked why they did something considered evil or bad, will have a positive and good intention behind more than probably 95% of everything they do. Thus, the Lord will make manifest the true intentions of our hearts so we will realize just how good and wonderful people really were. Hence we come to the final stage of the Lord's mysterious work.

Paul announces the Lord's true intention, "...and then shall every man have praise of God." ("...a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever." Psalms 111:10). Can you imagine all those people who have offended you receiving praise of God when you wanted retribution? Can you imagine Adolf Hitler receiving praise of God? Such a thought would seem blasphemous. People, however, do not know all of Hitler's history nor do they know the true intentions of his heart. Upon asking a close German friend why the German people followed such a 'truly evil person', he responded by telling many excellent things Hitler did to bring Germany out of a great depression and how he inspired many. He also revealed something quite shocking. When Hitler was young he attended LDS sabbath meetings (though he never joined the church) where he learned about fast Sunday. One of the programs Hitler initiated, when inaugurated into a position of power, was to institute a fast day once a month, for all of Germany, to help feed their poor. It is certain there will be many things he will have to answer for as well but when you consider what Isaiah said, "All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house." (Isaiah 14:18), Hitler may also have his own house just as Judas will receive a crown of glory according to D&C 29:12. Wouldn't it be a shame if you chose not to live in the mansion prepared for you, in your kingdom of glory, because you wouldn't live next to him or others you despised?

Please note: The use of Hitler in the example above was applied only because, Hitler has been associated as the most evil celebrity of our generation. The idea may be, if we can forgive the most evil person we know then we can forgive anyone anything and free ourselves from all hatred, prejudice or ill feelings. This ability could feed our joy and happiness in this life and may be our strength to do the Lord's work in the next.

When you take into consideration, "...and then shall every man have praise of God." and couple it with, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: (John 5:22) and the Son declaring, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." (John 8:15), then you may come to realize just how judgment and justice are likely to be imposed, especially when you consider how we, in some respects, will judge ourselves, as these verses depict:

"...Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame—mortality raised to immortality, corruption to incorruption—raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other—

"The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh.

"And so it is on the other hand. If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness.

"These are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil." Alma 41:4-7

"Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws?

"Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.

"For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you." Mormon 9:3-5

“But, O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit, which was spoken of by my father Mosiah.

“For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge.

“I say unto you, that there are not any among you, except children that have not been taught concerning these things, but what knoweth that ye are eternally indebted to your heavenly Father, to render to him all that you have and are; and also have been taught concerning the records which contain the prophecies which have been spoken by the holy prophets, even down to the time our father, Lehi, left Jerusalem;

“And also, all that has been spoken by our fathers until now. And behold, also, they spake that which was commanded them of the Lord; therefore, they are just and true.

“And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom’s paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved—

“I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples.

“Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.

“And now I say unto you, that mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment.” Mosiah 2:32-39

“The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.” Isaiah 49:20

“And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.” D&C 88:32

Could it be that Heavenly Father and Jesus will be spared the task of judging, but only show us what we did not repent of and leave us to judge ourselves and go to the place where we will feel most comfortable? It was Elder James E. Talmage who said, "...any man may enter the highest degree of the celestial kingdom when his actions have been such that he can feel at home there." Think of it this way: If you were in the middle of committing adultery then suddenly your spouse walked in... soon after your children also walked in followed by your parents, then neighbors, friends, the bishop, the stake president, the Prophet, then all the Prophets and holy men before him, and ultimately Jesus himself entered the room... would you want to be there? Would you wait around for Jesus to tell you, you don't belong among these righteous people or would he have difficulty catching you as you ran screaming in embarrassment to hide among the other adulterers and adulteresses?

"For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence." Alma 12:14

This may be why the Lord wants us to repent; because, although He can and has forgiven you, He knows you could not forgive yourself and you will not want to live with Him in the next life, under a consciousness of your guilt, which separation is the only pain He can experience. This is why He desires only to praise us and wants to show all His children in heaven all the sacrifices you have made and the love you have given and the good intentions of your heart, that all may feel about you the way He feels about you; that you may desire to live with Him, or in a higher kingdom, and feel worthy to do so.

"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

"All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live." Ezekiel 18:21-22

### **"Nobody's Perfect"**

This sectarian notion has erroneously entered the teachings of many members of the church, becoming the belief of most, and often quoted from the pulpit and Sunday school classes. In fact, it is wrong. There *are* perfect people and, not only could we strive to become such, we are actually commanded to be, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 18:13) as also Abraham was commanded to be perfect, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the

Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1). The scriptures state the following people were perfect:

“Because he (Seth) was a perfect man, and his likeness was the express likeness of his father, insomuch that he seemed to be like unto his father in all things, and could be distinguished from him only by his age.” D&C 107:43

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” Genesis 6:9

“And thus Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord; for Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and he walked with God, as did also his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” Moses 8:27 (This is particularly interesting when you consider that the curse continued through Ham yet it includes him as one who walked with God.)

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” Job 1:1,8

There is also reference to others who were perfect:

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:9-10

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Philippians 3:15

“... nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.” 2 Chronicles 15:17

We say Christ was the only perfect man, but in what? Was he the best cook? The top performer in the sport of his day? The best writer? Christ was the only man without sin because he always did the Father’s will, “...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.” (3 Nephi 11:11) and he was imbued with a portion of God in his genetics that gave him power to endure the atonement. However, even he never claimed to be perfect (or even good) until after his resurrection. Some people have accused him of evil actions and

even the Jews killed him because he broke many of their laws. He got angry (see Mark 3:5) he took corn from the field (not his) and broke the sabbath day (Luke 6:1) and some even claim that he committed suicide because he said of his life, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself...”. Yet through all of this he was without sin because he was fulfilling the Father’s will. “...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.” (3 Nephi 11:11). Thus, when we are fulfilling the Lord’s will, whatever we are doing when guided by the Spirit is not sin, even if we are called upon to kill Laban (1 Nephi 4:13), (see also D&C 132:36-37). It is said that Jesus ‘was made’ perfect, “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” (Hebrews 5:9). If Jesus *became* the author of eternal salvation after he was *made perfect*, then couldn’t we also desire to be *made perfect* by learning as he did? President Brigham Young said, “Joseph could not have been perfected, though he had lived a thousand years, if he had received no persecution.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:7). We also read of the spirits of just men made perfect in D&C 129:3,6. We tend to assume they were made perfect after they were dead, but we are told in several scriptures that the same spirit that lives within your tabernacle now will be the same that resides in the spirit world (see Alma 34:34). Therefore, those spirits of just men made perfect could have been made perfect in this life and not the other, as was Jesus.

Jesus also taught, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” (Luke 15:7). Does this not insinuate that there will be just persons, which need no repentance, who will enter into heaven? If they need no repentance, then could we not righteously presume they were perfect?

The scriptures are replete with passages calling us to be perfect and even showing us how this can be accomplished, as well as how close some of us may be already. Here are some of them:

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

“Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” 3 Nephi 12:48 (Has Christ ever asked us to do something we couldn’t?)

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40 (Are we not taught we can become like our master? When you become perfect you shall be.)



“The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.” Proverbs 11:5 (Why say ‘the righteousness of the perfect’ if there are no perfect people?)

“God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they could not be made perfect.” JST Hebrews 11:40 (Isn’t he speaking as though it is an accepted fact that we will become perfect and therefore, should endure sufferings?)

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” Matthew 19:21 (Why would Jesus tell him all he has left to do (to be perfect) if he could not become such?)

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

“That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim 3:16-17 (Does this not say the scriptures are given to teach us to be perfect?)

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” James 3:2 (If we offend not in word then our actions will not have to comply to our words keeping us from sinning in that instance.)

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Colossians 3:14

“... this also we wish, even your perfection.... Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13:9,11 (Why wish for something they couldn’t have? He is not teaching covetousness but his hope of what they could achieve.)

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.” Moroni 10:33 (Can it be spoken more plainly? When you repent and are forgiven of all your sins, you are sanctified and have become perfect or ‘holy, without spot’.)

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints...” Ephesians 4:11-12 (He provided an organized group of church leaders to not just serve and bless us, but to perfect us.)

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” Colossians 1:28 (Where did we go from “that we may present every man perfect” to “nobody’s perfect”?)

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1Peter 5:10 (God can and will make you perfect after you have suffered a while.)

“How many of you . . . are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow? How many of you, when you bow before your Heavenly Father in your family circle or in your secret places contend for these gifts to be bestowed upon you? How many of you ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to manifest Himself to you through these powers and these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges, without having any feeling upon the subject, without exercising any faith whatever; content to be baptized and be members of the Church, and to rest there, thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this? . . . . If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect.” President George Q. Cannon, *Millennial Star*, Apr. 1894, pp. 260–61

Therefore, yes we can become perfect and we must; but in what?

“And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.” D&C 88:125

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18

“... nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.” 2 Chronicles 15:17

“I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” Psalms 101:2

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him....” 2 Chronicles 16:9

“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.

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of

Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.” Moroni 10:32-33

“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:...” 1 Chronicles 28:9

“...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1

“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.” Moroni 10:32

“No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” JST 1 John 4:12

“...that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Colossians 4:12

“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.” Hebrews 13:21

“Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,

“And said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.” Isaiah 38:2-3

Please note that this is only a portion of the references requiring us to become, becoming and being perfect. As you can see, the bulk of the scriptures above follow ‘the Royal Law’ of love thy neighbor as thyself. Having a perfect heart or love is the most pronounced attribute in being perfect.

We can become perfect and there is a means by which you may know if you are perfect. The Lord, through several prophets, said no unclean thing can enter into his presence. That statement is accurate in respect of this life as well as the next. Therefore, anyone who has been in the presence of God was perfect at that time. We also know that at the time of our baptism we are perfect. What makes us perfect at the time of our baptism is that all of our sins are repented of and we are washed clean or forgiven of our sins. We are also told we are to repent before and not partake of the sacrament unworthily. Therefore, when you have repented of all your sins and you partake of the sacrament worthily, which is a renewing of your baptismal covenants, you are perfect in that moment. If you have not repented of your

sins then you should not have partaken of the sacrament. When the Lord forgives us our sins we are perfected. Therefore perfection is something you become and not something you necessarily are at all times; just as Joseph indicated when he said a prophet was a prophet when he was acting as such. Joseph and Sidney were perfect when they saw the vision we now have as section 76 of the Doctrine & Covenants yet Sidney later left the church.

Was Christ being perfect when he was throwing the money changers out of the temple? Answer yes or no it does not matter for either you can justify he was perfectly angry or you can say he did it in the spirit of love and therefore remained perfect while in that anger. Was Abraham perfect when he was raising the knife to slay his son? The simple answer is; they were doing the will of the Father so no sin was charged to them. The Lord judges our hearts, not our actions, and our hearts can be pure and perfected regardless of how others may judge our actions.

Because the Lord does not dwell in unholy temples, “the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell;” (Alma 34:36), ‘which temples ye are’ (1Corinthians 3:17), and neither will the Spirit dwell in unholy temples, “...yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24), whenever you feel the Spirit guiding you, inspiring you or testifying of the things you are saying, you are perfect in that moment because whether or not you asked for the forgiveness, he forgave you your sins and sanctified you before his Spirit could manifest himself to you (see James 5:15,20, Luke 7:47 and 1 Peter 4:8).

In perfecting yourself, do all things in love; even the spanking of your children (as Christ did the money changers at the temple) can be a loving experience if you are not doing so in anger and afterward you talk to them gently and give them a hug so they know you are not their enemy (D&C 121:43 “Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov’d, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;”). Remember God judges by the counsel of the hearts (1 Corinthians 4:5) so if your heart is pure your action thus becomes pure even if you have to kill Laban. Again, do all things in love and you shall become perfected in all things and your confidence will wax strong in the presence of God and then will he manifest all things to you-- even himself.

Hopefully you realize you have been perfect many times in your life and you may be so now, especially if you feel the Holy Ghost inspiring your thoughts while you are reading, praying or doing the works of the Lord. Therefore, the challenge is; how often and how long can you remain in this perfected state wherein the Lord can walk with you? Stop believing

and quoting the Luciferian mantra, “nobody’s perfect” because it is a lie and causes members to shy away from perfection instead of making it a goal to strive for and live by.

According to the philosophy above, here are some passages that may help one realize a path to perfection:

“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” James 5:20 (doing missionary work will hide a multitude of sins and thus perfect you).

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:8 (being charitable or having the pure love of Christ will cover a multitude of sins, thus perfecting you).

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” James 5:15 (using your priesthood or requesting the priesthood be used to heal you will cause a forgiveness of sins and thus perfect you).

“VERILY, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you—“ D&C 95:1 (endure chastening will perfect you).

“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Luke 7:47 (love will perfect you).

“Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen, because of their faith, and I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me, through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me.” 3 Nephi 19:28 (Faith or the showing of faith will purify you or sanctify you or perfect you).

“Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion...” D&C 121:45-46 (before the Holy Ghost manifests Himself, you must first be cleansed, forgiven of your sins, perfect, for no unclean thing can enter his presence therefore, if he is your constant companion, you are perfect).

When we are fulfilling the Lord’s will we are perfecting ourselves, and when we feel the Spirit we are close to the presence of the Lord. Since no unclean thing can enter into His

presence He forgives our sins perfecting us before His Spirit can be near us. Therefore, we are perfect when the Lord says we are perfect and he says this by manifesting his Spirit to us. Thus did Jesus state, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..." as you feel the Spirit you feel what it is like in the presence of the Father and if Jesus should appear to you, you would see as if you were in the presence of the Father. Therefore we are cleansed and sanctified whenever we feel the presence of the Holy Ghost and it is as if you were in the presence of the Father Himself. Therefore, be perfect, let the Holy Ghost direct you in everything you do and you will enter into the fulness of the joy of the Lord in this life and into his presence in the next.

(End of topic)

Hopefully, by now, you realize there is much more to learn and if you are not seeking answers to your own questions, you have now found something to question above that would hopefully cause you to search for inspiration. It is time to read and understand all of the scriptures and stop seeking only for proof to that which you already know and believe. It is time to move on to the third level of scripture study that you may learn as all prophets have before you. If you have begun to desire answers and learn more, then you will be open to believing the Lord can and will bless you with greater knowledge and understanding, and prepare you for his mysteries and further guidance. However, if you still do not see or feel the need to study further or strive for the path to God then you must realize that, not only do we need to be open to receiving further guidance, we are required to, and condemned until we do seek for the greater light and knowledge He promised to send us.

## Has Unbelief or Lack of Faith and Knowledge Condemned Us?

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke in a general conference regarding the church, as a people, being condemned because we were not living the principles of the Book of Mormon: ‘Unless we read the Book of Mormon and give heed to its teachings, the Lord has stated in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants that the whole Church is under condemnation: “And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.” (D&C 84:56.) The Lord continues: “And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written.” (D&C 84:57.)’ (April 5 1986 General Conference Sunday Morning- Cleansing The Inner Vessel). This awoke many to the reading of the Book of Mormon but have we lived its principles?

Did President Benson, or any Prophet since, lifted that condemnation? According to a few scripture passages we remain condemned, or limited in what the Lord will teach us, as a church and a people (though not necessarily as individuals):

“Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!” 2 Nephi 28:27

“And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace;

“And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;

“And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John.” D&C 93:12-13, 18

We still have not received the fulness of the record of John which, according to the Lord in verse 18, would mean that we have not been faithful.

“Behold, I say unto you, my son, that because you did not translate according to that which you desired of me, and did commence again to write for my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., even so I would that ye should continue until you have finished this record, which I have entrusted unto him.

“And then, behold, other records have I, that I will give unto you power that you may assist to translate.” D&C 9:1-2

So where are the ‘other records’ that Oliver was to ‘assist to translate’ after he finished helping Joseph finish translating the Book of Mormon?

“But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them.

“And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel.” 1 Nephi 14:25-26

Apparently, many prophets have seen the last days and have written what they saw but we have none of their writings save John’s (the book of Revelations) and his words were corrupted by the great and abominable church (1 Nephi 13:25,40).

“For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.

“And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ...” Ether 4:6-7

We still have not received the things which the brother of Jared saw, and according to the Lord in verse 7, this would mean we have not been faithful.

“And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

“And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

“Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.” 3 Nephi 26:9-11

According to Mormon, as we have not received the greater things, we are under condemnation. Also, according to the Lord, our faith is being tried but we have not believed or lived the principles of the Book of Mormon, otherwise we would have received these greater things written on the plates of Nephi. President Joseph Fielding Smith discoursed on how the general Church membership contributed to the failure of the Saints to have these records today:

“It is possible that some of them might have been translated had the people received the Book of Mormon with full purpose of heart and had been faithful to its teachings. This



was the promise the Lord made through Mormon. He said he would try the faith of the people and if they were willing to accept the lesser things (i.e., the Book of Mormon) then he would make known to them the greater things. That we have failed in this is very apparent, we have not accepted the revelations in the Book of Mormon, neither in the Doctrine and Covenants, with that faith and willingness to know the will of the Lord which would entitle us to receive this greater information.

“...the people have lost the privilege of receiving the ‘greater things’ spoken of by the Lord to Mormon until the day shall come when they are willing to be obedient in all things and will exercise faith such as was had by the brother of Jared.” Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:52–53

For those who may think we had received the greater things, because of many wonderful revelations found in the Doctrine & Covenants, then you must consider these two facts: 1. Mormon was referring to writings on the plates of Nephi, which we still do not have, and 2. The Prophet would not have told us we were under condemnation.

According to Alma, if we will diligently study and live the laws he has given, then, individually, we can still receive his mysteries even if the members as a whole will harden their hearts:

“And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

“And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

“And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.” Alma 12:9-11

There are many members of the church individually receiving the mysteries of the Lord though they don't boast of it but keep them close to their heart. The purpose of this book is to help you also receive revelations and mysteries. Hopefully you are learning how to receive his mysteries individually because we as a people and as a church are apparently condemned and cannot receive all his revelations as of yet. Deductive reasoning, based on this chapter,

would suggest that too many of us are not faithful and living the principles he has given thus far.

“...Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews.

“For I, Nephi, have not taught them many things concerning the manner of the Jews; for their works were works of darkness, and their doings were doings of abominations.

“...for because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy. ...

“...and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.” 2 Nephi 25:1-2, 4-5

Nephi testifies that the words of Isaiah are plain to all who read them with the spirit of prophecy. This is a true statement, but there have been a few jokes floating around the church about the difficulty of getting through 2 Nephi or understanding the words of Isaiah. One such joke hinged on a soldier whose life was purportedly saved when a bullet hit the Book of Mormon held in his pocket. The bullet apparently went so far as to indent a verse in 2 Nephi and the narrator of the story said, “See, even a bullet can’t get through 2 Nephi.” Yet Nephi states that those filled with the spirit of prophesy can read it plainly. Should all the saints read the Book of Mormon with the spirit of prophesy they would understand all mysteries and all knowledge for the Lord would reveal to you those mysteries hidden within the scriptures.

“...Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” Matthew 13:11-12

Here then lies the challenge; are you receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, or is that knowledge you once learned on your mission fading? For those of us less diligent, we must endure the chastening hand and more ominous words of the Lord regarding our treating his word lightly:

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

“As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.” Hosea 4:6-7

“dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” Ether 12:6

“ ... for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.” Moroni 7:37

Are you seeing miracles or the administration of angels in your life? According to Moroni, if you truly believed, you would have these experiences or see them first hand. As it also states in D&C 63:9 “But, behold, faith cometh not by signs, but signs follow those that believe.” Therefore, if we have faith and live the principles given us thus far (including being actively involved in the works of the Lord), signs would follow us.

“And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received” D&C 84:54

“Wherefore, I, the Lord, am not pleased with those among you who have sought after signs and wonders for faith, and not for the good of men unto my glory.” D&C 63:12

“And the time speedily cometh that great things are to be shown forth unto the children of men;

“But without faith shall not anything be shown forth...” D&C 35:10-11

“For all flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men, in the presence of all the hosts of heaven—

“Which causeth silence to reign...” D&C 38:11-12

“It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.” D&C 131:6

If we, who have access to such an elevated level of knowledge and wisdom (when compared to the world), are not receiving the further light and knowledge of the Lord, at what level will we be saved,?

"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." History of the Church, 5:588

It is incumbent upon each of us to live the principles given us in the Book of Mormon that we may receive of his greater knowledge. “I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.” (Psalms 119:100). It is then imperative that we seek the further light and knowledge he promised to send us through the revelations given to assist us. If this sounds

like work, then understand that the joy which will come to you may be the greatest experience you have ever worked for throughout your life.

## **The Lord Has Held Back Certain Knowledge for *Those Only, Who Are Prepared to Receive It***

The Lord desires all His children to learn all His will and understand all His mysteries. However, it may appear to most that His mysteries are unobtainable or the Lord keeps them, to a great extent, hidden. Why? When the Lord gives us knowledge we must live it (“Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.” D&C 132:3), otherwise we are outright rebelling against God (“...to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17). Therefore, as a means of not losing many of His children, (“After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me.” 2 Nephi 31:14) the Lord limits the responsibility of weak spirited people by giving them only as much understanding as they can live up to (“For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have;” Alma 29:8), or they must bear the ramifications, requirements or expectations associated with greater understanding (“And now, how much more cursed is he that knoweth the will of God and doeth it not, than he that only believeth, or only hath cause to believe, and falleth into transgression?” Alma 32:19). Thus, by limiting their knowledge (“Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come.” D&C 25:4), he can show mercy to those who didn’t know they were sinning (“And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:47-48) and His love for them will allow them to return to Him in as high a kingdom as they would be willing to enjoy (“And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.” D&C 88:32).

Jesus helped us to realize this position when he said the following to the Nephites:

“Write the things which ye have seen and heard, *save it be those which are forbidden*.

“Write the works of this people, which shall be, even as hath been written, of that which hath been.

“For behold, out of the books which have been written, and which shall be written, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men.

“And behold, all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written shall the world be judged.” (Italics added) 3 Nephi 27:23-26

Jesus first forbade them to write certain things and then told them they shall be judged by those thing that were written, removing the responsibility for them (us) to live by that which was not written.

This is akin to that which was stated in Mosiah 8:13 or a means by which we can better understand Mosiah’s words here, “....And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish....” It is not that the Lord would kill you if you looked through them without permission; it means the person looking through the Urim and Thummim would see or learn things that they were not ready for or which they could not live up to and would thus condemn themselves.

With limited knowledge comes limited responsibility. “Wherefore, he has given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement; for they are delivered by the power of him. For the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell...” (2 Nephi 9:25-26). Thus, their sins will not keep them from salvation because the atonement will have power to save them.

This is why *the Lord* has created so many religions, “We believe that religion is instituted of God...” (D&C 134:4), “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6), and gave various levels of understanding to one people over another, “For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have;...” (Alma 29:8), and why he told the missionaries in Joseph’s

time, “And let the residue take their journey from St. Louis, two by two, and preach the word, not in haste, among the congregations of the wicked, until they return to the churches from whence they came.” (D&C 60:8). Why would the Lord want them to preach to the congregations (churches) of the wicked (unbelievers) ‘until they return to the churches from whence they came’ (their churches), if He expected them to come to our church and accept the full gospel? unless He knew they would not accept it all and they would be condemned, not being able to abide by the responsibilities therein “...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13). Even when Christ visited the spirit world he did not show himself to the wicked, ungodly, rebellious and unrepentant (D&C 138:20-21). Why? Because they still have an opportunity to undo their guilt and show faith in our beloved Christ who paid for their sins. Were he to appear to them, it would remove their agency to accept or deny him because they would know who he was. Therefore, they would never have faith in his redemption, and there would be no forgiveness if they denied him because it would be outright rebellion against him making them sons and daughters of perdition to be cast out with the devil and his angels (D&C 138:32-37).

This does not mean, however, that they will be joining you in the Celestial Kingdom of God, “It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.” (D&C 131:6). Those who cannot live all his will and accept all his commandments will be remanded to a lower kingdom of glory (D&C 88:22-24). Those who have proven they will live the principles they have received thus far, will begin to receive the further light and knowledge He promised to give us, “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.” D&C 130:19). He will then give a little more and see if you will live it and when you do he will give more and continue until you stop living that which you have received or until you have received all his mysteries and become perfected. The more you receive, the more you will be blessed and the higher you will rise toward the glory of God, becoming as He is and living as He lives.

There are those who think there will be a time when the Lord will magically change them and make them a god without having to learn or go through the trials associated with overcoming evil and choosing good. Brigham Young taught, “All the Lord has called us to do is to renovate our own hearts, then our families, extending the principles to neighborhoods, to the earth we occupy, and so continue until we drive the power of Satan from the earth and Satan to his own place. That is the work Jesus is engaged in, and we will be co-workers with

him. Do not suppose that we shall ever in the flesh be free from temptations to sin.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 10:173). God will never force you to choose good over evil or make you live a godly life when you show a propensity toward evil, “Therefore, O my son, whosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come;...” (Alma 42:27). Those who choose not to learn or receive more, condemn themselves because as was quoted above, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge...”. Once lead to the path of knowledge it is our responsibility to stay on that road and continue to progress, for if we falter, then is when we condemn ourselves and stop progressing toward living a godlike life. Then is when the Lord’s admonitions come into play whereby we must repent or suffer as he suffered (D&C 19:15-19).

Below are some interesting statements, which teach us why the Lord limits what he gives us:

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld.” D&C 70:14

As the Lord said regarding Alvin (Joseph's brother) those "who would have received it with all their hearts" will be saved in the celestial kingdom of God; so those who have desires to live according to the law of consecration (who would if it were available) and are charitable, can still receive the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit as mentioned in the verse above.

“And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you.” Mormon 8:12

Though Moroni lived among the most wicked of the Nephites and watched their utter destruction, yet he rose above all the peer pressure, temptations and sin, learning all the mysteries of God and, if permitted, would loved to have taught them all. So we, living amongst the greatest level of peer pressure and sin, being thrown in our faces via TV, radio, movies, internet, newspaper, magazines and advertising, yet we too can rise above it all and receive all the mysteries of God.

“I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdom manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.” History of the Church 5:402



Like Moroni above, Joseph Smith also learned much more than he shared and would loved to have taught us were we prepared to receive.

“This doctrine, this doctrine of the priesthood—unknown in the world and but little known even in the Church—cannot be learned out of the scriptures alone. It is not set forth in the sermons and teachings of the prophets and Apostles, except in small measure.

“The doctrine of the priesthood is known only by personal revelation. It comes, line upon line and precept upon precept, by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who love and serve God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength.” The Doctrine of the Priesthood Elder Bruce R. McConkie Ensign, May 1982 issue

This was in reference to D&C 121:45 and Elder Bruce R. McConkie was speaking from personal experience what ‘the doctrine of the priesthood’ is and letting us know how we too can learn it as he did— “only by personal revelation.”

If you lack the desire to progress toward the Lord then he will limit your level of understanding to protect you from utter destruction. But know also that this is limiting your progression in the eternal world. If you limit your progression you will find yourself in the torment of hell referred to in the scriptures.

Several years ago there was a lottery in California where, if you won, you could spin a wheel and win from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on the position where the wheel stopped. A large woman spun the wheel and it just barely held on the peg making her the winner of \$1,000,000. In her excitement she jumped up and down several times while screaming in elation. Along with the roar of the audience, the vibrations caused the wheel to turn a fraction more and it moved to the \$10,000 prize. Later, in a news release announcing that she would sue the show, she was quoted as saying she felt deflated. Would you feel deflated if someone just handed you \$10,000 with little to no effort on your part to earn it? Nevertheless, knowing she could have received 100 times more left her devastated and so angry that she would sue. This is a type of the hell we who knew better, but chose selfishness or evil instead, will experience. You will not be magically changed into a god. You must go through the process of learning all that the gods know and develop as they have to become one yourself, and you will get there no faster than you put forth the effort and desire to do so, whether in this life or the next.

## Two Development Cycles

The Lord helps us to progress line upon line, precept upon precept even as He did:

“And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace;

“And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;

“And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first.” D&C 93:12-14

The encouragement of Christ is:

“Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.” D&C 67:13

This is our lot; to be patience and continue to endure the wiles of the adversary while we learn those things necessary to perfect our souls, until we receive the ministering of angles who will teach us all we need to understand until we are able to abide the presence of God.

The first development cycle includes the preparation and primary development stage. The preparation stage teaches us all the basics of the gospel. This stage helps us to know the importance of reading the scriptures, learning from the Prophets, how to exercise our priesthood and be good and honorable people. It is the juncture by which we are taken out of the world and put on the path toward God. During this process we meld into the development stage by our continued efforts to progress. While in the development stage we are assisted and encouraged by scripture, members and leaders as well as a limited level of the Holy Ghost. We take upon us covenants and strive to overcome the devil. We are the rough stone rolling down a hill, being smoothed by the various collisions of other rocks and roughness around us. Each time we endure a collision it knocks a piece of the roughness off. This is learning line upon line and it will continue until we are sufficiently smooth to enter the next phase of development. The smoothing process can be a very long process indeed. The spiritual manifestation of this process was beautifully expressed by Mormon:

“And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins;

“And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.” Moroni 8:25-26

After you have reached the point in your development where you have perfected your soul, when you are near ready to dwell with God, then you are prepared to enter the godly development stage far surpassing that which the world and most members understand. It is then you are placed on the path to God. This path is traversed much faster than the preparation/development stages:

“Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.” D&C 121:45-46

There is much beauty and greatness held within those two verses. They entail what we believe our spiritual reward will comprise of in the next life; yet, again we error in our belief as these verses too, are a depiction of the glory that can be ours, in *this life*. It is also a manifestation of what we can develop to in the next life, should we not accomplish that glory in this life. However, you will still need to learn the same lessons in the next life before you can progress to this glory, which will take much longer because you won't have direct evil to help you see the path so clearly.

The direct path to God is a straight course, however, there are other paths filled with intrigue and temptation like a maze having many paths. As you walk the course of the maze there are many influences enticing you to take one path or another.

“The adversary tries to smother this voice with a multitude of loud, persistent, persuasive, and appealing voices: murmuring voices that conjure up perceived injustices, whining voices that abhor challenge and work, seductive voices offering sensual enticements, soothing voices that lull us into carnal security, intellectual voices that profess sophistication and superiority, proud voices that rely on the arm of the flesh, flattering voices that puff us up with pride, cynical voices that destroy hope, entertaining voices that promote pleasure seeking, commercial voices that tempt us to “spend money for that

which is of no worth” and our “labor for that which cannot satisfy” (2 Ne. 9:51), and delirious voices that spawn the desire for a “high.”

“I refer not to a drug- or alcohol-induced high but to pursuing dangerous, death-defying experiences for nothing more than a thrill.” The Ensign, April 1994,p.7 “The Voice of the Spirit” Elder James E. Faust

At the entrance of each path are sprites coercing you to follow them, telling you this is the true path which leads to happiness found in pleasure. Each path offers various levels of pleasure, including lusts, revenge, ease, violence, acceptance, abundance, loftiness and gratification of the senses (“Folly *is* joy to *him that is* destitute of wisdom:...” Proverbs 15:21). As people are enticed to meander along these paths, they first learn the worldly pleasures associated with each path. If they continue along these paths for an extended period of time, they will eventually arrive at their dead end. Some will think this is all they need for happiness and remain on that path. Others will realize the emptiness and lack of progress found on that path and choose to return. In order to return they must fight through the crowd of people (evil spirits) and substance that guided them along that path. As they do they gain strength, overcome evil and learn lessons along with godly attributes. When they get back to the godly path they continue for a little while until they are enticed to enter another path. If they choose to overcome that path they return again to the godly path. There are many paths and man is given his agency to go up and down, in and out of any path he chooses. We continue through the maze until we find a path we are happy with and desire to go no further. If we never give up and become complacent or accepting of a particular path, we will eventually find or relinquish the desire for other paths and continue only on the path to God.

Think of this process as a maze of bushes where the entrance to the maze is joining the church and the exit leads to the highest degree of our Heavenly Father’s Kingdom. While in this maze you venture into roads that lead to nowhere and abate your progress. When you come to a dead-end you turn back through the maze (repent and no longer follow the temptations that led you to that path) until you find an alternate turn. As you go back you recognize where you’ve been before. Knowing the paths that lead to a dead end, you continue back until you find a path untraveled, hoping this will be the one.

In this world, evil is all around us and we can see it plainly as you would the walls of bushes and dead ends in a maze. In this life, when we choose the path of evil, we can also see the result (dead-ends) of its outcome. If you read pornographic materials, you will eventually feel it engulf and imprison you, driving your thoughts and actions to various stratum of unhappiness and weakness. The same is true if you try drugs or any chemical that impairs

your mind. When you steal, lie, backbite or do any of the basic evils of the world, you feel guilt and are captured by evil influences and must learn to overcome or remove yourself from that path. In this maze you learn the unhappiness which comes from the paths of anger, greed, lies, sloth, selfishness, etc. If you traverse far enough and overcome the sins of commission, you will then come to the paths of forgetting (sins of omission); forgetting to say thank you, forgetting to call someone you haven't seen at church for a while, forgetting to pray *intently*, forgetting to be a peacemaker, forgetting to forgive, forgetting to love your enemies, etc. Because you see the results (dead-ends or blocked progress) or ramifications of the evil paths, when you overcome them they teach you the godly attributes of tolerance, compassion, selflessness, patience, virtue, love, etc., (“Some were lifted up in pride, and others were exceedingly humble; some did return railing for railing, while others would receive railing and persecution and all manner of afflictions, and would not turn and revile again, but were humble and penitent before God.” 3 Nephi 6:13) which we must learn before we can enter the presence of God.

“And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:” Isaiah 30:20

“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee:...”  
Jeremiah 2:19

If you don't make it to the end of the maze in this life, when you go to the next life, you will find yourself there, at that same point in the maze where you advanced to in this life. You will find there is more to overcome and further progression necessary, however, the visible walls of evil are gone so the maze becomes transparent glass wherein you'll find it is much more difficult to see the walls and recognize where you have been. “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.” D&C 130:19). Therefore, it is with increased difficulty you strive to progress because evil is not there for you to see its guiding influences. In the next life there is no fear of death, lack, malicious evil, judgmentalness, sickness, fear, depression, anxiety and so forth. Also, everyone will then know there is an afterlife and those who did not believe here will realize their error and finally be open to truth. There may still be evil spirits there (according to Joseph Smith) but their range of influence will be greatly limited. The way the maze becomes transparent in the next life is because people there will not react to your foibles as they would have in this life.

Therefore, if you say something harsh to someone, they will not react as hurt or discomfited, and due to their lack of reaction you will not recognize the error of your harsh tones and thus not overcome your evil speaking. If you take beyond what you need, others will be willing to sacrifice for you saying nothing and thus your greed or gluttony will not be so apparent, which will make it more difficult and take longer to overcome. If you are proud and desire attention, you will get it and nobody will put you in your place. Thus, you won't recognize your pride so readily, increasing the difficulty to overcome.

The Lord has an instruction manual or path of knowledge that entails all we need to know to traverse this path to godhood. Think of this path as an assembly line for building an automobile. There is no skipping certain sections nor are there areas of non-importance. Would it be a heavenly car if it were missing a steering wheel or a tire? What about a seat or power window button? We are assembling a god/goddess and we need all the parts entailed in that object before we will become one. Can you expect the Lord to make you a heavenly car when you are lacking the parts? Even Christ's atonement does not deter from this path but only allows people to remain on it. This life is the fast track to that assembly (knowledge). We have the choice to learn it all in less than 70 years by overcoming evil and choosing love, charity and exaltation in this life, or spend potentially thousands of years in the spirit world learning it. It is safe to say that you will not become a god/goddess until you have assembled every part, or learned everything within that book which entails all godly attributes; not only to understand them but to live them (including love your enemies, purify your thoughts, perfect your love, forgive all for everything, etc.).

Something unique about this maze, whether in this life or the next, if you get bored, tired, weak etc., and decide you want to stop, you can. You are never forced (Alma 42:27) to go further than your desires and strength will take you. Furthermore, when you come to a dead end and find you are comfortable with this path or enjoy it and don't want to continue further, you can remain there. In the end you will find at each dead-end there is a hidden door through which you will find your kingdom and reward awaiting you based on how far you've come through this maze, "And they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received." (D&C 88:32). You will receive joy and rejoicing at every level but that joy will be limited if you've never entered the paths that taught you the godly attributes of faith, love, joy, peace, tolerance, patience, virtue, work, spirituality, or the elation of God's presence. Your hell will be to realize there was so

much more within your reach but your selfishness, laziness, greed, lustfulness etc., kept you from obtaining it.

“For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.

“And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory.

“And he who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory;...” D&C 88:22-24

“...any man may enter the highest degree of the celestial kingdom when his actions have been such that he can feel at home there” Elder James E. Talmage, (Hugh B. Brown, Seek to Know the Shepherd [Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, 9 Dec. 1959], p. 5)

“I can think of no blessings to be more fervently desired than those promised to the pure and the virtuous. Jesus spoke of specific rewards for different virtues but reserved the greatest, so it seems to me, for the pure in heart, ‘for they,’ said he, ‘shall see God’. And not only shall they see the Lord, but they shall feel at home in his presence.” President Marion G. Romney, Ensign, 1979, p. 42

That hell will be to know you have given up or limited yourself when others, who have endured more paths and continued to struggle to find the ultimate kingdom, have received much more joy and pleasures forever more (Psalms 16:11). Remember the prodigal son who spent his inheritance on the pleasures of this life; when he returned to his father, he received the blessings of being a little more than a servant in the house of his father, but the son who remained faithful inherited all that his father had.

This new revelation could help you appreciate evil more in this life which alludes to the revelation spoken of in the section above on “Who Created Evil”. It is this understanding that will help us to finally overcome Satan and his evil influences because once you understand how the Lord uses him to help us overcome (“And if it so be that they (Nephi’s seed) rebel against me, they (the Lamanites) shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance.” 1Nephi 2:24) then you realize he is no longer to be feared. Therefore when evil happens, you know it is only helping you to overcome some weakness or lack of faith in this life and is directing you back to the path toward God. This is because, as Isaiah teaches in the verse above, ‘the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction’ (evil) are the teachers you can see. Adam and Eve discovered the great teacher (evil) and stated:

“...Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

“And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.” Moses 5:10-11

“And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

“And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

“But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. 2 Nephi 2:22-25

Remember, Joseph said, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world...” (History of the Church, 5:588). You cannot enter the presence of the Father until you learn all godly attributes because no unclean thing can enter his presence. If you don't learn godly attributes in this life then you will struggle to learn them in the next, which means it will take you longer to be saved.

In saying that evil is the great teacher, that does not mean it is something to honor or cherish. Evil is still negative and something we need to overcome but if we appreciate it for its ability to teach and help us to grow and become stronger and more firm in our commitment to the Lord, then we will fear it less and be able to forgive easier, become less judgmental, and more loving.

In striving to understand the path to God process, entailed in D&C 121:45-46, we must first understand these verses in the context to which they are given. Surprisingly, they are seldom quoted and when they are, they are never explained in their entirety but picked apart. People use these verses to teach charity, virtuous thoughts, confidence in God, to not use compulsory means, but they are not taught in the context in which they are given. From verse 34 on, in section 121 of the Doctrine & Covenants, the Lord was teaching about the proper use of the priesthood; when it is to be used, and for what purpose, as well as its improper uses. Therefore it is referring to the culminating aspects of using your priesthood aright.



When used correctly, you begin receiving revelations, which will turn you, your life and understanding, into a new creature. You will then advance from the development structure found in Moroni 8:25-26 (the path toward God) to this stage, which is none other than the path to God or the path to having your calling and election made sure.

Once you have been true and faithful in all things pertaining to the priesthood and the magnifying of your calling, you then move on to purification, sanctification and perfection whereby you will enter the Lord's presence having your calling and election made sure, which is what Joseph Smith said we should all be striving for:

“After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, ‘Son, thou shalt be exalted.’ When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John....

“Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and the substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions--Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the Saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.” Teachings pp 150-151

The path to this process seems abbreviated in D&C 121:45-46 but once you are prepared, this process does move very quickly. It starts by being full of charity (or having the pure love of Christ) toward all men (even enemies), and finally having control over all your thoughts making them virtuous continually, you will then be prepared to enter the Lord's presence. By your virtuous thoughts (or giving up your will to the Lord and thinking or judging only in loving modulations as He would) you will grow in faith with a sure confidence that the Lord will answer your prayers because the Holy Ghost will instruct you how to pray and teach you His will. At this juncture the Lord will visit you and teach you the doctrine of the priesthood

or the fullness of the knowledge of God, and His mysteries will be unfolded to you as the dews (manna as that which was given to nourish the children of Israel, which came without effort on their part) from heaven. Elder Bruce R. McConkie had this to say about ‘the doctrine of the priesthood’:

“This doctrine, this doctrine of the priesthood—unknown in the world and but little known even in the Church—cannot be learned out of the scriptures alone. It is not set forth in the sermons and teachings of the prophets and Apostles, except in small measure.

“The doctrine of the priesthood is known only by personal revelation. It comes, line upon line and precept upon precept, by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who love and serve God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength. (See D&C 98:12.)

“...It is that priesthood is the very name of the power of God, and that if we are to become like him, we must receive and exercise his priesthood or power as he exercises it.

“It is that he has given us an endowment of heavenly power here on earth, which is after the order of his Son and which, because it is the power of God, is of necessity without beginning of days or end of years.

“It is that we can enter an order of the priesthood named the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:2), named also the patriarchal order, because of which order we can create for ourselves eternal family units of our own, patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father.

“It is that we have power, by faith, to govern and control all things, both temporal and spiritual; to work miracles and perfect lives; to stand in the presence of God and be like him because we have gained his faith, his perfections, and his power, or in other words the fulness of his priesthood.

“This, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood, that which there neither is nor can be anything greater. This is the power we can gain through faith and righteousness.

“Truly, there is power in the priesthood—power to do all things!

“If the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements.

“If one-third of the hosts of heaven were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can put at defiance the armies of nations or stay the fall of atomic bombs.

“If all men shall be raised from mortality to immortality by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can cure the diseased and the dying and raise the dead.” The Doctrine of the Priesthood Elder Bruce R. McConkie Ensign, May 1982 issue

There is a culminating effect for those who live their priesthood to its full extent:

“For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course;

“To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.

“And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven.” JST Geneses 14:30-32

At this point you will receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost wherein he is made a constant companion (having your calling and election made sure). There are 3 levels of the Holy Ghost: 1. He bears testimony of the truth. 2. You receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost which means he is there to help you whenever you are true and faithful to the covenants you have made and are doing the work of the Lord in its various facets. Elder Orson Pratt taught “...whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a spiritual gift. A person who is without a spiritual gift has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some spiritual gift. . . .” (*Masterful Discourses*, pp. 539–41). 3. You received *the fulness of the Holy Ghost* which means he becomes your constant companion and he will direct you in all things you do and say.

“And do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house . . . may grow up in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 109:14–15). The “fulness of the Holy Ghost” includes what Jesus described as “the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son” (D&C 88:4–5).” *The Power of Covenants* Elder D. Todd Christofferson- Note 5

“And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness.

“And that they may grow up in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost, and be organized according to thy laws, and be prepared to obtain every needful thing;” D&C 109:13,15

“Whosoever is born of God doth not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that holy Spirit of promise.” JST 1 John 3:9

When you receive the Holy Spirit of promise (Christ) and the Holy Ghost becomes your constant companion, then will your sceptre (a sceptre is the item given to rulers showing their authority and rule over a country or government) be an unchanging sceptre of righteousness and truth, or you will know how to rule as God does, in total righteousness:

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

“They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

“They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—

“They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

“Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—

“Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” D&C 76:53-56, 58-59

Then your dominion (which is God’s dominion) shall be yours forever and nothing shall take it from you as is referred to in D&C 132:26. Then will you have a continuation of glory or live as God lives in His dominion where ‘without compulsory means it shall flow unto you forever’, which is the way God rules His kingdom; He does not force anyone to live his way of life. Even of the Gods, who were building the earth, it is said, “And the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed.” Abraham 4:18. The Lord does the same with us, He gives commands then waits until we obey before He can progress us. You also will no longer force anyone to love or respect you but they will eventually discover for themselves that your way (which will be the same as all of the Gods’ way) is the only one which brings about joy and rejoicing for all and they will eventually love you for your plan of happiness as you will *eventually* love your Father’s.

## Receiving Revelation/Mysteries

To this point we have ventured into a preparatory mindset that can awaken you to the potential of new discovery. You should now realize the scriptures and the Prophets have not taught you all they know. You should understand there are things purposely omitted, hidden or perplexing within the scriptures, designed to persuade you to question what you've read, whereby you would open-mindedly seek revelation. You should also realize the Lord holds us under condemnation because we will not seek further knowledge or strive to live all that we have now. You should know too, that God will not force you to learn at all or faster than you choose. If you can accept what you have read thus far, then it shouldn't be difficult for you to believe the Lord has revelations in store for you leaving you only to know how they come to fruition.

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

“If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

“Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

“For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

Proverbs 2:3-6

Of the two development cycles listed above, ‘the path to God’ is travelled only by revelation. For one seeking further light and knowledge, it is a natural experience to receive revelations. In order to receive these revelations one must be actively striving to fulfil the Lord's mission here on earth. Therefore, most of our revelations will come when we are either engaged in missionary work, fulfilling the work for our kindred dead, magnifying our callings, studying, pondering or we are actively involved in a good cause.

The majority of the Doctrine & Covenants was revealed because Joseph Smith was striving to understand scripture and organize the Lord's church in these latter days. He went to the Lord with questions and received many revelations. If we are not asking questions then where will our revelations come from? Hence the problem with the first and second methods of studying the scriptures. If you are reading, only to say you have read the scriptures or seek only for information that will cater to or defend your current beliefs, that is all you will receive; you will progress no further. In this state there is nothing for the Lord to reveal nor is anything expedient for you. When you read something that doesn't fit your beliefs (although it obviously fit the author's) then is there an opportunity to study it out in your mind and

ultimately receive revelations. “Therefore, be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin; and I will order all things for your good, as fast as ye are able to receive them.” (D&C 111:11). Can you be wise as serpents when you will only look for supporting information to what you already know? How are you able to receive any revelations from the Lord when you will not seek further than what you already have? “...Behold they were manifest unto the prophet by the voice of the Spirit; for by the Spirit are all things made known unto the prophets...” (1 Nephi 22:2). You have been given a few things to question in the chapter “Things We Don’t Teach, Haven’t Learned, Don’t Know” but there are many more you can discover when and if you are seeking to understand all of the words of the prophets and the will of the Lord.

Upon reading a news article about California’s Proposition 8 regarding same sex marriages, there was a statement from a member regarding a revelation he claimed to have received:

“Upon reading an article on California’s proposition 8 regarding making homosexual marriage legal and reading the many comments on the article, I pondered over these many arguments regarding the rights of gays and how this is not their fault, “they were made that way”. While pondering on the subject and wondering the Lord’s view on the same, the Lord enlightened my mind and gave me the following understanding:

“I give unto man weakness that he may be humble and unto one I give one weakness to another I give another that they may learn to overcome and be strengthened in me. To one is given the lust of money, to another the lust of lying, to another the lust of adultery, to another the lust of anger and to another the lust of the same gender and there are many other desires of men’s hearts that weaken them, but if they will come unto me I will give them strength to overcome. All they who do not overcome but give heed to their lusts will not have the Spirit and condemn themselves to follow the dictates of the evil one, and if they continue to follow their lusts and not overcome, they will fall and great will be their fall.” (Author unknown as this statement was on the Internet in response to an article and the author’s identity was hidden. Also, the article has since been removed).

Therefore, we see that the Lord will give us, as individuals, revelations regarding things pertinent to our questions regarding His laws, His gospel and His plan. Why doesn’t He give revelations to everyone?

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14

Many people are too caught up in the world to receive further insights or knowledge from the Lord. Another reason is some members tend to rely on or trust only the written word, which, we have already established, is limited. And then there are those who follow the letter of the law and will not seek the Spirit:

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” 2 Corinthians 3:6

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:6

The letter teaches us not to kill but the Jesus and the Spirit teaches us that hating your brother is the same as killing. The letter said if a person is found to be an adulterer/adulteress you were to stone them to death but Jesus and the Spirit teaches; let him who is without sin cast the first stone or to forgive and not be so judgmental as we too are sinners and we must forgive to be forgiven. The letter says women should remain silent in church but the Spirit inspires them with great knowledge and insights as he does men. Unless people are open to the teachings of the Spirit, they are not open to revelation.

In order to receive the things of the Spirit of God we must first be in a spiritual attitude. Joseph Smith said “a prophet is a prophet when he is acting as such.” In this same respect, we only receive the Spirit of truth when we are in the attitude of seeking spiritual enlightenment or doing the works of the Lord. (Note: Joseph Smith taught; a prophet is an inspired teacher and claimed anyone with the testimony of Jesus is a prophet, then quoted Revelations 19:10. Elder Widtsoe also said, “...a prophet is a teacher. That is the essential meaning of the word. He teaches the body of truth, the gospel, revealed by the Lord to man; and under inspiration explains it to the understanding of the people.” (Evidences and Reconciliations, 1:204–5). We refer to the president of the church as the Prophet but we all can and should be prophets, which is a teacher inspired by the Spirit when teaching. What differentiates the president of the church from all the other prophets in the church is that he is also a seer and a revelator and the only Prophet authorized to receive the Lord’s word for the entire world. Therefore, you too can and should be, or should become, a prophet. From here on, most instances referring to prophets, in small case, will have reference to Joseph Smith’s definition of ‘inspired teachers’.)

## **Recognizing the Spirit**

In order to receive the Spirit one must first recognize when the Spirit is speaking to him/her. The reason most people in the world do not recognize the Spirit is because their egos

are too busy plagiarizing from him. As Joseph Smith said, ‘the Holy Ghost is a revelator’ yet we believe all our great ideas are our own. I’m sure Columbus thought his new route to the West Indies was a good idea yet Nephi saw that it was the Spirit of God who inspired him to make that trek to the new world:

“And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.” 1 Nephi 13:12

For over 5,000 years men couldn’t figure out indoor plumbing yet now in the last 200 years we have developed machinery that could construct anything we could imagine (see Genesis 11:6) sent spacecraft beyond our solar system; can travel anywhere in the world in a day; see a person on the other side of the world speak, in real time, in your own home. Somehow, men are arrogant enough to believe all those great ideas are their own creation. What is happening? The Lord has begun inspiring men everywhere to prepare for the coming of the Lord when the fulness of the knowledge of the Lord will be able to abide amongst the righteous who will remain during the millennium. Before TV people could not conceive of a God who was omnipresent. Before nuclear power, an omnipotent God was unfathomable. Before the internet, who could comprehend an omniscient God? You see, there is no such thing as an atheist; what truly exists is 86% of people who believe in a God; almighty, powerful and full of charity towards those who love him; and 14% of the people who think they are god and this because they plagiarize the Spirit who gives them their wonderful ideas.

Because the Lord knows all things work according to faith, His Spirit does not reveal Himself to our five senses in order that we might have faith in the sixth sense, that it is actually the Spirit speaking to us. Ideas, intuition, ‘a gut feeling’; this is how the Spirit often speaks to us. It is rare to see angels or apparitions unless there is a specific work we are to accomplish. However, they are all around us, assisting when needed, by prompting us to go a certain direction, read a certain book, watch a certain program, look a certain way, find a certain job, etc. Of Oliver Cowdery the Lord told him, through a revelation to Joseph Smith, “...behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.” (D&C 6:14). Without realizing it Oliver was being directed constantly, as is everyone in the world also. Do you think Oliver randomly went everywhere he did without a gentle whisper saying



something to the effect, ‘Joseph will have an answer for you.’ Then Oliver says to himself, ‘I’ll bet Joseph will know, I’ll go see him.’

When Joseph began his spiritual quest, God and Jesus appeared to him. Then he had many other apparitions from various Prophets. He also interpreted the Book of Mormon by the Urim and Thummim. However, as he became more familiar with the Spirit he no longer needed apparitions or instruments to guide him but was able to translate and receive revelation by listening to that still small voice within. This is what we must learn as well; it happens first by giving credit where credit is due. When you have a great idea or impression to do something that helps others or resolves a problem for you or others, thank the Lord for giving you that idea or impression (“And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.” D&C 59:21). When you give this recognition the Holy Ghost will bear witness that you were right to do so and this will build your faith and confidence in the Lord. Also, you will begin to recognize it happening more and more often, which will give you confidence that the Lord is speaking to you more often than not. “And he did exhort the people of Limhi and his brethren, all those that had been delivered out of bondage, that they should remember that it was the Lord that did deliver them.” (Mosiah 25:16). You will then begin to recognize the Spirit’s voice more clearly and realize the ideas and concepts inspiring you in the moment you need them are the Spirit speaking to you. With some practice, you will finally be able to dictate what he is putting into your heart, which will give you the gift to speak with a new tongue and write with a new clarity and appear wise beyond your level of education or experience.

Here are a few scriptures that will help you to understand better, the workings of the Spirit:

“And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.” 1 Kings 19:11-12

Elijah was looking for the Lord but didn’t find him in the wind, fire or earthquake but in the still small voice.

“Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God. Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words...” 1 Nephi 17:45

Like the atheists and anti-Christos of the world, although Laman and Lemuel had seen an angel and heard his voice from time to time, yet they did not recognize the Spirit when he spoke in the still small voice, or to their feelings. Therein is a great clue to understanding the Spirit speaking to you, because the Spirit rarely speaks to your ears, but rather, speaks to your mind and your feelings, which is why many people think the inspiration they receive is their own thoughts.

“And it came to pass that there came a voice as if it were above the cloud of darkness, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, and seek no more to destroy my servants whom I have sent unto you to declare good tidings.

“And it came to pass when they heard this voice, and beheld that it was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul—

“And notwithstanding the mildness of the voice, behold the earth shook exceedingly, and the walls of the prison trembled again...” Helaman 5:29-31

Even when the Lord spoke with such power that it shook the earth, it was but a mild voice as if it had been a whisper, but the real power was in that ‘it did pierce even to the very soul’. When the Lord speaks to us, it is to our soul, so we need to feel after his words and not expect to see with our eyes or hear with our ears but to pay attention to the intuition and ideas that come to us.

“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:27

## **Manifestations of the Spirit**

The problem that hinders most good people from receiving revelation is judgementalness. I’m sure there are readers who questioned the personal revelation of the unknown author above because it did not come from the president of the church himself. This weakness tends to keep many people from receiving revelations even though our 13th Article of Faith states “...we believe all things...” and the Lord, referring to any Elder performing his work, said in D&C 68:3-4 “And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as

they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.” If we strive to believe first, instead of being a self-proclaimed critic, then we are open to new ideas and thoughts, “Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.” (Titus 1:15).

Before Nephi was given a view of the tree of life and of Christ coming to this earth, the Spirit of the Lord asked him, “Believest thou that thy father saw the tree of which he hath spoken?” to which Nephi responded, “Yea, thou knowest that I believe all the words of my father.” and then he said, “And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired.” (1Nephi 11:4-6). If you desire to learn and believe in new things taught by people who are enlightened, then you can behold the desires of your heart. “...open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.” (Mosiah 2:9). No critic can receive revelation because humility is usually a requirement of revelation. A critic cannot be humble because to critique is to assume authority that was never sanctioned. In other words, it comes from pride. Only when we are humble can the Spirit teach us. Hear Jacob’s words referring to those ‘brethren’ who do not receive revelations unless those revelations are by their own accepted terms:

“Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.” Jacob 4:8

People struggle to believe revelations from others yet the scripture states:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged.

“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:1-2

If you judge a person’s revelation as just his own thoughts then you will also judge your own revelations as your thoughts and you will not increase in faith or learn to readily receive the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

The understanding of the verse in Matthew 7:1-2 is another that could come through revelation. At first glance people tend to think it means God is going to judge us the way we judge others, but this is not so because many scriptures teach the opposite; such as what the Lord said to Samuel, "...the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." also, Mosiah said, "Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man, for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of man are not always just." (Mosiah 29:12). Therefore, God will not judge as we judge, which is to our advantage. The intention of Matthew 7:1-2 is; when you judge others you are only judging yourself, meaning, when you judge another you are saying that if you did what he did you would be guilty ("Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." Romans 2:1). Your judgment of that person does not mean he/she is guilty. For instance: You are not guilty though a Muslim may consider it evil, when you eat bacon. As well as he is not guilty if you consider his having multiple wives evil. This is also true of Luke 6:27 wherein the Lord said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:" If you do not judge others you will not judge yourself, if you do not condemn others you will not condemn yourself and if you forgive others you will be able to forgive yourself. "Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again. For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored;..." (Alma 41:14-15). Likewise, if you judge one person's revelation as not a revelation then you will also judge your own revelation as not a revelation, which will limit your ability to receive of the Lord because you will doubt that you received a revelation and think it was your own thought. The doubt of the source of revelation will also create lack of faith.

Hopefully you can accept that which was written above and can now believe people do receive revelations, which would invariably mean, you can also. If so, we can move on to receiving revelations for the Lord desires to teach us his will but he cannot teach you until you are ready and prepared to receive.

The following verses are quite powerful and if you will receive them, you could open your heart to revelation. First let us understand that we can receive (as others have) new information not given to the Prophets of old or Joseph Smith or even the current Prophet (but

realize that these revelations will be for you only, you cannot and will not receive revelation *from God*, for the entire church):

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;” Ephesians 3:3

Here Paul is explaining how he received new revelation unknown to past Prophets prior to him receiving it. One can also deduce this new revelation was not taught by Jesus either. Paul received new information and he also testifies that not only he but other prophets and apostles were also receiving these revealed words.

“And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God.” Alma 18:35

Here again you see Ammon teaching that he received knowledge through the Spirit according to his faith and *desires* which are in God. When your desires are to fulfill the Lord’s will, His Spirit will reveal to you what His will is and also give you the knowledge needed for its fulfillment (1 Nephi 3:7).

When you are ready to receive, what can you expect of the revelations the Lord desires to give you:

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

God has prepared new and deep things which no eye hath seen nor ear heard (“God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now;” D&C 121:26). The things held back by the prophets and possibly new information, even they have not considered, are awaiting you if you love the Lord and His will more than you love your own.

“Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.

“Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief.” Ether 4:13-14

The Lord professes again, speaking to us and not the Nephites of old, that if we come unto him (not to the scriptures or the prophets but to Him) He will show us the knowledge which is hidden up (and which we must keep hidden up. Although you may have received a revelation, you are not the Prophet of the church and that information is for you only. When the Lord wants it revealed to the church He will give the revelation to the Prophet of the church).

“For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

“Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

“And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

“Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

“And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

“For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.” D&C 76:5-10

What a powerful promise made to us who desire to serve Him to the end. Our Father obviously has many things He wants to teach us and looks forward to us finally waking up to and overcoming the false pleasures of this life so He can give us the riches of eternity.

Some, who do not believe there are revelations in store for them or that they cannot receive revelations, tend to think the rest of D&C 76 was the fulfillment of these words, but at the end of D&C 76 Joseph said:

114 But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;

115 Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;

116 Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him;

117 To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves;

118 That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.

Though Joseph was given the most elucidating view of heaven and taught us among the greatest mysteries ever revealed to man on earth, yet he also stated there was more he was not permitted to utter or write; and then comes the same promise in verses 116-117 that the Lord will grant this privilege of seeing these things for ourselves when we purify ourselves before Him and love Him more than ourselves (as was echoed by Alma in Alma 5:46).

The Lord teaches us how these things shall be and what we can expect:

“If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.” D&C 42:61

Line upon line, precept upon precept is how you will receive His mysteries. It is similar to what was explained in the section “Will Satan Be Bound In Chains For 1000 Years.” At first you may believe Satan is going to be locked in a dungeon with chains. Later you learn he will not have power to tempt you because of your righteousness. Still further you will learn how to come to that level of righteousness where you will gain power over him. As you develop, grow and overcome, you are given a little more here and a little more there, until you are able to live by all Gods commandments and accept all His will. Please note also; this is inferring that those receiving revelations tend to find greater joy in life and become less judgmental which creates greater peace.

Here is a verse every priesthood holder could memorize who desires to know the mysteries and that, which has never been revealed unto man:

“Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed...” Alma 26:22

Not only did this verse teach what is required to receive revelations but it also tells you that you will be given the opportunity to reveal things which have never been revealed, just like the unknown author did in his revelation on homosexuality. You may say the revelation

on homosexuality is not new and there are scriptures already telling us it is wrong; you may also say there were already scriptures telling of three degrees of glory so section 76 of the Doctrine & Covenants was unnecessary. This revelation on homosexuality gave a greater view into the Lord's mind on homosexuality, removed the excuses the world (who are now accepting of homosexuality) have given for its protection, and helped us to understand the importance for us to overcome all sins like lying, backbiting, adulterous thoughts and homosexuality. You can learn, see or experience everything all the prophets before you saw and learned plus you may learn new things that even they have not seen or heard. What a marvelous revelation this very thought could be to you.

Note: You may, in very deed, receive a revelation that no man has received before you but you may also be receiving a revelation that many men have received before you but were wise enough not to reveal. You can receive revelation for yourself, your family, your job, your functions and if you are a teacher or leader, you will receive revelations for your class or those you oversee, but your revelation does not give you authority nor will it instruct you to go against the Prophet, scripture or the sanctioned church teachings. If it does, your revelation is either from a source other than the Spirit or it was given to you only and not to be revealed to others. When the scripture said "to reveal things which never have been revealed" that is only when you are given the authority to reveal it ("... It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him." Alma 12:9)

Finally, we need to realize, as Joseph Smith discovered, the scriptures are written on various levels and when you read them with a spiritual mind you will understand them in an entirely new light from that which the layman or simple 'reader' of the scriptures understands:

"Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of..." JSH 1:74

With such a statement, who could ever expect to know the word of the Lord simply by reading the scriptures or listening to the words of the prophets (who are limited in what they can teach)? When you study the scriptures with the Spirit, having desires to know God and His plan, giving up your sins as well as your pride that you may do His work and help to



bring to pass His glory, instead of your own, His Spirit will attend you and teach you the scriptures (“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,” Luke 24:45) and reveal to you their true meanings and intensions in a manner which you could not attain to otherwise. (“For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” Colossians 1:9).

Following his mission a young man continued to study and pray and receive revelations. However, there was a time when he went almost a year without receiving a revelation (that he was aware of). He then began seeking a sign asking the Lord for a revelation. After much nagging he felt the words come to him, “What do you want?” he then realized he had nothing in mind he was seeking an answer to and therefore he was only seeking a sign. He then gave up his quest for a sign and went back to the scriptures searching for something he had not learned. He came to the account of Ammon meeting his brothers following their extended missions to the Lamanites. In Alma 27:17 it states, “Now the joy of Ammon was so great even that he was full; yea, he was swallowed up in the joy of his God, even to the exhausting of his strength; and he fell again to the earth.” He reflected on this passage and began to wonder what it would be like to have such an experience; to be so full of joy that it would exhaust your strength and cast you to the earth. He then prayed and told the Lord this is what he wanted to understand and experience, asking, “what is the fulness of the joy of the Lord”. He began researching it and found there was but little to be said on the subject.

After he had exhausted all avenues available to him, he decided it was time to re-approach the Lord asking Him what the fulness of the joy of the Lord meant. The answer came to the young man that the fulness of the joy of the Lord was not one grand emotional experience that would exhaust all of your strength, but it is the removing of all doubts, fears, judgementalness, uncertainties, and other negative attributes associated with this life. With the passing of each negative comes joy; when all negatives are gone, all that is left is fulness of joy. What a grand new understanding this gave him and he thanked the Lord for this new perspective; but then he realized something and said to the Lord, “But Lord, this is not me. I have fears, doubts and weakness I struggle to overcome. How can I achieve this level of joy or how can I rid myself of those things which take joy from me?” (“The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.” D&C 93:36-37). The voice within was silent but he felt the Lord would make it known to him in time so he kept this thought on his mind and began watching for answers in the world around him. Without going through all the details, within two months he learned how to overcome

these worldly attributes, and when he did he said, “For many years I could not get sick and I could choose what I desired to experience in any given day. After nearly a year of not feeling pain I decided I wanted to feel pain and prayed to feel pain. Sure enough, within one hour, three things happened to me inflicting pain to my shin, head and eye; and then I remembered why I don’t like pain and prayed saying, thank you for the experience, I don’t need it anymore. It was then the experiences stopped. If I wanted to experience love, people I knew would suddenly express their love toward me. If I wanted to help someone, I would find one in need or distress that I could help. I truly experienced the fulness of the joy of the Lord for several years because I desired it.” This came because he requested understanding regarding something that was foreign to him, found within the scriptures.

Search the scriptures for things you don’t know. Desire to know the answers to those thoughts that come to you while reading, which may cause you to question your traditions or beliefs. Pray to ask their true meaning. If the answer is not forthcoming, study them out in your mind and research them as far as you can. When you have done all within your power to find the answer, pray again. If you still do not receive an answer, begin looking for an answer in the world around you (this may take days, weeks or months). If you still have not received your answer, fast. By the time you get to this level of continual importuning the Lord will answer your petition. If you still have not received an answer then it is time to reflect upon your request; is it expedient for you? is it something to consume upon your lusts? is it an answer you don’t really want to hear because of the responsibility incumbent upon receiving it? etcetera. If you have done all that is spoken of above, then look to your approach and preparation. Have you purified yourself? are you worthy or clean before your maker? (“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven; And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts.” D&C 1:31-33) are your thoughts pure? have you been doing the works of the Lord? If all the above has been fulfilled and you see no other reason for the Lord not to answer you, the only thing left is to judge your request; is it an answer you are seeking to fulfill your will... or the Lord’s? If you come to realize you are only seeking your own will then pray to know the Lord’s will and ask His Spirit to guide you in your quest.

It is the Lord’s promise that He will give answers to our petitions when we have fulfilled the conditions required for this blessing, so have faith and realize; when you have done all you can to discover an answer on your own, and you are living a clean life having repented of

all your sins, and have sufficient faith, the Lord will manifest the answer to you through His Spirit-- of this there is no doubt. If you lack the faith to receive an answer then bear your testimony unto the Lord and continue to bear your testimony of all the times you recognized the Lord in your life until your faith is so strong... you feel you can *expect* an answer from the Lord; then be still and listen to your feelings.

## The Path Towards God

For those who have been to the temple, there is a great mystery hidden therein, which few have realized: As you come to the veil it is said, in part, that Adam desired further light and knowledge by conversing with the Lord through the veil. Most people interpret this to mean 'at' the veil instead of 'through' the veil, thus they think Adam was done when he reached this point, therefore they leave. In this same respect, we go to church, read our scriptures, listen to the prophets, then stop or return and do it again and again, never actually entering the presence of the Lord. At the veil he receives the name of a token, or a key, but what of the further light and knowledge? What the temple teaches you is the path toward God in this life as well as the next. Thus, after you have taken upon you to live the laws of the Telestial and Terrestrial kingdoms, you then proceed to prepare yourself to live the laws of the Celestial kingdom (we say prepare yourself because one of the laws of the Celestial kingdom is the law of consecration, which we are not living). When you have been true and faithful to all those laws taught to you through the scriptures and Prophets, and have done all things necessary to prepare yourself, being filled with virtue and charity, you are now ready to enter His presence and be taught directly by Him through revelation, visions, dreams, apparitions or being conveyed away to see all things for yourself. The temple teaches you all things you need to accomplish while on the path toward God to reach this point. Therefore, once you have learned all things the scriptures, prophets and the temple can teach you, you are now about to enter the presence of the Lord (the path to God) to receive personal revelation and learn those mysteries which cannot be revealed in any other way. You must, however, be seeking for further light and knowledge or you will never step beyond the bounds you have set for yourself. ("And again Moses said: I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him:..." Moses 1:18).

After the preparation stage, you then reach the advanced development stage of the path toward God. You will know you have reached this stage by achieving the following abilities:

### Love

The stages of development are first to read and be taught the wisdom and basics of the gospel as found in the scriptures. The basic principles we must first learn (after what is found in the 4th Article of Faith) are love, forgiveness, humility, righteousness, charity, faith, obedience, virtue and other such godly attributes.

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” Psalms 119:165

And what is His law:

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Galatians 5:14

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:8-10

Love is quoted as the ‘royal law’ (James 2:8) and even Jesus taught; to love God and your neighbor are the two commandments wherein all the law and the prophets hang (Matthew 22:36-40). Jesus taught also to love your enemies (Matthew 5:44) then right after this statement in verse 46 he says, “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” We must love everyone and forgive everyone. If you knew no laws or were never privy to any of the commandments, you would fulfill them all by simply loving your neighbors, your family, and your enemies.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness...” Romans 2:14-15

In our pre-mortal life there existed only love, because that is all God would have in his presence. Because there was only love, that love was not appreciated and we did not know we were living in love and therefore we did not know love nor happiness and wouldn't until we learned their opposites. Their opposite is pride and sin. Therefore sin is nothing more and nothing less than lack of love. When we love we will not sin and love is the state we must eventually come back to in order to live a godly life and endure the presence of the Father. Those who love perfectly will love as God loves, judge as God judges, and will be able to live as He lives. Those who limit the amount or level of love they will experience will live with those, too, who will not love fully (“We love him, because he first loved us. If a man

say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” 1 John 4:19-21).

If you loved your enemies it would mean you harbor no desires of retribution for what they have done to you and only hope for their eventual happiness. Please understand that love and forgiveness does not mean you have to trust or befriend your enemy for though you may forgive a man who raped your child, you are not then required to prove that forgiveness by letting him babysit your children. You may forgive him but your forgiveness does not mean your enemy has had a change of heart and you still must protect yourself or your family from further assailing or reprisal. You can love and forgive people without trusting them because you love and forgive for you not them. By doing so, the evil person can no longer imprison you with hatred and vengeful thoughts against him/her. But this forgiveness does not require you to make yourself vulnerable to further attacks (“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” John 7:1). This is another great mystery of the Lord; you forgive others for you... not them. It is your forgiveness that stops them from hurting you further (within) and not your retribution or punishment, “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.” Proverbs 19:11.

Following love we must adhere to the other commandments of the Lord, yet you must not let your obedience turn to pride or judgementalness for this will keep you from entering through the veil. Romans 14:14 states, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” Also, Paul further attempts to inculcate this understanding when he says, “...for why is my liberty judged of another man’s conscience?” (1 Corinthians 10:29). Because you know and will live the higher order of love and choose obedience to higher laws, there is no reason to judge the acts and actions of those around you. God still loves those who live none of his laws and so could we (“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:” Luke 6:35-37). Because of the higher order of love, we understand the commandments bring joy, inspiration and happiness.

“The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.” Psalms 19:8

“He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.” D&C 93:28

“After it was truly manifested unto this first elder that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world;

“But after repenting, and humbling himself sincerely, through faith, God ministered unto him by an holy angel, whose countenance was as lightning, and whose garments were pure and white above all other whiteness;

“And gave unto him commandments which inspired him;” D&C 20:5-7

“I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy.” Alma 29:9

There is no love in judgementalness. When we come unto God and remove judgementalness, the commandments become joyous and inspirational. The world sees the commandments as ‘thou shalt not’ and believe them to limit their freedom and pleasure in this life (“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Peter 2:19). Those imbued with the Spirit and knowledge of the Lord know that the commandments free us and give us power to overcome all things. They are also the way to happiness and joy for though you are free to break the commandments, is this joy? Are you happy when you lie, steal, cheat, backbite, manipulate, force, lust, etc.? The commandments are given to us for our happiness and freedom (“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:34). To receive a direct command from God will always inspire us because, in that instance, we know the will of the Lord for us.

We show we love God by keeping his commandments. We show we love our fellow man by keeping God’s commandments; or the commandments are fulfilled when we perform acts of love for our fellow man.

### **The Grace to Endure Suffering**

In our pre-earth existence, life was bliss. We had no lack, we knew no sickness, trauma or weakness. We knew no gluttony, greed, pain, suffering, sloth, ill will, pride or selfishness. These negatives are in opposition to the bliss we lived in during our pre-mortal life. We did

not comprehend the joy of our bliss because we never experienced its opposite. This world was created to be our school and evil is set to be the great school master. Although we are put in this life to overcome evil and learn not to subject ourselves to its awful grasp, yet we have never been promised that the Lord would keep us from enduring its ill effects. Though we may not follow after evil, evil will still find us and teach us. The Lord tried to help Joseph Smith understand this concept when he said:

“If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;

“If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

“And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

“The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?” D&C 122:5-8

Every prophet who ever lived on this earth suffered at the hands of evil and conspiring men, else would they have remained in the ignorant state they were prior to coming here, and would remain nescient never to have learned what it is to be a God. Through all their trials and proving they would endure to the end, they gained experience and that experience was for their good. President Brigham Young said of the persecutions leveled upon a woman who had her house burned down 4 or 5 times:

“If her eyes had been opened to see, she would have thanked the Lord for that, more than anything else; that persecution was more precious to her than riches, because it was designed to teach her the knowledge of God. Do I acknowledge the hand of God in



persecution? Yes, I do. It is one of the greatest blessings that could be conferred upon the people of God.” Journal of Discourses 2:7

After Adam partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil the Lord said, “...Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil:” (Genesis 3:22), also “Now, we see that the man had become as God, knowing good and evil;...” (Alma 42:3). Therefore, the Gods know good and evil and it wasn’t until Adam broke a commandment that he also gained that knowledge. We all must conform to the same experience in order to gain the same knowledge but following that sin we become unclean and no unclean thing can enter the presence of God, wherefore we were given a Savior and mercy to save us due to His atoning sacrifice.

Because we repent of our sins, this does not mean we will now prosper and there is a guaranteed life of bliss without trials; it means the Lord can now use you to fulfill His bidding, *if* you will follow His Spirit. In fulfilling His will you will be subject to the fiery darts of the adversary and all manner of ridicule, hardship, trial and deprivation, yet the Lord expects this to happen and also expects us to endure it all, to be an example:

“...ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls.” Alma 17:11

“Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days.” D&C 24:8

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” 1 Peter 2:18-23

There are some who will not endure suffering or loss, and of those it is said:

“Now, I speak unto you concerning your families—if men will smite you, or your families, once, and ye bear it patiently and revile not against them, neither seek revenge, ye shall be rewarded;

“But if ye bear it not patiently, it shall be accounted unto you as being meted out as a just measure unto you.” D&C 98:23-24

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” 1 John 3:16-17

The Lord expects us to suffer for others:

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:7-8

“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” 1 Corinthians 6:7

“And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;” 3 Nephi 12:40

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Colossians 3:12-13

“And this they did, it being in their view a testimony to God, and also to men, that they never would use weapons again for the shedding of man’s blood; and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands.

“And thus we see that, when these Lamanites were brought to believe and to know the truth, they were firm, and would suffer even unto death rather than commit sin; and thus we see that they buried their weapons of peace, or they buried the weapons of war, for peace.” Alma 24:18-19

The Lord expects us also to suffer for him:

“For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” 1 Timothy 4:10

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Romans 8:16-17

“Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

“And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.” 1 Corinthians 4:11-12

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;” Philippians 1:29

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12

“And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek, Amulek having forsaken all his gold, and silver, and his precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah, for the word of God, he being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred;” Alma 15:16

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” Hebrews 11:24-26

The Lord knows we will and expects us to endure various afflictions in this life, yet He promises that He will deliver us out of all our afflictions, (even if it is by death):

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” Psalms 34:19

“...and when he falls he shall rise again, for his sacrifice shall be more sacred unto me than his increase, saith the Lord.” D&C 117:13

“Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward.

“Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.” D&C 6:33-34

“For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—

“Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble.” D&C 3:7-8

“For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God.” Alma 60:13

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

“Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

We are also taught that suffering is necessary for repentance:

“Nevertheless, after wading through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death, the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to snatch me out of an everlasting burning, and I am born of God.

“My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more.” Mosiah 27:28-29

“Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble.

“And thus did the Spirit of the Lord work upon them, for they were the very vilest of sinners. And the Lord saw fit in his infinite mercy to spare them; nevertheless they suffered much anguish of soul because of their iniquities, suffering much and fearing that they should be cast off forever.” Mosiah 28:3-4

“Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

“Yea, and I had murdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

“Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds.” Alma 36:13-15

Suffering is also necessary for perfection:

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” Hebrews 5:8-9

“God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they could not be made perfect.” JST Hebrews 11:40

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5:10

“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.” Moroni 10:32

Along with our works we shall also be rewarded by the suffering we endure:

“But, behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever.” 2 Nephi 9:18

“For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.

“Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

“For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.” D&C 58:2-4

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.” D&C 121:7-8

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelations 20:4

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Matthew 10:22

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12

“And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” 3 Nephi 12:10

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John 15:18-19

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Matthew 19:29

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;” 2 Corinthians 4:17

Because they understood the blessings and rewards associated with suffering, prophets and disciples rejoiced because of their sufferings:

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:3-5

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:4,10

“...I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.” 2 Corinthians 7:4

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

“...and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Hebrews 10:31-32,34-36

“...wherefore, they came unto me, and loosed the bands which were upon my wrists, and behold they had swollen exceedingly; and also mine ankles were much swollen, and great was the soreness thereof.

“Nevertheless, I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions.” 1 Nephi 18:15-16

“...and we have been cast out, and mocked, and spit upon, and smote upon our cheeks; and we have been stoned, and taken and bound with strong cords, and cast into prison; and through the power and wisdom of God we have been delivered again.

“And we have suffered all manner of afflictions, and all this, that perhaps we might be the means of saving some soul; and we supposed that our joy would be full if perhaps we could be the means of saving some.” Alma 26:29-30

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:” Job 5:17

“And when Amulek saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire, he also was pained; and he said unto Alma: How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames.

“But Alma said unto him: The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory;” Alma 14:10-11

“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”  
Mosiah 24:15

“There is the reason. It is for our development, our purification, our growth, our education and advancement, that we buffet the fierce waves of sorrow and misfortune; and we shall be all the stronger and better when we have swum the flood and stand upon the farther shore.” Elder Orson F. Whitney, Improvement Era, Nov. 1918, p.6

Thus can we surmise that the saints who endure suffering, hardship, loss, humiliation, deprivation, ridicule, etc., are those who truly are living the gospel and fulfilling the works of the Lord and though they may not be blessed with the idols and material things of this world, their reward is assured from above. Remember, we have already lived with the riches of eternity and had every need and want fulfilled before we came here, and we will have even more in the next life. Therefore, rejoice that you are able to suffer in this life and learn the opposite of all you had and will have. They who suffer the most will appreciate the pleasures awaiting them in the next life so much more than those who lived lives of ease or who never learned to endure or overcome. This principle follows along the same point Jesus was trying to make to Simon when He said:

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

“And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?”

“Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. Luke 7:41-43

As those forgiven the most will love the most, so will those who suffer the most appreciate or enjoy the mansions prepared for us the most. You, who are enduring the crosses of the world, are those who are sanctifying and perfecting yourselves and the ones in whom God desires to reward the most. That is not to say the rich can't or don't suffer, but it may be they are missing out on something because their riches limit the amount of suffering they could undergo and appreciation they could receive. If they sacrificed more of their riches (anonymously) then maybe they too could appreciate and love as much as those who are deprived.



## Overcoming Satan

The path to God is found only through revelation but the path toward God is where we prepare ourselves and it is actually the most important aspect of our lives here on earth. This is where we gain our godly attributes and learn the joy of living as God lives (in total righteousness and love) by experiencing the opposite of God's life and gaining the power and desire to overcome ("for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God." Moroni 9:6). This world is filled with every possible temptation and pleasure, of the body and mind, previously unknown to any of us. Because this body desires and needs so much more than our spirits ever did, we must learn to control it and overcome its propensity to do evil and follow the path of least resistance. As the famed verse states, "...wickedness never was happiness." but our bodies are blind to this idea and find pleasure in the sins of the body. God is God because He has all power not just over the universe but over the temptations of His body. We cannot be like Him until we first learn to overpower the desires of our body and mind.

"Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, if ye are not ye are not prepared to meet God...

"Behold, I say, is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? I say unto you that such an one is not prepared;...

"And again I say unto you, is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother, or that heapeth upon him persecutions?

"Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared, and the time is at hand that he must repent or he cannot be saved!

"Yea, even wo unto all ye workers of iniquity; repent, repent, for the Lord God hath spoken it!" Alma 5:28-29; 30-32

Although Satan has never experienced life in a body, he has had plenty of time to learn (through the outward show of our actions to various stimuli) what a body craves and desires. He also knows the godly attributes necessary to become like God. Because he knows the godly attributes, he also understands their opposites so he gives us every opportunity to be lifted up in pride, experience greed, gluttony, selfishness, anger, judgementalness, fear, temptations, etc. It is not enough for us to understand that everything has its opposite in this life, we must also learn how to overcome everything in opposition to a godly lifestyle.

In this life we strive for excellence or to be the best at our chosen endeavor or vocation. But we don't consider the number of people hurt when our desire for excellence becomes so poignant and engrossing that we 'will do anything' to become the best. When you are finally awarded the title of 'the best', it is then you will feel the guilt and agony that comes if you ever cheated or used any evil means or unsavory tactics to reach the top ("As the partridge sitteth *on eggs*, and hatcheth *them* not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." Jeremiah 17:11). Until then, your thirst to become the best was nothing more than a temptation of Satan to do evil. Does that mean it is evil to be the best? No, somebody has got to be the best. However, the godly path to becoming the best is to strive to overcome yourself and your weaknesses. When you have sufficiently overcome yourself and endured the pain and struggle it takes to overcome your weaknesses and faults, you will suddenly awaken to and be awarded the prize of the best without realizing you ever were. In this case you will be humbled by the award and feel the love of those who admired you along your quest to overcome your body and mind. Satan's way gives you the pride of conquering everyone, using whatsoever means available to steal that position, to be alone at the top and look down on others. The Lord's way strengthens, yet humbles us while becoming the best, that we may use those skills learned to serve others; helping them to rise to the level we have and experience joy in those who join us at the top.

In this life we taste the pleasure of food and strive to feel it again and again. This gift of the gods offers great pleasure to each of us daily. However, those foods which tend to tantalize our tongue the most are often those most dangerous or unfit for our bodies; making us weak, overweight and sickly. We must learn to overcome the pleasure of overindulging in unhealthy yet tantalizing foods, in order to respect our bodies as the temple of the Spirit they are. Would it help if you thought your gluttony was like spray painting graffiti on the temple walls and racing a monster truck through its gardens? Your body is a temple, is it not? If so, should you not strive to beautify it and honor it as a fitting place for the Spirit to dwell?

In this life we learn the overwhelming stimulant of sexual desires. These desires and the pleasure they provide bond man and woman making them dependent one to another, giving them each a desire to overcome themselves and strive to serve each other. This power is given us to become families who love, support and protect one another; growing in strength through the raising of our children in a mutual effort to become a team, united in a cause of good and fidelity. Satan has taught this powerful gift is meant to satisfy various perversions, illicit depravity and all manner of lasciviousness. We must learn to overcome Satan's false teachings of personal gratification and self abuse that we may experience the joy of God's

gift in its proper use and not allow it to overthrow our thoughts and destroy our lives. God's use creates families and binds men and women. Satan's use makes people cheap, creates single parent households, causes disease, guilt, shame, lack of control, dishonor and various other negative traits.

It is the same with all virtues the Lord has provided for us. He has provided all things in this life to give us joy and true happiness, but Satan believes he can dissuade us from choosing a life of happiness through momentary pleasure. He does this by convincing us to believe in the false pleasures found in pride, revenge, gluttony, lust, etc. Because of our agency, God allows them to coexist giving us the opportunity to choose. If we choose the path of evil, we ultimately see the negative ramifications culminating in a lack of happiness and various hardships. When we finally break through the fog of lies, momentary pleasures and false beliefs that led us to do evil, we then choose the godly path and learn for ourselves that God's way is better.

In this life we learn fear, which is nothing more than a lack of knowledge. We fear the dark because we don't know what is there. We fear saying no because we don't know if we will lose our friends. We fear strangers because we don't know if they will be mean or hurt us (yet we are all strangers to someone). When we turn on the light there is no more fear because we can see what's there. Satan teaches us to fear and tries to keep us ignorant and in the dark so he will not be detected. When we turn on the light we discover Satan and realize he is not all powerful and that we can overcome him. The more we discover, the more Satan will continue to lose power until we overcome him completely.

Hollywood and some scriptures lead us to believe that being possessed of a devil means we turn into freaks of nature, tearing ourselves, ripping off our clothes, vomiting green pea soup, etc. However, the devils are more cunning and less obvious than that and many people are possessed of devils without realizing it. If there is some weakness in you that continues to afflict you or some temptation you can't seem to overcome, that is because you have allowed that devil to possess you or that evil influence to pervade your mind. This is why you read even in the Doctrine & Covenants that those having the priesthood will cast out devils:

“And these signs shall follow them that believe—

“In my name they shall do many wonderful works;

“In my name they shall cast out devils;” D&C 84:65-67

Do you ever hear of priesthood holders casting out devils? No. Why? Because the devil has convinced us we are not possessed of devils so there is no need. Many of us are possessed

with devils and we must have faith to remove them. This is why it is also important to confess your sins. When you let a priesthood holder know of a sin you are struggling with, he has the power to cast out the devil that is causing this sin to continue in your life or the temptation to remain prevalent in your mind. Once the devil is cast out, it is remanded from having control of your thoughts and actions, to merely whispering evil ideas to you again. It is much more subtle than you think (And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. 2 Nephi 28:22) and so much so that you don't realize you are possessed and therefore you continue your fight with this imp instead of removing him from his power of influence through the priesthood. If this helps you to recognize a devil inside you then go to a member of the priesthood, tell him you are struggling with a particular sin (be it theft, anger, lust, gluttony, selfishness, backbiting, judgementalness, envy, etc.) and tell him you want him to cast that devil out of you. This may, at first, seem like an odd request to him but he will bless you as you requested. However, if he only blesses you with strength to overcome then when he is finished quote D&C 84:65-67 and ask him to do it again and this time cast the devil out of you (And it shall be given unto you, power over that spirit; and you shall proclaim against that spirit with a loud voice that it is not of God— Not with railing accusation, that ye be not overcome, neither with boasting nor rejoicing, lest you be seized therewith. D&C 50:32-33). This will increase your faith and will give you power by first recognizing his influence then stopping it before it ever grasps hold of you again. This is not some freaky exorcism depicted in the annals of Hollywood, it is a priesthood power and function given us to help increase our faith, perfect our souls and grow in the Spirit.

The greatest gift given to overcome Satan is love (“...for perfect love casteth out all fear.” Moroni 8:16). Love of God, man and the commandments give us power over the adversary and help us withstand his tempting influence. If you love someone you will not kill, cheat, steal, lie to, put down, etc., that person, and Satan loses power. When we are filled with love we will happily endure all the fiery darts of the adversary. Our sufferings will be made light by strengthening us to handle them (“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.” Mosiah 24:15) and the Lord will use our sufferings to bring many people to the gospel (which is our greatest treasure). When enough of us reach

this stratum of power over the devil, then will we be a people prepared for the Lord at his coming. You cannot overcome something you don't first recognize.

“And because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth.” 1 Nephi 22:26

“Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved.” Ether 8:26

Another great tool to overcome Satan is prayer, “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.” D&C 10:5. Understand; this is something we will do for ourselves with the Lord's help-- the Lord will not do it for us. Overcoming evil is easier than we think but it primarily comes through a desire to fulfill the Lord's will and do his work.

## **Power Over Your Thoughts**

“And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.” Alma 41:11

This may seem like an impossible task but it is important for you to realize that perfecting your thoughts is possible and you have the power to subdue any negative recollection. In the LDS.org website, in the section “The Guide to the Scriptures”, under the topic of “Thoughts” it states, “Ideas, concepts, and images in a person's mind. The power to think is a gift from God, and we are free to choose how we use our power to think. The way we think greatly affects attitudes and behavior, as well as our standing after this life. Righteous thoughts lead to salvation; wicked thoughts lead to damnation.” The idea of having ‘your eye single to the glory of God’ is nothing more and nothing less than purifying and controlling your thoughts. “...Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal.” (2 Nephi 9:39). You must realize the vital importance placed upon this subject; “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7). You cannot truly sanctify yourself

until you learn to purify your thoughts, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matthew 22:37). Satan controls worldly people by instilling fear and lust into their thoughts. These thoughts are a powerful distraction from all that is holy. Also, Satan knows that your sense of guilt and unworthiness causes you to shrink from the Lord’s presence and distracts you from keeping your eye single to the glory of God. Therefore, if he can continue to whisper things that will cause you to occupy your mind with evil thoughts, then, even when you have stopped thinking the evil thought, your sense of guilt and unworthiness will continue to distract you from keeping your eye single to His glory (“Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings.” D&C 88:121). The process discussed below will help you control your thoughts and free you from guilt and burdens you may have struggled with for years. “O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.” (Jacob 3:2).

Another vital aspect inherent within the power of your thoughts; your body cannot sin until your thoughts direct it to do so. Therefore, if your thoughts are pure and your eye single to the glory of God then you cannot sin in the body and you will also be able to endure His presence and be prepared to walk the path to God. “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, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage.” (Mosiah 7:33).

Because of their evil thoughts, most people doubt they have the capacity to purify and perfect themselves, to a level commensurate with what it takes to meet God (“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7); and they know no way to overcome them. “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds.” (D&C 43:34). The science of psychology coupled with divine insight has produced a very simple way to control thoughts as well as understand how the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost work with our ‘counselors’ (to be explained later) to help us purify ourselves and overcome all evil. (“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” 2 Corinthians 10:5). To borrow from the example above, the power to overcome evil thoughts comes by ‘turning on the light’ or adding to your knowledge. The

first step in this new understanding is to introduce you to your counselors; who you have supposed, is yourself.

Psychology can teach us the differences between the left and the right brain. By divine understanding we can learn how the Lord speaks to both sides of our brain according to the remits of each side. The left side or left brain processes logical sequences. This is where math, logic, judgment and short term memory reside. It is where the loud voice in our head speaks and it also likes to take control. Thus, the left brain is where good and evil are judged so the Light of Christ speaks to this side of your brain and lets you know through your conscience whether or not you are making good decisions.

The right side or right brain is where all creativity, imagination, fantasy, emotions, long term memory, dreams and spirituality are processed and it is the side to which the Holy Ghost speaks. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;” (D&C 11:13). In essence, the Light of Christ speaks to our logical side, our conscience and sense of judgment; the Holy Ghost speaks to our emotions and feelings, and since our long term memory resides in the right side, it is the right brain that remembers all things we have been taught throughout our lives. This is true of even our earliest memories, and especially those experiences which had the greatest impact on our emotions. Therefore, when you think of Matthew 12:31-32 wherein it states, “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” you then realize why the Spirit speaks to your long term memory and also why you can’t be forgiven when you rebel against a truth you *felt* to be true. When the light of Christ speaks it reasons with our left brain, which houses our short term memory. If we go against the light of Christ, we can be forgiven because our left brain can be persuaded logically against something it judged earlier, because it may not remember all the evidences it used to make the first decision; it may also change its judgment when new evidence is introduced. When the Holy Ghost speaks to our long term memory and touches our feelings, we can remember this event throughout our lives. We cannot be convinced against our feelings and therefore can only rebel against them. To rebel against what we know to be true with the very fiber of our being is to knowingly lie to God and ourselves.

To illustrate this fact, think about a person you fell in love with or trusted wholeheartedly, who then broke your heart or betrayed you, and you possibly still have ill

feelings towards. Though you may be so harsh as to say you hate this person now, you cannot deny the fact or forget that you once loved him/her.

When you think back to your childhood, the things you remember best are those that had intense emotions tied to them. Whether the emotion was anger, fear, love, compassion, thrill, exuberance, etc., these are the things you remember. You do not remember every math or reading test; the exception would be one you did remarkably well or extremely bad, which peaked your emotions; because it stimulated you emotionally you may remember. You don't remember every time you brushed your teeth, put on your clothes, walked to school, played cards, etc.

It is important you understand this principle about your brain in order to overcome evil thoughts. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind," (Ephesians 4:17). Most people think their brain is the sum total of who they are, but in this they err. Your left and right brains are your counselors and each have specific duties, and they function according to those duties. However, you are neither of them and that *you* inside of you is the president or the one in charge.

As stated earlier, your left brain processes logic and makes judgments; it inherently judges fairly without emotion. However, because it judges fairly, it will consider the feelings of your right brain as well; and depending on the level of trust it has for the intuitiveness of your right brain, it may or may not decide based on your feelings. Your right brain, on the other hand, knows no logic or judgment and brings up only those things, from your long term memory, where you spent the most time or had the greatest emotional impact. The left brain is also the side in charge (when it is awake and functioning), thus when you daydream your left brain is not fully functional and will allow your right brain to play in unholy imaginations.

When your mind is idle, or you are doing nothing to make your left brain work, your right brain then goes to work creating and imagining. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6). It does this by bringing up, first, those things which have impacted you emotionally or where you spent the most time in thought. What the right brain basically does is present you with a menu of thoughts in the order of importance it has derived based on the amount of time and emotion you have given this subject in the past. Thus, if you are struggling with overcoming fear it is because you allow your right brain to stay focused on your fears. If you seem constantly or easily angered; when your right brain brings up a situation that makes you angry, you stay focused on it or



dwell in it for an excessive period of time. “And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.” (Mosiah 4:13). It is how you respond to a menu item that determines how often your right brain will bring up these thoughts. For example: If an angry thought is brought up and you consider that angry thought, remain focused on it, imagine how you would act in vengeance, until your entire body is worked up, you give this thought intense power and your brain thinks you desire it greatly. Because your right brain has no sense of judgment nor understands what is good or bad for you, it will bring it up again and again. The same goes with all lusts whether they be evil or righteous. If you love to help people your right brain will continually bring up times where you helped people or create opportunities for helping people.

The great understanding is to realize you are neither your right or left brain but you are the president in this presidency and you can make decisions against both counselors if you so desire. “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22-24). For instance; logic may state that; if you went to a party of fifty friends and all but one were smoking and every one of the them said that smoking made them feel good, removed tension, was pleasurable, helped them lose weight, etc., you may logically deduce that smoking must be good. Yet you can decide for yourself that you choose to follow the one person against smoking and won’t smoke even when all logic says you could or should. Your right brain may fanaticize the perfect way to get revenge and nobody would know it was you who destroyed your enemy, yet you can choose not to fulfill these fantasies because the *you* inside you is the president and ultimately makes all final decisions. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7).

Overcoming guilt comes with understanding as well. When you fantasize, your brain often proceeds without much logic and if you dwell on a bad thought through to its culminating evil before your left brain awakens, when it does, it judges your imagination and tells you, you are bad. This causes feelings of unworthiness and guilt, which makes you ashamed to be in God’s presence (“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” 1 John 3:21). However, when you realize you are in charge, then you also know that you no longer are subject to the menu of thoughts your right brain presents and you are not required to think about anything you know to be bad for you. (“And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations,

kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.” (Mosiah 27:25-26). Also, you will find it is not requisite that you judge yourself guilty or unworthy when you come to understand this process. This is because you have the same power over your brain that you do when someone is trying to convince you to drink alcohol; you can ‘just say no’. All you have to do when a bad thought comes to mind is simply say in your head, “No, I don’t want that one, give me another.” You will be amazed at how quickly your right brain will come up with a new thought. “...Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal.” (2 Nephi 9:39).

Before continuing the idea above, it’s time to introduce you to your right brain. Here is an experiment to prove the point above: Think, right now, about the last evil thing you said, did or thought. Before you continue get that thought firmly into your head. If you continue without performing this experiment, you will not understand this power that you have within you so please get that evil experience into your head.

With that experience firmly in your head- now think about your favorite activity (hopefully it doesn’t have anything to do with the evil thought) and your best accomplishment in that activity. Again, don’t continue until you have the accomplishment in your mind.

Hopefully you now have a bit of a smile on your face because of that recollection. Two things happened here. First and foremost you changed your thoughts very quickly and stopped thinking about the evil thing you did. The second is when you were thinking evil you were also feeling the guilt or negativity associated with that evil. When you thought about your accomplishment your feelings changed to something more pleasing. You just controlled your thoughts.

Another important principle in the quest to rid yourself of the unworthiness you feel because of evil thoughts; is to realize that your right brain does not understand good and evil and was only working like an intelligent computer giving you what it thought you wanted. Would you consider a person evil if someone placed a pornographic picture in front of him, but when he realized what it was, he turned his head? Of course not, because it was thrust upon him unawares. Now if he took the picture in hand and started thinking about it and commenting on it, this is when he introduces evil into his right brain telling it that he likes this stimuli and it is important to him. Thus he has introduced pornography into his long term

memory so his right brain will bring it up again and again, and his left brain will judge him evil for doing so. To remove this guilt, turn your head to every bad thought; then realize your right brain has simply flashed a picture in front of you that it thought you wanted. All that is required to take control is to you don't want it ("And it shall be given unto you, power over that spirit; and you shall proclaim against that spirit with a loud voice that it is not of God" D&C 50:32), which is like turning your head from seeing what your right brain has thrust upon you. When you do, you will also feel good about yourself that you maintained your control and you chose righteously. This is because the light of Christ commends you on your good choice. You are not evil because your right brain flashed a picture in front of you just as you would not be evil if you performed an innocent search on the internet and a pornography site popped up. If you choose not to dwell on the evil thought then you have not let it control you, and that picture is not who you are.

The principal shared in the paragraph above follows the true order of repentance. We often think repentance only comes by following the regimented direction of the church; to acknowledge you committed a sin through confession, ask for forgiveness from God and the person victimized by your sin, then pay for or restore everything to the proper fashion it was before your sin, then endure your punishment. That is a process to help you to repent but it is not the actual repentance. In the Bible Dictionary, under 'repentance', none of the direction above is mentioned. What it does say is:

"The Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a change of mind, i.e., a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. Since we are born into conditions of mortality, repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined...."

Thus, it is hoped the repentance process will convince or coerce you to realize the importance of removing this sin from your repertoire of functions and gain a new mind on the subject that in this sin there is no happiness. When you utilize the method shown here in controlling your thoughts you will fulfill repentance as defined in the Bible Dictionary. You will gain a fresh view about God, about yourself and the world. You will now be able to turn your heart and will toward God and renounce your sins, because you will be able to control your thoughts or stop thinking evil.

This process will take a little practice. It is said it takes 21 days to change a habit or to train your sub-conscience to take over and create a new habit. Therefore, theoretically, if you keep doing this for 21 days, you will realize you can now take charge of your thoughts and

your right brain will only bring up those things you truly want to think about (which is what it always has done, but without control). Therefore, if you choose to think of righteous endeavors, your right brain will imagine and create in that area as well. “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” (Proverbs 16:3). Therefore, when an unsavory thought comes to mind, say in your head, ‘No, I don’t want to think about that, give me ideas on how I could better help my neighbors or find people in need (or any other righteous or productive thought).’ Your mind will then take you to, and begin creating, for this righteous endeavor.

Something else to understand regarding the power or intensity of your thoughts; if your imagination rises to such a peak that your body begins responding to those thoughts, such as; you are laying down in a park on a beautiful serene day all alone, birds singing in the background, then you suddenly flinch because you imagine someone is about to strike you; then is when you know this is a thought or imagination, you have told your right brain, is very important to you and it will bring it up again and again. It is the same if you sweat, laugh, become tense, aroused, angry, etc. Therefore, you want to stop the imagination or daydream before it arouses to a level where your body begins to respond physically either as a twitch or sensation. The sooner you stop the video playing in your head the better. The best way to control your thought is to stop it as soon as it enters into your mind (“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...” James 4:7-8). If you do, you will find, after only a few times of your right brain bringing it up and you telling it you don’t want it, that your right brain will move it down the list and not bring it up as a top thought anymore. This is also how you can initiate a character change “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit...” Ezekiel 18:31). As you become better at this and gain control, instead of saying to yourself, “I don’t want that thought, give me another”, you can simply say, “Don’t even think it” and your right brain will shut it off immediately.

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:” Proverbs 23:7

“But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.” Mosiah 4:30

Hopefully now that you know how your brain works and how to control your thoughts, the scriptures above will no longer be a source of guilt, but will produce good feelings, being a reminder of a great accomplishment you had achieved in overcoming evil thoughts. After overcoming judgementalness, gaining power over your thoughts is the next big wall to surmount, which blocks one from entering the presence of God, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:” (Isaiah 26:3). The process above can help you overcome nearly every weakness in your life, (even the desire to give up on something you know you shouldn’t, like a bad habit) making the path toward God clear and distinctive, preparing you for the path to God. It is about the only way you will learn to keep your eye single to the glory of God. It is also the way you will learn to create, invent and produce effective items or programs that will help yourself and others. When you become strong enough to keep your eye single to His glory, then will the greater powers of the Spirit also be given to you, “...for behold, he knows all thy thoughts, and thou seest that thy thoughts are made known unto us by his Spirit;” (Alma 12:3). Finally, take upon you the wisdom of President Marion G. Romney:

“I am persuaded, my brothers and sisters, that it is irrational to hope to escape the lusts of the world without substituting for them as the subjects of our thoughts the things of the Spirit.” Ensign, May 1980, p. 67

And Amulek:

“Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save.

“Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him.

“Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.

“Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening.

“Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies.

“Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.

“Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them.

“Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase.

“But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

“Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” Alma 34:18-27

## Ask And Ye Shall Receive

President Marion G. Romney said:

“The purpose of prayer, . . . is to attune oneself with the spirit or light which ‘proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.’ In that light is to be found sure answers to all our needs.

“Prayer is the key which unlocks the door and lets Christ into our lives.” Ensign, May 1978, pp. 48–50

Many people wonder why they pray and pray, asking for assistance or the fulfilment of their righteous desires, but fail to receive answers. One is often left to wonder whether Jesus and the many prophets and apostles who have quoted the statement ‘ask and ye shall receive’ were speaking flippantly or even misleading when in actual practice it doesn’t appear to work with the same simplicity as the statement engenders. In D&C 132:5 it states, “For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, *and the conditions thereof*, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.” (Italics added). It is a blessing to receive an answer to prayer and therefore we must abide the conditions required to receive an answer. So what are the conditions? Before we venture into the conditions, there is an important aspect of prayer everyone should understand first:

### Righteous Desires

The Lord has promised us great happiness and joy if we would but fulfil his will. “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psalms 16:11). His will always follows the path of true happiness, but the world’s will leads to false happiness (entertainment and momentary pleasures). People tend to think; because they have what they would consider to be a righteous desire, the Lord should provide an answer. The question you should ask yourself; is your righteous desire your own or the will and desire of the Lord? “And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God.” (Alma 18:35). Your desires must be according to the Lord’s will and not your own. What was Nephi’s will when told to slay Laban? Nephi had never shed a man’s blood and he didn’t want to start then, but he went against his own righteous desires (to live peaceably and not harm others) and fulfilled the Lord’s will. We also learn of the people of Ohio who had righteous desires but the Lord could not answer them because they went against his word:

“Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that the people in Ohio call upon me in much faith, thinking I will stay my hand in judgment upon the nations, but I cannot deny my word.” D&C 39:16

Then of course there was Peter who, when told by Jesus that he would suffer at the hands of the Jews and be killed and raised again the third day, said, “...Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” To which Jesus responded “...Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” (Matthew 16:21-23). Peter had only the best of intentions and desired that Christ should be saved and remain with them to continue teaching them, but Jesus listened to the Spirit and knew the Father’s will concerning him, and would follow it even if it meant he must suffer at the hands of men until dead.

Finally, right after Nephi declared in 2 Nephi 4:35 “Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss...” in the very next verses we read, “Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren. But behold, their anger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life.” (2 Nephi 5:1-2).

There are many other examples as well, even of Jesus who prayed that the cup (of the sins of the world) might pass him by, as he didn’t want to experience the pain he knew would come from the atonement, yet he stated, “...Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42). When we ask it must be according to the Lord’s will and not our own:

“... do not ask for that which you ought not.” D&C 8:10

Your child, whom you love with all your heart, begins to take drugs. You pray and pray for the Lord to stop him. There are two things you need to consider when making such a request: First, you are asking Heavenly Father to take away your child’s agency (which was Satan’s plan, not the Lord’s), but he cannot deny his word. Second, this may have been part of your child’s plan. It may be that this great fall (where the path to drugs often takes one) will cause your child to realize the path of worldly pursuits does not work but leads to poverty, danger, false friends and dependence. When he hits bottom, waking up in prison, he may finally look at the life he has chosen then think about the last time he remembers being happy and realizes it was when he lived at home, went to church and prayed. It is only then he longs to be back home and will develop the strength and courage to return. The story of

the prodigal son is a sad and painful one but it is still a story of success. Your child's struggle to return may also bear the story that will one day cause many other youth, deceived by the enticement of drugs, to gain the strength needed to overcome before they enter that path to the great fall. This may be the mission or great work only your child's experience will bring to fruition.

When you think about it, some of the greatest missionaries known to us (Alma the younger, the sons of Mosiah, Paul, etc.) lived very rebellious lives, or in Paul's case, fanatical against the people of God. When they finally saw the light, that conversion caused the light of the gospel to burn within them much brighter than those who had lived in His light throughout their lives. One is compelled to wonder if they would have had such a passion for missionary work, and been willing to sacrifice so much of their lives, had they not first endured a life of rebellion. Does this mean we don't pray for our wayward child? Of course not. But instead of asking the Lord to stop him, ask that he may find wisdom and be protected while he learns through his experience. You can also ask the Lord to show you or help you to understand why your son is passing through this trial. It may be that the Lord will fill your soul with confidence and understanding that He has a plan for him which includes this trial. Such a revelation will give you the strength to endure watching your child suffer through this ordeal.

Another scripture verse of particular interest states:

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

James 4:3

How often do we justify our righteous desires and pray for what we want? We want a better job, a nicer house, to lose weight, improved health, better car, smarter children, greater faith, etc., but all of these righteous desires are for our personal benefit. Remember, Jesus taught, “For your Father, who is in heaven, knoweth that you have need of all these things.” (D&C 84:83) so why treat our Father in Heaven like Santa Clause? When will we begin to seek his will or to understand the lesson our trial is teaching us? Will you ever learn patience if you don't work for or wait for success? Will you ever learn the value of serving if you expect the Lord to help others instead of you getting out of your comfort zone to help them? Will you ever learn love if you never do anything thankworthy but leave it for the Lord to do? Will you ever learn humility if the Lord gives you the fancy car or house when you never worked to earn it? Will you ever receive the blessings of the word of wisdom if the Lord made you healthy while you were eating Twinkies and ice-cream while sitting on the sofa



watching soap operas? Will you ever learn virtue if you are never enticed to do evil then overcome? Will you ever learn temperance if you are never given the opportunity to have more than you need? Pray that the Lord will give you the wisdom, strength, courage and insight to learn the lesson of your trials, and to fulfill his will and not your own.

We tend to think of lust only as evil and selfish desires, and they typically are; but there are also righteous lusts such as we have seen above with the people of Ohio and Nephi's handling of Laban. You may pray for and desire that your spouse will accept the gospel and be sealed to you in the Temple, but the Lord knows whether your spouse would ever be able to live up to the covenants he/she will make in the temple or altogether turn against Him and be held accountable because of the covenants they made. You may be a righteous person and have a great idea for a business that could make an excessive amount of money whereby you could bless many people and give to many charities; yet you seem to falter at every turn or it may seem like elements in the world continue to combine against you and keep you from succeeding as you believe you could. It may be that the fortune you would receive would corrupt your spouse or children and cause much sorrow. The riches may be your downfall or the downfall of those around you so the Lord is blessing you by not making you rich. You may pray for the sick to heal yet that person is needed elsewhere and you are praying against God's will ("And again, it shall come to pass that he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed." D&C 42:48). It is imperative when we pray that we do not implore the Lord to fulfil our righteous lusts but trust in and seek the Spirit to help us with our prayer that we may know the Lord's will and pray for strength to follow it. Pray as Jesus did, "Not my will but thine be done."

### **Conditions of Receiving Answers**

We now come to that point brought up in D&C 132:5; in order to receive the blessing of having your prayer answered, we must abide by the conditions of that blessing. So what are the conditions requisite to receive answers?

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you." 3 Nephi 18:20

Praying for that 'which is right', and believing you shall receive are conditions. How do we know 'which is right'? By humbling ourselves and asking according to the Spirit.

"Ask the Father in my name, in faith believing that you shall receive, and you shall have the Holy Ghost, which manifesteth all things which are expedient unto the children of men." D&C 18:18

When you ask you must have faith and believe that you shall receive. But, then comes the clincher, we must ask only for those things ‘which are expedient’. We must ask only for what we need and not more ‘that we may consume it upon our lusts.’

Another reason we do not receive answers:

“And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.” Moroni 7:9

Each time we pray, we must have a true intension. Flighty prayers just because we woke up, are going to bed, about to eat, wherein we are simply fulfilling obligations and hurry through so we can get to what is really on our mind, are not acceptable to the Lord. You should always have in your heart at least one temptation you are trying to overcome, one person you are trying to help, one cause you are trying to fight, one good deed you are trying to accomplish, one doctrine you are trying to understand, etc., something of intense interest wherein you are truly seeking the assistance or assurance of the Lord, or your prayer is vain.

“And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust.

“Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.” Mormon 9:20-21

The added phrases here of ‘doubting nothing’ as well as ‘believing that ye shall receive’, in the verse prior, are highly significant. If you have doubts that the Lord will answer you, that you are worthy to receive an answer, that you are asking the right thing-- then you may not receive an answer. It states in Ether 12:12 “For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith.” Even the resurrected Christ could not perform miracles until after a show of faith; so why then should we think he would answer our prayers without faith? The Lord promised Mormon, “And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth.” (Mormon 9:25).

Something that may help you to increase your faith during your prayers, especially when you truly need an answer now, is to bear your testimony to the Lord, acknowledging the various times he helped you or was with you in your time of need. It is not that the Lord needs your acknowledgement to bolster his ego, it’s because of the effect bearing your testimony has on your faith. With each instance you recall, where the Lord working on your

behalf, the Spirit confirms the truth and will bring to remembrance another. As you remember more and more you begin to realize the many times the Lord has been with you in your life, and because of the continual acknowledgement of the Spirit, you become more in tune with him. Because of the several manifestations of the truth, you start to feel the Spirit with greater intensity. Then the thought impacts upon your mind that if he has helped you on those occasions then why not now? Your faith may increase to such a zenith that you can actually *expect* the Lord to answer you. Elder Bruce R McConkie made this point clear:

“Faith in its full and pure form requires an unshakable assurance and an absolute confidence that Deity will hear our pleas and grant our petitions. It requires a mental guarantee, sealed with surety in the soul, that what we ask is right and will be granted. Only then can we "come boldly unto the throne of grace," there to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) And it scarcely needs that no person can have this confidence and assurance when he knows he is not living in the way the Lord wants him to live.” A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pp. 187

Elder McConkie interjected something important at the end, “...no person can have this confidence and assurance when he knows he is not living in the way the Lord wants him to live.” President Joseph Fielding Smith also taught:

“It is the Holy Priesthood that unlocks the door to heaven and reveals to man the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. It is this Divine Authority which makes known the knowledge of God! Is there any wonder that the world today is groping in gross darkness concerning God and the things of his kingdom? We should also remember that these great truths are not made known even to members of the Church unless they place their lives in harmony with the law on which these blessings are predicated.” Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:338

Therefore, we must also repent as guilt is a feeling that will repel you from God, which is that second death whereby we become separated from our Heavenly Father by our choosing. “Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.” (Mosiah 2:38). Only when we remove guilt can we endure the presence of God. “And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins. ...And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.”

(Enos 1:2, 5-6). Before we pray for that which is expedient for us, we must repent of our sins that we may have confidence in the presence of our Father or confidence that our Father will hear us and be near.

“In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.” JSH 1:29

“...and I know that thou wilt, even at this time, hearken unto my words...” Helaman 11:14

You must also be focused or have your eye single to the Lord’s glory to receive. There was a time, while Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, that he had an argument with Emma. Following this argument he tried to continue the work of translation, but when he sat down to commence he found his gift of translation had been taken from him. When he prayed he was told to reconcile things with Emma first and then he could continue the work of translation, which he did. Therefore, if we have doubts or distractions then we should also reconcile those things which are causing our doubts and distractions before we seek answers to our prayers.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7

If you abide in Him or if you are doing His will, and His words abide in you, or the Holy Ghost is giving you words or the thoughts of your heart, then whatever you ask for it shall be done, because you will be doing that which is the will of the Lord.

“Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

“And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.” Helaman 10:4-5

Here Nephi was promised that whatsoever he shall say shall be done because he had proven to the Lord that even at the peril of his life he would not ask anything contrary to His

will. This means he only asked as the Spirit directed him, which is something we can all train ourselves to do.

“And I said unto him: What am I that I should tempt God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be true? Yet thou wilt deny it, because thou art of the devil. Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee, let that be a sign unto thee that he has power, both in heaven and in earth; and also, that Christ shall come. And thy will, O Lord, be done, and not mine.” Jacob 7:14

Jacob here sounds, almost, as though there may be some doubt in his heart since he is not simply saying his will but leaving it up to the Lord to do His work as He saw fit. When bound in cords by his brothers, Nephi, in much faith knowing the Lord could do so, prayed for the Lord to give him strength to burst those cords. Can you imagine the angel who assisted him saying to himself ‘okay Nephi, take it down a notch, I’ll let you go’ as he loosened those bands? Nephi thought of a method of escape but the Lord had an easier solution to the problem. Jacob’s confidence in the Lord was not waning; his desire was to show a sign, but he knew it was contrary to the teachings of the Lord to show a sign because you want to prove something. Therefore, the inspiration he must have received gave him the solution that would save many people (by turning those deceived back to the Lord). Because he didn’t have the time to pray for the will of the Lord against Sherem, he spoke according to the inspiration he received and left it up to the Lord to show the sign he felt would do the most good at that time. Because Jacob’s will was that of the Lord’s, it was done as Jacob spake.

“Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.” D&C 112:10

Brigham Young taught that a humble man was a teachable man. “Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.” (Ecclesiastes 4:13). When you are truly humbled you are in a state of openness, giving up your own will or ego, and willing to submit to and learn from others. It is in this state where you can more readily hear and follow the promptings of the Spirit. (“And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.” D&C 1:28).

### **Diligently Seek**

“For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost...” 1 Nephi 10:19

We need to diligently seek and not just ask, as it was said to Oliver Cowdery in D&C 9:7 “Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.” To diligently seek means that we will exhaust all our available resources before we expect an answer from the Lord. You seek answers from your scriptures, your church leaders and friends, the internet, other inspired reference books, and when you cannot find your answer then is the time to ask the Lord and He will lead you to your answer. It is also important to realize the Lord’s answer may come in audible tones, a whispering of the heart, or it may come from a business associate, a song, movie, painting on a wall; it may come from a friendly conversation, a newspaper, the hug of a child or the gentle lick on your leg from your pet. The Lord will most likely use those things around you to answer you and will only speak to you directly when it is the only way for you to understand something expedient for you.

“...Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;” Abraham 2:12

There is a story of a man who was upon his housetop protecting himself from a torrent of water rushing round about. In this flood there were cars, trees, animals and various refuse caught in its wake being carried away. The man full of faith calls upon the Lord to save him and feels the assurance of the Spirit within him that he will be saved. Suddenly a man in scuba gear swims by and yells to the man to jump into the water and he will carry him to safety. The man of faith tells him to go find someone else to save because he has prayed and the Lord will save him. Later a boat comes by and the driver tells him to jump in and he will take him to safety, but the man of faith tells him ‘there are others that need your boat; hurry, go help them’ for he was certain the Lord would save him. The water was now through the windows and the foundation was about to give way when a helicopter came to rescue the man of faith; yet again he told the pilot to go save others for he was certain the Lord was about to save him. At last the house gave way to the flood and the man drowned. On the other side he met the Lord and asked, “Lord, I called upon you in much faith to save me yet you let me drown. Why Lord?” To which the Lord responded, “I sent a swimmer, a boat and a helicopter, what more could I have done?”

Look for the Lord’s answers in everything around you. When your eyes are opened, you will see the Lord talking to you constantly, in everything around you.

### **Importune**

“And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

“For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?”

“And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

“I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Luke 11:5-9

Sometimes we need to importune the Lord to receive an answer. You must understand that importuning in this instance does not mean nagging or being repetitive. This goes along with the section on diligence above. When you have asked but do not receive, you then seek to find other sources for your answer, and when they have failed you come to the Lord and ask again. (“...And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth. And thus I will do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me.” Ether 1:43). You repeat this process over and over until you receive an answer; this is importuning the Lord. Many people performing genealogical work can attest to this level of importuning to receive answers.

“Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me.” Alma 5:46

## Negative Logic

The Lord uses both sides of logic to make his point. Above he has taught the positive side and now we will look at the negative side to see how we pray incorrectly or why we don't receive answers:

“Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you;

“And if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation.” D&C 88:63-65

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:” Psalms 66:18

“Ye endeavored to believe that ye should receive the blessing which was offered unto you; but behold, verily I say unto you there were fears in your hearts, and verily this is the reason that ye did not receive.” D&C 67:3

“Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.” 1 Nephi 15:11

“Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss;” 2 Nephi 4:35

There are many other similar verses but this will suffice. In these examples we don't receive answers when we ask for things that are not expedient for us (you don't need it or it is not important for you to have at this time), when we are not living worthily, or we have fears or doubts in our heart. Therefore, the best way to remove these negatives is to first humble ourselves through faith and repentance until we feel the Spirit, which can only manifest itself when we are worthy (“And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts.” D&C 1:33). Then think about what it is you desire and ask yourself, is this actually expedient for me at this time or is it a righteous lust? When you ask yourself this, pay attention to your feelings; if you feel that sense of goodness and love, which accompanies the Spirit, then you will know it is a proper thing to ask for. Then, when you begin to pray, listen to the whisperings of the Spirit and pray according to the words that will come to you.

### **It Shall Be Given You**

“And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done.

“But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask...” D&C 50:29-30

Worthiness is a great hindrance to receiving answers. Satan uses guilt to keep us from having the faith to receive answers, (“...For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.” 2 Nephi 32:8) which is why he has made the phrase so prominent ‘nobody’s perfect’. If you don't believe you are pure and clean before the Lord, you also have doubts that you are worthy to receive. If this is the case go, repent and reconcile yourself to those you may have sinned against and then will your confidence wax strong in the presence of God. Prepare yourself before prayer in the manner written above and the Spirit will tell you what to ask before you speak.



What happens if we don't follow what the Spirit says and instead follow our own will?  
President Spencer W. Kimball and other Prophets taught:

“The Lord will not force himself upon people, and if they do not believe, they will receive no revelation. If they are content to depend upon their own limited calculations and interpretations, then, of course, the Lord will leave them to their chosen fate.”  
Ensign, May 1977, p. 77

“I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

“Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.”  
Alma 29:3-4

“But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.” Jacob 4:14

Those scriptures are referring to people who loved the Lord and were trying to live as godly as they knew how. However, they didn't realize they were following their own will and not the Lord's. (“When we learn to distinguish between the inspiration that comes from the Spirit of the Lord and that which comes from our own uninspired hopes and desires, we need make no mistakes.” President Marion G. Romney (*New Era*, Oct. 1975, p. 35.)) Thus, the Lord gave them more of what they wanted, ‘because they desired it’, instead of what he would have for them, which caused their fall. Along these same lines Jesus also taught:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Luke 7:21-23

Therefore, when praying, we must seek the Lord's will by listening to and following what the Spirit teaches us to say and not our own will. "And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me." (Moroni 7:33). Remember, it is the promise of the Lord that the Spirit will manifest all things expedient for you, but when they are expedient in him.

### **Prepare Yourself to Pray**

"And now I would 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.

"And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works." Alma 7:23-24

Praying because it is time to or expected, will not yield any spiritual manifestations. The prayer that comes following the relaxing of one's thoughts and pondering matters of the Lord, tend to bring about revelation more than the prayers of covetous and lustful desires or the wants of an erratic and worrisome mind. President David O. McKay once explained to the twelve apostles the following:

"...it is a great thing to be responsive to the whisperings of the Spirit, and we know that when these whisperings come it is a gift and our privilege to have them. They come when we are relaxed and not under pressure of appointments....

"...when we are relaxed in a private room we are more susceptible to those things; and that so far as he was concerned, his best thoughts come after he gets up in the morning and is relaxed and thinking about the duties of the day; that impressions come more clearly, as if it were to hear a voice. Those impressions are right. If we are worried about something and upset in our feelings, the inspiration does not come. If we so live that our minds are free from worry and our conscience is clear and our feelings are right toward one another, the operation of the spirit of the Lord upon our spirit is as real as when we pick up the telephone." Related by Elder Harold B. Lee (Prayer [address to CES religious educators, 6 July 1956], pp. 14–16).

Being in a proper frame of mind is paramount to receiving inspiration and revelation from the Lord. His voice is near silent compared to the one that speaks inside your head.

“Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.” Mormon 9:28

Here again we are told to prepare ourselves and then seek the Lord’s will in our prayer; and not that we may consume it upon our lusts. He also emphasises that we ask in faith ‘with a firmness unshaken’. He then comes to the point of many failed prayers ‘that ye will yield to no temptation’ but serve God. The temptations referred to are righteous lusts where you believe your righteous will (desire) should supersede the Lord’s. He is saying, when you inquire of the Lord, don’t yield to your own temptations or righteous lusts but pray that you will serve God’s will instead.

The question is; what is the Lord’s will? We know that His work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (Moses 1:39). Let us combine this scripture with the following:

“...inasmuch as thou art faithful in counsel... in prayer always... also in thy ministry in proclaiming the gospel in the land of the living, and among thy brethren.

“And in doing these things thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord.” D&C 81:3-4

Therefore, since the missionary effort appears to be the greatest good we can do then it can be surmised that when we pray, if we are praying for education, items, people, strength, etc., which will somehow help to bring ourselves or others closer to God, then we can be assured this is, in part, the fulfilling of His will and something He will definitely give answer to whether the answer is positive or negative. His will also includes your health, faith, strength, perfection, etc. Remember, however, though you want your friend or loved one to understand and accept the gospel, as was explained before, he/she may not be able to abide by it or handle the responsibility associated with the gospel, and thus, because the Lord loves and doesn’t want to lose them, He may not give them the truth or a manifestation at this time. This is where we pray to know what we can do to help prepare them for the responsibility instead of asking the Lord to take away their agency and force them to accept the gospel before they are ready. The Lord has said:

“And I command you that you preach naught but repentance, and show not these things unto the world until it is wisdom in me.

“For they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish.” D&C 19:21-22

Therefore, if the Lord knows this person may eventually rebel against the truth or is unable to live up to the responsibility and would thus thrust themselves into that hell reserved for the rebellious, He may withhold His Spirit until they are ready. God knows their hearts better than we do, which is why we need to seek His Spirit and guidance in all we do.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26-27

“And it shall come to pass that he that asketh in Spirit shall receive in Spirit;

“He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh.” D&C 46:28,30

“And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him; and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.” 3 Nephi 19:24

Here again; let the Spirit guide your words and you shall know the Lord’s will, which will become your own, and will fill you with desire even as Joseph Smith referred to in D&C 20:7 when he received instruction from a holy messenger “And gave unto him commandments which inspired him;” There is a great propensity to rejoice when one receives instruction from the Lord, even if that instruction is not what you were seeking.

There was a young man preparing to go on a mission but had a girlfriend he dearly loved. His faith was such that there was no choice as to whether or not he would stay home to marry her, for he was resolute on fulfilling a mission. However, he had such passionate feelings toward her that he desired to ask her to wait for his return. He prayed and prayed and never received an answer. Finally he confided in a mentor asking what he should do. His mentor asked him, “What would happen if the Lord said yes?” his eyes grew large, his smile could not be restrained as he said, “Well, that’s what I’m hoping for.” The mentor then asked, “And what would happen if he said no?” The young man’s face turned to gloom as he said, “That’s what I’m afraid of.” The mentor then suggested that he think about life with her and then, again, think about life without her. He then said, “When you come to terms with the fact that you can accept either life and be happy, that is the time to ask the Lord what is His will. Until then you are only telling the Lord what your will is and not seeking His.”

The young man did as the mentor suggested. Upon their next meeting, the young man greeted the mentor with exuberance as he gleefully shouted, “It worked, it worked! I got an answer.” The mentor concluded from this display of bounding joy that the answer must have been in the affirmative. The mentor then asked what the answer was? The boy replied, “He said no!” Taken aback the mentor asked why he was so happy. The boy responded, “Because I received an answer and when I did all the anxiety and pressure was relieved and I realized I would be happy without her, and now I can focus on my mission.”

As you see, even a negative answer can bring solace and joy when we realize we are following the Lord’s will instead of our own.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16

What is an effectual fervent prayer? More than trying to beat the record for the shortest prayer ever offered before or after a meeting, or the ‘I’m hungry, let’s eat’ prayer. It is the sincere prayer from the heart where there is a legitimate seeking of the Lord’s voice on some matter of keen importance to you.

“I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.

“Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.” 3 Nephi 17:2-3

Here Jesus realized they had not properly prepared themselves for what He was about to teach them so He told them to go home and prepare their minds for the morrow. Have you ever tried preparing yourself for an important prayer you plan on having tomorrow? Yes some have with fasting and prayer but the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man does not come without actually preparing yourself first to receive of the Spirit.

Now that you understand the true order of prayer, realize when you are seeking to fulfil the Lord’s will, His Spirit will teach you what to say and what to ask for, and when you do, you shall receive.

In conclusion; here are the steps you should fulfil to prepare yourself to receive instruction or revelation through prayer:

Repent of your sins that you may have faith and confidence in the presence of the Lord.

Try to resolve your query first.

Come to the Lord in faith, believing that He will answer you (bear your testimony if you are weak in faith).

Ask for that which is right; you will know what is right because you will feel after the words of the Spirit within you as you speak.

Ask and you shall receive. Again, remember that His will also includes your happiness, your health, your peace of mind, and so forth.

Most importantly: Understand that you must be ready to live by or fulfill the revelations you receive because with each revelation comes responsibility. He will not tell you the president of the church is His Prophet to the world unless you are ready to live by the words he will give you; He will not answer your petition as to whether or not you should follow after a financial opportunity unless you are ready to accept either answer, etc. Therefore, you must not only be seeking an answer according to the Lord's will but also be willing to live by the consequences or ramifications of His answer "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do *it*,..." (*Ezra 7:10*).

A young man who had been excommunicated was asked by a priesthood leader why he never grasped the gospel in his life, having been born a member. He responded that he once prayed very hard for a sign or manifestation that God was there but he received no answer so he gave up. The leader then asked what he did after he gave up. He followed after the path of drugs, sex and all worldly pleasures ("...ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head." Heleman 13:38). The leader then explained; the reason he didn't receive an answer was because he already had desires to follow evil paths and was probably hoping he wouldn't get an answer so he would have an excuse to do as he pleased. Heavenly Father merely gave you what you wanted as he knew you didn't want the path He would choose for you. Silence was the answer you wanted and silence was the answer you received. When we come to the Lord with desires already in our heart of an answer we want ("Wherefore, enter ye in at the gate, as I have commanded, and seek not to counsel your God." D&C 22:4), the Lord does not answer such prayers unless they are according to His will.

"And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in

need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.” Alma 34:28

Prayer can be a very joyous occasion when we approach Him prepared and ready to receive. Learn to pray as a prophet and you’ll enjoy the blessings and wisdom that will come your way through revelation.

### **Your Revelations are For You**

It is one thing to receive a personal answer to help you in one aspect of your life while you struggle on the path toward God. It is an entirely different situation when you are on the path to God. Before we venture onto the path to God, there is a very important element you should be prepared for.

Like the prophets before you who have received the further light and knowledge, yet taught only milk and not meat, you too will come to find, when you begin to receive this greater knowledge of the Lord, that you will need to keep many of these revelations to yourself. Like Joseph of old who received dreams by which his brothers were want to kill him, but instead sold him to the Ishmeelites, you are likely to get excited about the new understanding the Lord will teach you and because of your excitement you will share what you have learned thinking others will enjoy the light you have received. However, you will find your revelation may be met with disdain and you may be judged and criticized, rebuked and derided because of your revelation; because *they* are not ready for it. Like the Pharisees who were among the most educated and strictest sect of Jews, there are members who are sanctimonious because of their knowledge and self-righteousness. They have the appearance of being very good and righteous people, solid and active in the works of the Lord, and you may think they would be the most prepared to receive of this greater knowledge. However, it may be they who will actually be the first to condemn you and your revelations. It could be their righteous pride blinds them from the love and humility needed to comprehend the Lord’s further light and knowledge you have received. Remember, as it was said before, there is no love in judgementalness, and they will be judging your revelation instead of trying to learn from it.

One way the Lord will let you know you should not tell this person your advanced knowledge, is; just before you speak the thing you should not, somebody or some thing will interrupt you. When you see this happen, speak no more on the subject unless they ask you to continue following the interruption. If they do then they were actually interested and may be ready for this new understanding. Otherwise, they will by no means follow the example of

Nephi in seeking to receive the same revelation from the Lord. Even Jesus, when He cast the exceedingly fierce devils out of the two men and into the swine, when the people of the town heard of this great miracle, they responded thus: “And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.” (Matthew 8:34). Therefore you will find in some respects, the path to God is a very lonely path for there are so few traversing its glorious course.

“Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night-time.

“And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.

“And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.” 2 Nephi 4:23-25

Remember, the majority of the world, including those of your own faith, study the scriptures only to defend their current beliefs; as the young returned missionary did in the example given earlier when, upon his return he was taught by a high priest that Satan would not be bound in chains a thousand years and he did not believe him, showing evidence to the contrary, until it was revealed to him by the Spirit years later. On the path to God you will learn things that contrast or contradict some of those beliefs or traditions, and those, not ready, will defend their beliefs even to the point of attacking you because of the light you will receive. Therefore, when you begin sharing your revelations and you find members who begin to ‘nicely’ contend with you, realize their minds are closed or they are not prepared for this information so you must leave it for the Lord to teach them in His way, when they are ready; otherwise, like Joseph of old, they may ‘sell you to the Ishmaelites’.

You need to realize that if the Lord wanted everyone to know the revelation he just gave you, it would already be in the holy writ or it would have come from the Prophet and not directly from the Lord. The fact He had to teach you directly is because others were not ready for it yet. Hence, why push your new enlightenment on any of them? Teach your personal revelations only when the Spirit directs you.

Hopefully, as you receive these revelations you will not get caught up in the righteous pride, false piety or sanctimony that Satan will strive to lead you toward because of your revelations. For those already on this path (you know who you are) realize that the



temptations just mentioned are the new temptations the adversary will press upon you to impede your progress.

“For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.” D&C 3:4

Love is the only attribute that will keep you from falling into this trap. With each revelation you could seek the love of the Father and His Spirit to know those humble enough and prepared to learn from your revelations. If the person you want to teach is not ready, simply love them and don't consider yourself better than them for although they may not be ready for your revelation, they may have received revelations you have not and they may have something to teach you as well. Remember many scriptures teach that in the last days the Lord says your sons and daughters will prophesy and that He will use those who are unlearned and despised to thrash the nations by the power of His Spirit. Therefore remain humble, teachable and full of love, (knowing that even children may have something yet to teach you) following the direction of the Lord, and you will by no means fall from the grace He will give you. Be patient with others and know they are fine where they are in their development and it is not your duty to bring them to the level of understanding you have received (unless the Spirit directs otherwise). Remember too that the path to God is taught by God Himself through His Spirit, angels and revelation. He may use you to help here and there, but it will never be your responsibility to lead them on this path. You are only given power to lead on the path toward God. Therefore have joy and rejoicing in the light you will receive but remember, this light is for you and those only who the Lord knows are prepared to receive.

## The Path 'Toward' Leads to The Path 'To' God

There are two paths or speeds whereby one can traverse the path toward God. Many saints tend to choose the playful approach. To build upon the analogy of Lehi's dream of the tree of life; people of the world are in the misty flats searching for the iron rod. The iron rod in this case will mean the path toward God. When they have found it (join the church) they grasp onto the iron rod and begin their journey. However, as this path is long and difficult and even boring to some. Being the playful people they are, some get distracted, others like to show off and let go of the rod then grasp onto it again just before they fall into the murky river. Others like the thrill of sliding down the rod causing others to lift their hands from the rod. Some of those lifting their hands think this person is fun and run down the hill to observe him. These are stopped only by the lone person down the rod who is stalwart and will not lift his/her hand from the rod making the slider finally stop and see his error. Some like to jump over the rod and crawl under it, take breaks and slowly follow but never really quite grasp it. They somewhat follow those who have a good hold, but being skeptical and cautious, yet ever interested to see where the rod will take them, they do not strive with much energy to get there themselves. All of the playful people have the potential of making it but each time they play they become sluggish and slip down the hill, losing ground, finding only that they have to climb again. When they begin their trek to reach the height they once were, they realize it took an excessive amount of strength to play so they move ever so slowly as compared to those who have never varied. They also realize they will never catch those who never slid but continued their march line upon line and precept upon precept.

“They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey;

“Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst, because of their transgressions.”

“And now, my son, I would that ye should understand that these things are not without a shadow; for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual.” Alma 37:41-43

The other path are those who grasp onto the rod never allowing anything to deter them nor break their grip. These are on the fast track and able to get there with greater speed. Even when bumped by the playful people; they may be forced to stop for a moment, until the

playful person removes himself as the obstacle of impedance, but they will not release the rod. They will even strive to help the playful person re-grip the rod so long as they can reach him without releasing the rod themselves.

Both speeds begin the same way. First we read the scriptures and listen to the Lord's instruction through his living prophets. (Remember: Joseph Smith taught that a prophet is an inspired teacher and claimed anyone with the testimony of Jesus is a prophet.) During this process of learning from the scriptures and prophets, the Holy Ghost will bear testimony of the truth of their teachings.

“And, behold, and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth—

“And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

“And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.” D&C 68:2-4

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:20-21

The way to know if they are speaking by the Spirit of truth is if you are receiving by the Spirit of truth:

“Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.

“And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” D&C 50:21-24

Those who held tight are they who purify and sanctify themselves, enduring the trials created by the sliders and playful people (as well as the people of the world), increasing in worthiness and confidence, receiving strength from the Spirit to maintain their grip on the rod. When they reach the fruit and receive of its nourishment and strength, they then receive

the encouragement of Christ to continue a little further, without the rod, on the path he will show them (“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11-12), until they are ultimately able to endure the presence of God (that is the presence of God in this life).

“Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord,…” Mosiah 2:38

“Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God;…” D&C 121:45

For those who are playful and struggling to maintain their grasp on the rod, there are those that will direct you back and lighten your load so you can move faster along the path. They will show you that the way this is accomplished is by doing those things which will remove those burdens (sins) dragging you down:

“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” James 5:20

Missionary work will compel you to seek the help of the Spirit in providing what is needed to bring another to the rod and put him on that path toward God. Because no unclean thing can be in His presence, you must first be forgiven your sins before He can give you His words and manifest the truth of those words to your investigator. Therefore, by doing missionary work you are forgiven, thus removing the burden of a multitude of sins slowing you down.

“Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you.” D&C 62:3

For the reason listed above, the bearing of your testimony will also remove sins helping you to release the burden of those many sins.

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:8

Charity, or the pure love of Christ, will also remove the burden of many sins which hold you back. Here are a few others:

“And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.

“And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.” Mosiah 4:12-13

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16

“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Luke 7:47

And, as quoted earlier:

“Faith in its full and pure form requires an unshakable assurance and an absolute confidence that Deity will hear our pleas and grant our petitions. It requires a mental guarantee, sealed with surety in the soul, that what we ask is right and will be granted. Only then can we “come boldly unto the throne of grace,” there to “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16) And it scarcely needs that no person can have this confidence and assurance when he knows he is not living in the way the Lord wants him to live.” Bruce R. McConkie A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pp. 187

Repent and do those works that will remove your sins making you worthy, giving you confidence to stand in the presence of God and it shall be done, “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” (1 John 3:21). Without the burden of many sins to slow your progress, you will find the path toward God much easier and you will be strengthened with increased faith and diligence to hold on to that rod.

### **Desire to be a prophet**

“And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, *and* that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” Numbers 11:29

When you begin to control your thoughts you will realize the power within you to overcome all things, especially the adversary. Hopefully this could also increase your sense of worthiness knowing you are not evil simply because your right brain flashed a fleeting thought before you. You could also increase in confidence, by the new training of your brain, that even those fleeting evil thoughts will dissipate until they eventually disappear. With this in mind you could realize you no longer need to judge yourself as evil because of a fleeting

thought and you will also extend that same courtesy to others realizing you don't have to judge them anymore. This loss of judgementalness is the incipency of the fulness of joy that will now be attainable to you. If you must judge, do so as Jesus did, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30).

Eventually, this new power and joy will develop a desire to become a prophet (inspired teacher and testifier of Christ). "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6). With that desire, the Holy Ghost will begin to teach you the mysteries of God and give the true meanings and intensions of those passages of scripture which embrace hidden messages, beyond what is to be understood by the general populace. "Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God." (Jacob 4:8). Then will you be able to teach by the Spirit in a manner that will bring many to understand the word of the Lord through you. "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men." (D&C 11:21). These mysteries and inspiration will assist you while on the path toward God. Until one reaches this point he/she is only in the preparatory stages of the path toward God. "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." (3 Nephi 12:6). The path toward God bestows personal development through teaching, missionary work, temple work, fervently praying, etc., whereby the Holy Ghost can intervene and bless you with greater knowledge and mysteries.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;" D&C 88:78

That verse could arouse a new sense of desire to become a prophet. It plainly shows us, when we are 'diligently teaching' others we will be instructed more perfectly in theory, principle, doctrine, etc. In the past, while you were teaching, you may have relied on the lesson manual to teach your lessons instead of allowing the Spirit to guide what you teach. The lesson manual has many great quotes, stories and ideas making it an excellent resource in teaching but how would the lesson manual know what each individual in your class needs to

hear at this time in his or her life? “And now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men.” (2 Nephi 33:1). When relying on the Spirit to teach you what you shall speak, you will read the lesson manual but when you begin to teach, an entirely different lesson may come about. “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.” (D&C 42:14). During the time following Christ’s visit to the Nephites, not only were the lessons, but the entire church service was guided by the Spirit, “And their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.” (Moroni 6:9).

The following message was based on an actual event where the teacher received a letter from a student explaining the situation below and the teacher revealing the Spirit changing the course of his lesson.

In his class unbeknownst to the teacher, he had a child reeling over a choice whether or not to give up her chastity to a boyfriend who was importuning this sacrifice as a show of devotion and love. She loved her boyfriend but also wanted to remain true to her virtue. She came to church hoping for an answer. If you were the teacher in this class and were reading the manual teaching the lesson, ‘The Blessings of Work’, could you inspire her or give her the answer to her deeply spiritual problem? This teacher was listening to the Spirit, who caused the discussion to segue over to a lesson on morality and in the course of this lesson he said something that gave this student strength to make the right decision. If your method of teaching entails only the reading of a manual, it could be that you might be held somewhat accountable for the sins of this child if they made the wrong decision because you were to be the tool needed in that instance, but instead you relied on a manual when you could have been seeking the wisdom and words of the Spirit in your discussion. In the actual experience, when the Spirit turned the lesson mid-stream to morality, the girl, who had already decided to give in to her boyfriend’s desires, that Sunday evening, when she was to meet him, instead broke up with him and maintained her virtue.

As the verse in D&C 88:78 also states, when you are teaching by the Spirit, He will teach you doctrine and theories which you have never before thought. You will also be enlightened in the very moment you are speaking as is promised in Matthew 10:19-20:

“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

“For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”

And again in D&C 84:85

“Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man.”

One obstruction people tend to experience when the thought of teaching by the Spirit presents itself; they erroneously believe you must be a theologian or possess great knowledge or have great experience before the Lord will begin to work with you. This notion is inconsistent with the way the Lord works:

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13

“Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

“And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” John 7:14-15

“Wherefore, I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised, to thrash the nations by the power of my Spirit;” D&C 35:13

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Matthew 11:25

“And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.” D&C 128:18

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;” 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

The Lord uses young men to serve missions and even Joseph Smith had but a third grade formal education. The scripture above (Matthew 11:25) where Jesus prays, thanking the Father for revealing His truth to babes or those who are humble and willing to be taught, yet



hiding it from the wise and prudent, could help you to realize the Lord is more likely to reveal his word to you, or a humble seeker of truth, than to one full of pride because of facts with which he has filled his head.

Here again the Lord testifies that we are to be taught not just from scriptures and Prophets but from on high:

"...A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.,) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus." Teachings p153 under 'The Spirit of Revelation'

“Again I say, hearken ye elders of my church, whom I have appointed: Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit;

“And ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power...” D&C 43:15-16

“Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?

“To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth.” D&C 50:13-14

“Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.

“And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” D&C 50:21-24

“But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things.

“And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.” D&C 100:7-8

"The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching." Teaching p196 Under 'Angels and Ministering Spirits'

Thus we see that the Lord intends on teaching us while we teach and He will inspire us what to say while we are in the very act of speaking, "Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men; For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say." (D&C 100:5-6). During this process he may actually teach you new doctrine of which you never before had thought.

Another ensuing effect you may experience; those to whom the Spirit was speaking, following your lesson, will often come up to you saying, 'that was the best lesson I've ever had', or 'that lesson really touched me', or any number of similar messages whereby the Lord will show you who He was teaching or why He directed you to speak in the manner you did. A man recently spoke in Sacrament meeting on the subject of 'ask and you shall receive'. As you could expect, he happen to have a vast amount of information on the subject and had many insights he wanted to share. However, when he began, he suddenly went off track and never had time to get to the points he really wanted to make. When he finished he was somewhat disappointed that he never shared those points so important to him and he felt he let down the members of the congregation by not providing the impact of such an essential topic. Furthermore, when the meeting was over, nobody came up after to declare they got anything out of it. He went home somewhat discouraged thinking his tangent must have come from his pride instead of the Spirit and he ruined the potential for people to receive something efficacious. A couple hours after he returned home he received two calls, one from a lady who was inspired by the talk and another from an attending missionary who wanted him to elaborate on the tangent. It was then he realized the Spirit truly inspired him to speak against his preparation.

This is another aspect of the gospel foretold, and expected, for each of us in these last days:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:" Acts 2:17

We cannot progress to the level the Lord promised us until we begin teaching by the Spirit. If we become acquainted with teaching by the Spirit and the saints become

experienced in listening by the Spirit, then will we develop to a level capable of accepting the promise of the Lord of his covenant he will make with the house of Israel in these last days:

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” Hebrews 8:10-11

Therein lies the expectation of the Lord for us in these last days, that we will be ruled by revelation and not simply rely on man for our education of God’s laws. But this will not come until we are adequately prepared and learn to do all things by the Spirit, or that we all learn to become prophets. You will spend some time as a prophet (inspired teacher with a testimony of Jesus) on the path toward God before you will embark on the path to God. Becoming a prophet however, is a vital step on the path toward God, which will eventually awaken you to the path to God.

## **Sanctify Yourself**

“...Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power...” D&C 43:16

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.” 3 Nephi 27:20

Many people do not understand the meaning of sanctification or to sanctify. In 1 Peter 3:14-15 we read: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...” Now why would we need to sanctify the Lord? The interpretation of these verses helps us understand the meaning of the word, in that, if God causes you to suffer to help fulfil his will, Peter is saying, do not hold it against him or become angry with him. If you hold him blameless and without sin, then you have sanctified him. Therefore, when we do works of righteousness, though we may have committed sins in the process, the Lord will sanctify us or not hold our sins against us, thus purifying our souls whereby the Holy Ghost can speak to us Spirit to spirit. Therefore, to be sanctified, we must live a life such that the Lord can forgive our sins and make us holy, despite our weaknesses.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie defined sanctification as:

“To be sanctified is to become clean, pure, and spotless; to be free from the blood and sins of the world; to become a new creature of the Holy Ghost, one whose body has been renewed by the rebirth of the Spirit. Sanctification is a state of saintliness, a state attained only by conformity to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. The plan of salvation is the system and means provided whereby men may sanctify their souls and thereby become worthy of a celestial inheritance.

“Sanctification is a basic doctrine of the gospel; indeed, the very reason men are commanded to believe, repent, and be baptized is so they ‘may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost,’ and thereby be enabled to stand spotless before the judgment bar of Christ.” *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 675

President Brigham Young taught what sanctification means to him:

“I will put my own definition to the term sanctification, and say it consists in overcoming every sin and bringing all into subjection to the law of Christ. God has placed in us a pure spirit; when this reigns predominant, without let or hindrance, and triumphs over the flesh and rules and governs and controls as the Lord controls the heavens and the earth, this I call the blessing of sanctification. . . .” *In Journal of Discourses*, 10:173

Elder Orson Pratt in speaking of a sanctified people said:

“When we go back to Jackson County, we are to go back with power. Do you suppose that God will reveal his power among an unsanctified people, who have no regard nor respect for his laws and institutions, but who are filled with covetousness? No. When God shows forth his power among the Latter-day Saints, it will be because there is a union of feeling in regard to doctrine, and in regard to everything that God has placed in their hands; and not only a union, but a sanctification on their part, that there shall not be a spot or wrinkle as it were, but everything shall be as fair as the sun that shines in the heavens.” (*In Journal of Discourses*, 15:361.)

President Spencer W. Kimball explains the blessings of the sanctified are not predicated upon position or prestige but by personal achievement:

“Abraham was true with God in all respects. Oft cited is the instance when Abraham gave to God ‘tithes of all.’ Do you think it was any easier for Abraham to be righteous than it is for you? Do you inwardly suspect that Abraham was given a little extra help by the Lord so that he could become a great and righteous man, or do you feel that we can all become as Abraham if we will learn to put God first in our lives? I testify to you that we can become as Abraham, who now, as a result of his valiance, ‘hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.’ Is such exaltation a blessing reserved only for General Authorities, or stake presidents, or quorum presidents, or bishops? It is not. It is a

blessing reserved for all who will prepare themselves by forsaking their sins, by truly receiving the Holy Ghost into their lives, and by following the example Abraham has set.” The Example of Abraham,” Ensign, June 1975, pp. 6–7

Sanctification begins by keeping your eye single to the glory of God:

“And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.” D&C 88:67

“The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

“Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

“If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.” Luke 11:34-36

Many people think that Satan’s work is only to lie, deceive, trick or manipulate. His great work in these last days is to ‘distract’; that we will not have our eye single to God’s glory and will not become sanctified. He helps us get caught up in all the vain things of the world wherein we work excessively first to acquire them and then spend our time using them. In this we find little time for God in our lives. In the vain things of the world, we foolishly believe the lie of Satan that they are the blessings of God. What blessing is it that takes our focus away from God or does not give us the time to love and serve our brothers and sisters? Who now has time to pray as Enos did? Who has time to drop everything and follow Christ as Peter, James and John did after they caught the greatest haul of fish their vocation ever experienced... such that it broke their nets (see Luke 5:1-11)? In our day we would ignore the miracle and see only the blessing given to us and spend our time cleaning the fish, preparing displays and selling them at market so we could make the money. Yes, we would probably remember to say thanks, but do we follow or revere the giver of the gift and seek further guidance and instruction? Who can take the time to fast for days as many of the prophets have done in their quest to reach the Father or to cast out devils or receive many revelations daily such as the sons of Mosiah did (see Alma 17:2-3)? Who has the time to be spiritually focused such as is necessary to perform miracles in his name? “And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust.” (Mormon 9:20). Have we departed from the right way, being distracted by the vain things of the world, wherein his miracles are not performed through us? Do we really have the time to know the

God in whom we should trust? We need to give up some of the distractions of the world and make time to sanctify ourselves. “Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.” (D&C 6:7); “Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul. And seek the face of the Lord always,…” (D&C 101:37-38); “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil;” (Exodus 23:2).

As a prophet you will begin to sanctify yourself by being able to readily identify the Spirit speaking to and leading you. Then you will realize your ability to teach anyone in any circumstance whether it be in business, school, home or while recreating. Your wisdom will increase, your love will increase and your insights into what people are thinking or needing will increase. Each time you speak to people, utilizing the Spirit, you will be taught more perfectly in the gospel and what the Lord expects of you. When you have been true and faithful, living by the true knowledge given you, growing in faith and purifying your soul, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen, because of their faith, and I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me, through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me." (3 Nephi 19:28), then is when you will enter the path to God; then will the Savior eventually visit you directly in word or vision, and give you promises and further instruction:

“Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.” D&C 110:8

"...the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. " Teachings p49 under 'As Man Approaches God He Is Enlightened'

“And again, verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am—not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual.” D&C 67:10

“But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;

“Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;

“Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him;

“To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves;

“That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.” D&C 76:114-118

"...After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter....

"Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God;..." Teachings p151-152 under 'The Second Comforter'

“Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;” D&C 93:1

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.” Moroni 10:33

We are sanctified, in part, each time we feel the Holy Ghost working in our lives; but when you have truly sanctified yourself, or made the Holy Ghost your constant companion, and followed His counsel at all perils, then will you have your calling and election made sure and the Lord Himself will speak to you and become your companion in this life, speaking to you from time to time and giving you instruction according to the will of the Father.

“And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” 3 Nephi 12:8

“But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.

“This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.” D&C 132:23-24

“...Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.

“Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.” Ether 3:13-14

Moroni speaking: “And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;” Ether 12:39

## Introduction to God

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

The ultimate province afforded us is nothing more and nothing less than a life of perfection and love. By enduring the trials of life and proving ourselves worthy, our perfection and love will enable us to develop the attributes and character necessary to meet the Father while yet in this life.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:1-3 (It says to *know*, not ‘believe in’. There is a difference.)

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Psalms 17:15

Who is it that can glorify the Father but those who the Father first glorifies. Does gold plating truly glorify a lead ball? No, because of the lead that remains within it. The only way to make lead glorious is to turn the entire lump into gold and no man has the capacity to do



this on his own. As God is already gold (figuratively speaking), the only way for him to increase in glory is to add more gold. For God to be glorified, he must first glorify us and this can only happen when we eschew all evil and walk the path to God. Jesus glorified God because God first glorified him. When Jesus visited the Nephites he also showed that this is the way Jesus also increases in glory, “Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that *I may be glorified in them.*” (Italics added) (3 Nephi 19:29).

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:21-24

When you have been true and faithful to all Christ has taught then he will introduce you to God the Father that he may purify you and turn you to gold. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“We have the power—and it is our privilege—so to live, that becoming pure in heart, we shall see the face of God while we yet dwell as mortals in a world of sin and sorrow. “This is the crowning blessing of mortality. It is offered by that God who is no respecter of persons to all the faithful in his kingdom.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 52; or Ensign, Nov. 1977, p. 34.)

“Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.” John 6:46

As we see, receiving the second comforter is not the end either, but if we continue to walk with Jesus then he will introduce you to God Himself and you will receive all things, while yet in this life, and become a member of The Church of The Firstborn:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6 (Not the scriptures or prophets but Jesus will take you).

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Matthew 11:27

“The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—

“To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” D&C 107:18-19

“Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.” D&C 88:68

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23

“For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course;

“To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.” JST Genesis 14:30-31

If you believe this only happens to special people then please, with all the fiber of your being, know that in the eyes of the Lord you are special and he is awaiting you with arms wide open. Believe in yourself, believe that God loves you and wants you near Him, believe that He will help you to overcome all your enemies, believe that you can stand in the presence of God... and one day you shall.

## Summary

The church, scriptures and the prophets are meant to prepare us and show the path toward God, but not take us there. When we have done all we are commanded, and live honorable lives, striving to be righteous, charitable, virtuous, faithful, loving, obedient, long-suffering and do the works of the Lord, then one day the Lord will take us by the hand and we shall embark on the path to God. The path to God is found through the path toward God by desiring to help others come to the point where you are and by teaching them through the Spirit (missionary work). This step is hastened by overcoming judgementalness and controlling your thoughts. During this process you will endure persecution and afflictions ("...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12) because you are at odds with the devil, he will now go to war with you. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:18-19). If you are not personally being persecuted then you are not in the war against the adversary but still in the preparation stage. Persecution is a necessary step in your personal spiritual development and you will be rewarded for that which you endure, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12).

While on the path toward God you will receive many revelations ("...Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having many revelations daily, therefore they did preach unto the people..." Helaman 11:23) and be taught the true principles and mysteries of God and His Kingdom. When you have endured persecutions and received the mysteries, and shown that you will do all things whatsoever is required of you, then will you come to the path to God. Then will Christ manifest himself to you either by word or by vision, and give you the promise of eternal life or, in other words, God's life. If you continue to follow faithfully doing all things Jesus tells you and you keep sacred those mysteries given you, then will the Father also manifest Himself or Jesus will reveal Him to you. This is the path we as Latter Day Saints are to traverse and not merely the preparation stage of going to church and obeying the word of wisdom. Joseph was asked --

"Will everybody be damned, but Mormons?" He responded, "Yes, and a great portion of them, unless they repent, and work righteousness." There is more to do and much more joy to receive when we find ourselves on the path to God.

## How to Begin

There is a difference between being on the path 'toward' God, and the path 'to' God. The path toward God runs parallel with the world and they who are on this path keep one foot in church and the other in the world. The path to God is a right angle turn away from the world where one foot can no longer reach this corruptible place. ("Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." 1 Corinthians 10:21). This is the path to trek, and understanding the tools to find this path is essential. The person on the fast track to God will live these Christ like attributes and understand these mysteries:

1. Remove judgmentalness- When you love people without reservation and without conditions, you cannot judge them for you will eventually learn there is no love in judgment, which is why, of the Father it was said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" (John 5:22), then Jesus stated "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." (John 8:15). We are to judge ourselves, not others. If you must judge, judge as Jesus did the adulterous woman... don't be the one to cast the first stone.

2. A more difficult concept to grasp is that God created evil and gives strong delusion that they should believe a lie. When you receive the revelation on this subject you will finally realize God's great love for us and you will understand that God created evil so that we will be able to receive a fulness of joy and appreciate the life without evil that will be ours when we live with him eternally.

God limits what people know so he can forgive them, "... neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him." (2 Samuel 14:14), "Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come." (D&C 25:4). With knowledge comes responsibility. "For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation" (D&C 82:3). God gives people strong delusion because of his love for them; knowing they will not be able to live up to the responsibilities of the fulness of the gospel, "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." (John 9:41), he therefore limits their knowledge. Therefore, by believing those delusions, they will

never take upon them covenants they would be required to live by or be cast out. “He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” (John 12:40). You will also note the verse in James 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Thus they who do not know the fulness of the gospel also cannot be judged by the fulness of the gospel (“Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15) “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;” (Romans 2:12) and Christ’s atonement can have power to save them in the highest kingdom afforded those of a limited spiritual capacity, “For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” (2 Corinthians 3:9-10). This does not mean they will receive the same or all the blessings you shall, “For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory. And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory. And he who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory; therefore he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory.” (D&C 88:22-24).

3. Love, charity, the bearing of your testimony and missionary work will remove a multitude of sins. When you are anxiously engaged in a good cause and strive to turn wicked people from their evil ways through your abounding love, your sins are forgiven and you are strengthened and able to overcome all sins and perfect your soul. Therefore, we must spread the gospel at every opportunity.

4. Preparing ourselves for the law of consecration and removing the power of the devil. During the millennium the devil will be bound only by our ability to block him from our thoughts and the desires of our hearts. We can and must do this now and teach our children this ability also, because when Christ returns He will not push a button that suddenly removes all evil and will take away our agency. The peace that will reign during the millennium will be caused by our increase of knowledge in overcoming that evil one and our desire to do so. The other important aspect of giving up evil is giving up the gods of this world and removing our selfishness and self-serving ways.

5. Become perfect. Yes we can and must become perfect in love, in the application of our priesthood duties, in our charity and service to others, in our judgment (or lack thereof), in our thoughts and our desires toward God, just as Jesus did. We must live by, and increase in

all godly attributes, especially those which are most difficult to the world, i.e. love your enemies, forgive all, perform miracles, pray in the Spirit, sacrifice all worldly goods and pleasures, overcome evil, release all idols, etc.

6. The temple ordinance. We must do the work for our dead but also strive to understand the temple ordinances because they teach us how to overcome the world and ultimately come to God in this life as well as the next.

7. Living the law of consecration and building the New Jerusalem. We can start now to live the law of consecration between ourselves (“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Galations 6:2) instead of waiting for the Prophet (president of the church) to tell us it is time to live it, which he may never do (“But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned.” D&C 58:29). The law of consecration is a personal commitment to serve others instead of yourself, “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.” (1 Corinthians 10:24). Do we live in houses bigger than what we need? Do we drive cars that are expensive or ostentatious, that show off our wealth? Do we wear jewelry and adorn ourselves in the latest fashions so we can be admired? “...Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another;...” (Mosiah 23:7). Do we have people in our midst living below a comfortable standard of living and we are not striving to give of our talents or means to help them achieve more?

If you do not comprehend those mysteries listed above then you could strive to learn of them for they are taught by the Spirit, and they bring peace to your soul and joy beyond measure. Remember, God’s plan is a plan of happiness; how much more would your life increase in happiness if you understood and lived those principals listed above? Think about it, the scripture states, “at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more.” With God and living His lifestyle there is joy and pleasure. Have you ever known pleasure in judgementalness? Has God ever had pleasure kicking his children out of his presence (or when you make an enemy of someone)? Does bringing someone into the fold or finding a lost relative and having their work done for them bring pleasure? Will overcoming Satan and all his temptations bring pleasure? Would understanding your place in the plan of God bring pleasure? Would living the law of consecration, trusting everyone, no longer fearing worldly people, etc., bring pleasure? The closer you come to understanding and ultimately living the law of consecration, the greater will be your pleasure in this life and eternal pleasure in the next. The pleasures of the world are momentary, the pleasures of the Lord are eternal. Choose happiness and the pleasures of the Lord that they may remain forever more.

## Understanding Charity

When we think of charity, those familiar with the scriptures are drawn first to the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Corinthians. There is no other scripture defining this virtue in greater detail. However, before we get into this divine aspiration, I would like to call your attention to what preceded this inspired expository. In chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, Paul was teaching about the many spiritual gifts to covet:

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

We tend to look on these gifts and desire them ourselves or to see them manifest in others. However, after discussing the importance of these various gifts and how they are manifest in many members of the church, at the end of that chapter; Paul puts those spiritual gifts into perspective by stating in verse 31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” Thus, these spiritual gifts are the precursor to something better, something of greater importance, ‘a more excellent way.’ He then introduces charity as defined in chapter 13. Therefore, whether we have the gifts of the Spirit or not, what we should truly desire is a mind and a will to fulfill the law of charity, for in this divine attribute is the promise of the Lord found in D&C 121:45 “Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”

Our experience of charity somewhat pales in comparison to the understanding which Paul was trying to achieve in his attempt to explain this virtue in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians. Many of us are still puzzled over what Paul has said, as well as how difficult and perplexing it would be to accomplish his level of charity. Charity is not just love; it is a combination of love coupled with a tremendous faith and trust in the Lord. To say it is the pure love of Christ is not adequate to the understanding of most because they don’t understand the meaning of the pure love of Christ. A person filled with charity is perfect, for such an one could not commit sin; because sin is lack of love. A charitable person constantly forgives people at the onset or notion that they *might* sin against him, and as it is happening they are already

praying for the person. Therefore, a charitable person cannot be offended or feel any sense of retribution or loss when they are afflicted. This is because they know the Lord is watching these events and he will not allow anyone to harm them greater than what the Lord knows they could endure.

A charitable person will give freely, if he has, and not grudgingly because he not only feels obligated by covenants he has made, or a duty to God, but he also loves others more than himself. He gives all because he trusts in the Lord's promise that he will never lack or be without; and because of his bounding love, he cannot stand to see others lack when he has so much more. A charitable person has only desires to build, inspire and ameliorate those around him so he could never offend purposefully. A truly charitable person could watch everything be taken from him, enduring the very trials of Job, and like Job, shed not a tear or have any negative thing to say against anyone. Therefore, charity cannot be experienced without tremendous faith in the Lord, that He will never allow you to suffer beyond what you can endure; that He has a great reward awaiting you because you allowed yourself to suffer in order that He may teach those performing evil acts against you, to learn by their mistakes. Because you truly understand the Lord's plan you will have charity, and not because you gave money to a cause or paid tithing or were kind to someone in need. A charitable person will truly love his enemies, and this can only happen because of his great faith in God's plan knowing that no enemy could truly take anything from him or harm him, so his suffering in this life is but a small thing he must endure for the ultimate salvation of his brother.

Paul was the first to give such a detailed description of charity, but before we delve into Paul's understanding, let us realize the significance this all encompassing virtue entails, in our day, according to the words of Moroni:

“And again, I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men.

“And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father.

“Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, that thou wilt prove them, and take away their talent, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.



“And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.

“And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.” Ether 12:33-37

As Moroni knew, we must also know that if we, as a people, do not have charity then the Lord will take away our talent and give it to them who shall have more abundantly. Remember, Moroni was praying about us, the ‘Gentile’ nations of our day. Yes, the gospel was given to the Gentiles in the beginning of this dispensation but have the Gentile nations began turning away from the Lord’s call? Do we not see the gospel growing in greater abundance among the ‘heathen nations’ and slowing in the nations of the Gentiles? The percentage of growth in Africa and the Caribbean currently top the LDS growth charts. Mission realignment has seen an increase of missions in Africa, Latin America and the western United States but has actually backed off a bit in Europe and Australia. “And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles.” (3 Nephi 20:20). Has this already begun? If you listen to nearly any radio station in England long enough you will hear the radio announcer boast about England being part of “the Godless west” as they so affectionately call it. The scriptures and prophecy alludes to the fact that if the Gentiles do not repent and come unto the Lord, the gospel will be taken from them and given to other nations who are more worthy. That does not mean the church will end and resume elsewhere, but it does mean the blessings of the gospel, that keeps nations from being destroyed, will be taken from those nations who will not adhere to or will reject the gospel, and will be given to those who will receive it. Therefore it behooves us to increase in charity, not that we, ‘the gentiles’, may continue to maintain power over the church, but that the nations of the gentiles will continue to increase as well as the heathen nations; that the root and the branches may grow together equal in strength.

Paul gave a simpler and more concise explanation of charity in Philippians 4:11 “...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” If you altered that statement a little to say ‘for I have learned, in whatsoever state I (and others) are in, therewith to be content’, you may have a clearer idea of how you can summarize the beginning of charity. To be charitable one must first be content with themselves and every character around them, to love them just the way they are.

Charity is not one grand feeling of love, a great act, or some service in church, nor is charity something only very religious church attendees or leaders achieve. Charity is a state of mind. It is a way of experiencing life and doing things as would God. Again, Jesus said, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." (John 8:15), therefore, if we were to abide in the pure love of Christ we too would judge no man. There is no judgment in charity for charity is of the atonement.

As was stated in the previous paragraph, charity, the pure love of Christ, is a state of mind; it is a state of mind in which all fear and doubt leaves you. In charity-- jealousy, vanity and pride are vanquished as well as greed envy and covetousness. Imagine what life would be like if you no longer concerned yourself with judging others or yourself. Imagine what it would be like if nobody judged you ever again. Imagine what it would be like if you no longer concerned yourself with money or the idols of the world, yet had no fear of lack. Anxiety and stress would cease to exist in you. Though you would still feel pain, you would never experience suffering or harm again because nobody would be able to say or do anything that would harm or offend you. You would be able to love all people and all life without wondering if they feel the same about you. All greed, power, prestige and status would no longer matter to you and you would cease the required sacrifice of friends, family and love to obtain it.

You would never feel compelled to become angry, force, manipulate or feel responsible for the foibles of others. You could enjoy life without worrying about how your children are going to turn out; whether or not you will have a job tomorrow; if your health will hold out. And best of all, you would cease to make decisions based on guilt of conscience and would begin to make decisions based on love and inspiration. This is where you will find the fulness of the joy of the Lord.

If someone in a fit of anger broke an item of significant importance to you, you will not feel the least bit annoyed but only compassion for the ill effects of a person so overcome with anger. If someone actually slapped or hit you due to a misunderstanding or for no real reason at all, you would only feel the pain but would not be discomfited or feel vindictive toward the person who struck the blow (as Christ did in his ministry). If a government or some great force took and bound you mistakenly, you would feel no resentment. If a member of your family was raped and murdered you would not feel vengeful or angry though you would still feel the pain of the loss, which would be limited by your knowledge that you would soon be with your child again. This is the fruit of charity- the pure love of Christ.

When you cease to judge yourself and others; when you can accept everything as it is and realize God had a hand in all of it, including all good and what you consider bad; when you can quit comparing ‘what is’ with what you think ‘ought to be’; when you can stop asking yourself “did I do the right thing?”, “am I doing the right thing?” or “am I going to do the right thing?”; when you can stop trying to change others or think that you can change others (which is pride) without their asking, and be willing to accept them just the way they are; when you can simply offer suggestions without a care or judgment whether or not people will do anything with your suggestions; this is the beginning of charity.

With this understanding in mind, let us explore what Paul was striving to help us understand about charity:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13 1-3

Paul, here, is helping us to understand that charity is not about one grand gesture, sacrifice or providing enlightenment to those of a lower understanding. The fact that you pay tithing or have the means to give thousands to a charity, this is not charity. Oftentimes these grandiose acts instill in us a sense of righteous pride instead of the pure love of Christ. These acts should exude the attitude Paul expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”, meaning it is nothing more than our duty to perform acts of kindness—if we have, we give; if one is in danger, we make him/her safe; if we are strong, we protect those who are weak; if we have faith, we bless those who are lacking. In all these ‘charitable’ acts we should not seek or expect the applause or appreciation of others but feel only that we have fulfilled our duty. Otherwise, the acknowledgement and applause of others may be the extent of your reward, which would pale in comparison to the reward awaiting you in heaven, remember; the Lord inferred our reward would be 100 times greater than what we would receive here, so who in their right mind would want the reward of people in this life?

After telling us what charity is not, Paul then proceeds to tell us what charity is (all the remaining words in quotes are direct quotations from 1 Corinthians 13):

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind;” Here Paul is telling us there will be people who will cause all manner of afflictions or endanger our well being, yet through all they shall inflict upon us, if we are charitable, we will forgive them, be kind to and love them anyway. This is because you would see them as you do children, acting out in ignorance, knowing that, had they known as you know and had they understood as you understand, they wouldn’t do as they have done.

“charity envieth not”- Envy is a judgmental attribute against yourself but its rage is inflicted on the person so envied. Envy and jealousy are actually subcategories of hate at one extreme and the feeling of lack at the other. Envy tells you that you are not good enough because you have not the talents or materials of another. God has given every one of us various talents and everyone is better than everyone else at one thing or another, therefore, we are to enjoy the talents of others and share with them ours and the combining of those talents will bless us all. A great musician may entertain millions with his talent and maybe you can help but one child at a time to see his worth in the world and bring him to the light. Those millions may have a love for that artist who provided them excitement for a moment but how much more will that one child love and appreciate your talent for years to come? And, how many other people in the world may be blessed because you have revealed to a child his talent and true value to society?

“charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”- To vaunt is to show off or have pride in yourself and puffed up is to put yourself above others. As Paul also said earlier in 1 Corinthians 10:24 “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.”, although you may have a great talent and you may share that talent, charity means your interest will be to inspire others to master their talents instead of seeking praise for your own. Let them enjoy your talent while you help them build theirs, that you may have joy and rejoicing in them as they will you.

“Doth not behave itself unseemly”- To be unseemly is to lack in social graces, to be impolite, rude, untidy, profane and so forth. There is an air of dignity associated with charity because with charity comes a desire not to offend. Therefore, to be charitable one does not use offensive language, dress immodestly, appear unhygienic, or use lewd gestures or behaviors.

“seeketh not her own”- Again, as stated in 1 Corinthians 10:24 above, a charitable person is always looking out for the interests of others. If you are striving to make your boss

wealthy, wealth will come to you. If you are striving to make your employee wealthy, wealth will come to you. When people see you as looking out only for yourself, it is within their worldly nature to hope for, or attribute to, your downfall. Therefore, they will offer only the minimum effort to help you. But when they see you will sacrifice for them, they love you and want to do all they can to assure your success. Give of yourself and it will return to you.

“is not easily provoked”- A charitable person is patient, tolerant, compassionate and forgiving. When one challenges him in a competition of danger or violence he would back down and not allow his pride to reduce him to injure or take away the dignity of another.

“thinketh no evil”- You may never have thought of charity as the controlling of your thoughts but this attribute actually contributes to the primary characteristic of charity. Your body cannot commit any evil without your mind’s command. As Jesus said in Luke 6:45 “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” Therefore, a charitable person thinks charitable thoughts before he can perform a charitable act, and a truly charitable person could not find words to offend.

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;”- The world teaches that to get away with evil or to receive more than what you have truly earned is a good thing. “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” (Malachi 3:14-15). The world rejoices in the accumulation of worldly treasures and pleasures; a person of charity rejoices in purity and righteousness which is found in truth; the world and all its pleasures are the lie.

“Beareth all things,” A charitable person remains ever patient, tolerant and temperate and can put up with all that is assailed against him without a thought of retribution.

“believeth all things,” Charity is in opposition to skepticism and the lack of hope. Charity would rather trust and not stereotype anyone, but give everyone the opportunity to prove themselves people of integrity and love. A charitable person would rather listen than speak, that he may learn. When someone tells you something, you will believe them first and only when they are proven wrong, will you not believe a lie.

“hopeth all things,” There is great power in hope especially when it is coupled with love. The false hope of the wicked is to desire the things of the world and therefore is not hope but covetousness, selfishness, greed, envy, sloth and gluttony. True hope engenders

only thoughts of righteousness and goodwill for all men. A hopeful person desires the success of others and believes in their ability to achieve, as well as his own. A hopeful person is confident and loving, desiring to do good always.

“endureth all things.” A charitable person will never give up but will endure every injustice, privation, hatred, assail, lie or theft perpetrated against him. As Paul said, “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (1 Corinthians 6:7). Charity understands people are acting out of ignorance and fear when they commit evil against him and realize that someday, when enlightened, they will repent and therefore, forgives them while they are inflicting their evil upon him even as Jesus did on the cross.

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” Jonah was upset with the Lord because he prophesied that the city of Nineveh would be destroyed, but the people of Nineveh repented at the warning of Jonah and the scripture states “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” (Jonah 3:10). In another instance, found in Doctrine and Covenants 114, David W. Patten was told by the Lord to prepare for a mission he was to fulfill in the Spring, but David was killed in the battle of Crooked River on 25 October 1838 not living to Spring. Prophesying the future is always dubious because the Lord is only giving you information of what *can be* and not necessarily what *will be* because of men’s agency. Does that mean Jonah and Joseph and several others are false prophets? No, all prophets prophesy what can be but it is still up to our agency to act in accordance with the prophesy. Had Peter not feared at the trial of Jesus and admitted he was an apostle of the Lord, Jesus would have appeared a false prophet. It was within Peter’s power to go against Christ’s word regarding his betrayal, as his agency was never taken from him; so Jesus was prophesying what ‘could be’ with regard to Peter’s betrayal. From Nephi on, many of the prophets foretold the destruction of the Nephites 400 years after Christ’s ministry but Samuel the Lamanite prophesied it a bit differently, “...the sword of justice hangeth over this people; and four hundred years pass not away save the sword of justice falleth upon this people. Yea, heavy destruction awaiteth this people, and it surely cometh unto this people, and nothing can save this people save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Helaman 13:5-6). Thus, according to Samuel, if the

Nephites repented, like the people of Nineveh did, they would not have been destroyed, negating the prophecies of all the prophets up to the time of their destruction. In fact there are many prophecies regarding the last days, and others are happening now, that may not come to pass if people repent. Hopefully many of the prophets will be made wrong through a sudden turn to righteousness. Therefore, if you don't fear being wrong then you will be open and willing to prophesy. It is the same with all tongues and knowledge as they all can change with new information, i.e. the world is not flat, gay no longer means happy, etc. But, when Christ returns and the full knowledge of the Lord reigns supreme, there will no longer be a need for prophecy, speaking in tongues or the education of men because all knowledge will be available to everyone. Therefore, what Paul is saying; don't put all your trust or faith in prophecy, speakers or worldly knowledge because it is all fleeting, but charity is not fleeting and it will lead you back to the presence of your Father in Heaven before any prophet, speaker or educated person could.

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” This is Paul's metaphor meaning, as children in the gospel we still follow the will of the world making mistakes, overcoming evil and enduring the chastening hand of the Father, but when we learn the true order of charity and live it, we put away the cares of the world and become godly or enter the path to God no longer to be chastened but accept the roll and responsibilities of a godlike life.

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” If we knew the real us, as we were before coming to this earth, and we saw our determination to fulfill God's plan on earth, we would probably take courage and live more faithful and have confidence to bear our testimonies more and defend the will of God. When we finally enter the path to God, then will we realize our true selves, remembering who we are and will be able to choose righteously and live a charitable life always. “They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace; And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.” (D&C 76:94-95).

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” Faith gives us power to act, endure, accomplish and overcome. Hope gives us desire to fulfill and achieve ever increasing stratum of joy and glory. (“Wherefore, if a man have faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope. And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart. If so,

his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.” Moroni 7:42-44). But, it is charity that puts us on the path to God and will cause us to enter his presence, for until we achieve this, we know not God and cannot endure his presence.

“And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.” Moroni 10:21

Thus we can surmise that without charity one can remain on the path toward God but will never find the path to God. Charity brings great joy to all men, both those giving and they who receive. In charity you fulfill all the commandments and become one with God. Practice charity every day of your life and your eye will be single to His glory and you will have found the path to the right hand of God and pleasures forever more. (Psalms 16:11).

## **Living The Celestial Law**

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote:

“The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, ‘the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth, even in one,’ when the Saints of God will be gathered in one from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, when the Jews will be gathered together into one, the wicked will also be gathered together to be destroyed, as spoken of by the prophets; the Spirit of God will also dwell with His people, and be withdrawn from the rest of the nations, and all things whether in heaven or on earth will be in one, even in Christ. The heavenly Priesthood will unite with the earthly, to bring about those great purposes; and whilst we are thus united in the one common cause, to roll forth the kingdom of God, the heavenly Priesthood are not idle spectators, the Spirit of God will be showered down from above, and it will dwell in our midst. The blessings of the Most High will rest upon our tabernacles, and our name will be handed down to future ages; our children will rise up



and call us blessed; and generations yet unborn will dwell with peculiar delight upon the scenes that we have passed through, the privations that we have endured; the untiring zeal that we have manifested; the all but insurmountable difficulties that we have overcome in laying the foundation of a work that brought about the glory and blessing which they will realize; a work that God and angels have contemplated with delight for generations past; that fired the souls of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; a work that is destined to bring about the destruction of the powers of darkness, the renovation of the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of the human family.” (History of the Church, 4:609–10.)

“In this revelation the Law of Consecration is stated definitely as the law on which the New Jerusalem is to be built. This law is given for the benefit of the poor, for the building of Zion and the work of the ministry. . . . Through this celestial law (Consecration) the Saints are to become the covenant people of the Lord. We cannot enter into the fulness of the covenants pertaining to Zion until we have reached the point where we can live such a divine law.” Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:185

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

“It is verily true that before we can enter into the celestial kingdom we will have to learn how to live in unity with the love of our fellows at heart, desiring their good as well as our own, and not preferring ourselves before them. Here the Lord gave to the Church the plan and the opportunity to prepare themselves by obedience to celestial law. They failed, and the privilege to practice this law of consecration had to be postponed because we were not able to esteem our neighbor as ourselves.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:322.)

The poor are always willing to live the law of consecration but it can't be fulfilled by the poor because Zion must prosper and the poor haven't the knowledge or means to make Zion rich and powerful, and terrible to all nations. Zion has been delayed because of the rich who will not give of their substance, who love their money, power and possession; and desire to put themselves on the pedestal for all to look upon and admire. (“That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn *yourselves* from your idols...” Ezekiel 14:5-6). They know not that God has blessed them with wealth in order that they might bless others (“The joys come from putting the welfare of others above our own. That is what love is. And the sorrow comes primarily from selfishness, which is the absence of love.” Our Perfect Example- Henry B. Eyring). Thus, their riches canker their souls and Zion continues to slumber. “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all

things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation” (*Lectures on Faith* 6:7). The Lord told Joseph Smith in D&C 119 that we are to give, as a tithe, *all our excess* and then one tenth of all our increase. The poor have done this because they have no excess, but the rich give only a scanty amount compared to the vast sums they reserve for themselves.

“And again Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given.

“And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.

“And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants.” Mosiah 18:27-29

D&C 49:20 states: “But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin.” If the world, who does not know of the law of consecration, lies in sin, how much more the members of the church who have been given the truth of these things since their beginning? The Lord is not simply talking about the church and the law of consecration; he is saying it goes against his plan for anyone in or out of the church to possess that which sets one person above another, and his edict states; it is sin. If it is sin for the world to possess that which is above another, how much more those of us who are to believe and know the truth? To impart of our excess one to another is a gospel requirement, “See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.” (D&C 88:123).

The lack of living the celestial law is among the reasons the Lord (in speaking about the destruction that will come upon the earth in the latter days) says it will first be poured out upon the members of the church:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

“Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

“And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

“First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.” D&C 112:23-26

In the Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual under D&C 112:24–26. “Upon My House Shall It Begin”, the comment on the scripture quoted above states:

“In the same revelation in which Zion was defined, the Lord warned the Saints that only if Zion met the Lord’s qualifications would it escape the judgments that were to be poured out upon the world. If they did not qualify as a Zion people, they had no promise (see D&C 97:21–27). Severe judgments befell the Saints because they failed to build Zion and abide by its laws. This prophetic statement also had reference to future members of the Church.”

D&C 70:14 tells us:

"Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld."

Hasn’t this verse been established in the beginning of this work? Where are the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit? D&C 130:21 states, “And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” Therefore, by not obeying the law of consecration we do not receive the blessings of the law of consecration. Yes, the Spirit is doing His job of bearing testimony of truth but where are all the miracles and the power of the Lord manifest? Remember, these verses are not saying ‘if’ you live the law of consecration this will be a law to you; it is saying ‘this is the law’, so if one possesses that which is above another then it is sin and the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit will be withheld.

“For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

“But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

“As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.” 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

Paul is not talking about communism, wherein government is forcing you to give up your excess and forcing you to work. It is based on the law of consecration which is similar to those who travel to a another country to make a better living, then take that money they earn and send all they can, after they have paid for their own support, to their families back home. Thus they show God the love for their families is greater than the desire to build up their

personal prosperity. “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.” (Jacob 2:17). We, above all people of the earth, know better that we are all truly family, yet we do not care for one another as a family but will let some of our family members suffer because we believe we have given enough by paying our tithing and a small fast offering to the church. But what about your church family? If we are all family, how can we let our brothers and sisters suffer or live in poverty while we have so much more? “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (James 2:15-16)

It was President Marion G. Romney who taught:

“The Lord claims the earth as his, that it is not yours and mine to own and manage independently of him. No matter how many stocks and bonds or how much land and other properties we possess, they are not wholly ours. They are the Lord’s. He further says that he owns and gives to us all the blessings we have and that he makes us stewards over them, responsible to him. He makes it clear that it is his purpose to provide for his Saints, but he requires that it be done in his way, which way, he explains, is for those who have to contribute to those who have not. Having made us stewards, he gives us our agency, however, and then lays down the condition that if we accept these blessings and refuse to contribute our share for the care of the poor, we shall go to—well, he tells us where we shall go.” (Ensign, May 1979, pp. 95–96).

President Kimball taught:

“The Lord has blessed us as a people with a prosperity unequalled in times past. The resources that have been placed in our power are good, and necessary to our work here on the earth. But I am afraid that many of us have been surfeited with flocks and herds and acres and barns and wealth and have begun to worship them as false gods, and they have power over us. Do we have more of these good things than our faith can stand? Many people spend most of their time working in the service of a self-image that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life. Forgotten is the fact that our assignment is to use these many resources in our families and quorums to build up the kingdom of God” (Ensign, June 1976, p. 4).

President N. Eldon Tanner commenting on President Kimball’s statement above said:

“By way of testimony, may I add this to President Kimball’s statement. I know of no situation where happiness and peace of mind have increased with the amassing of property beyond the reasonable wants and needs of the family.” (Ensign, Nov. 1979, pp. 81–82).

But it was President Lorenzo Snow who, in reference to the building up of the center stake of Zion (the New Jerusalem), said that we must prove obedience to the law of consecration *first* before the New Jerusalem will be established.

“And I think we are not justified in anticipating the privilege of returning to build up the center stake of Zion, until we shall have shown obedience to the law of consecration. One thing, however, is certain, we shall not be permitted to enter the land from whence we were expelled, till our hearts are prepared to honor this law, and we become sanctified through the practice of the truth.” In Journal of Discourses, 16:276

There are certain members of the church who are deceived, who say in their hearts; ‘who cares about an abundance of spiritual manifestations when you can have money? (...Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.” 2 Chronicles 28:23). After all, the Lord prospered me and gave me talents to achieve money, power and prestige, for my own good and to make me a beacon of prowess for the world to look upon and admire... didn't He?’ “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (Luke 12:15). Some of us are foolish and blind saints, who don’t know that He who made us, made us equal and gave each of us talents, not to bless ourselves but others? (“For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby.” D&C 46:11-12). Because the world has made one man powerful and another a beggar, does that mean God willed it so? God forbid. God gave man, and especially members, the capacity to help and serve one another that all may be blessed thereby.

“And blessed are the Gentiles, they of whom the prophet has written; for behold, if it so be that they shall repent and fight not against Zion, and do not unite themselves to that great and abominable church, they shall be saved...” 2 Nephi 6:12

We, members of the church, who call ourselves the children of Israel; are we the Gentiles referred to by Isaiah? When will we cease to fight against Zion and put off the rewards of the great and abominable church?

“...Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church.” 1 Nephi 13:8

In Jesus’ parable of the sower, he said of members caught up in the accumulation of wealth or the riches of the world:

“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” Luke 8:14

Where would all our luxuries be if God did not bless people with the talent to design and build our houses and our cars and our fine apparel, computers and food, air conditioning, toilet paper, freezers, trash bags and so forth? Where would our fine living be if God did not bless others with the ability to clean our houses and offices, care for our gardens and lawns, transport us to our various locations, cook our food and many other such services? We believe we are independent, but in our living we are dependent above all and most dependent on others for all we possess. Yet, we will give but a small portion to those who have served us while we feed our bellies on their labors. Hence our life is full of sin and we come short of the glory of God.

“Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, even as you desire of me so it shall be unto you; and if you desire, you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation.” D&C 6:7-8

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” 1 John 2:15-17

Christ was our great exemplar who never asked anyone to do anything he would not do himself. Christ told the rich man to sell all that he had and give it to the poor that he would have treasures in heaven and to come and follow him (Matthew 19:16-22). Christ could only tell him to do this because he did it himself:

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9

If Christ gave up his riches and told the rich man, if he wanted to be perfect he must sell all that he had and give to the poor; why would he expect less of us? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "...if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things" (*Teachings*, p. 322). Herein lies the challenge to rich men everywhere: Do you desire to be the means of doing much good in this generation? King Lamoni's father, when taught that he could be redeemed from his sins and be filled with the joy of the Lord, said, "... I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy." (Alma 22:15). This king was willing to forsake all his possessions and his kingdom just to join the church and receive of the Spirit. This gift comes much cheaper to us, but what would you give to live the joys of Zion? Lehi gave up all his gold and silver and precious things to travel to a promised land, would you? Amulek forsook all his gold, silver and precious things including the bonds of his family, for the word of God. Have you given so much? To be amongst a people who prosper together in the Lord, who love one another and serve one another, who are of one mind and one heart dwelling in righteousness; what is such a life worth? Is the life we have now so much better than Zion? President Lorenzo Snow taught, "We cannot be forced into living a celestial law; we must do this ourselves, of our own free will. And whatever we do in regard to the principles of the United Order, we must do it because we desire to do it. Some of us are practising in the spirit of the United Order, doing more than the law of tithing requires." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 19:346.) Therefore, why do we sit idly by waiting for the president of the church to force us to live it?

Living under this law can happen now, with the world in the state it is in and without the command of God or His Prophet. Bruce R. McConkie said:

"Zion has been established many times among men. From the day of Adam to the present moment—whenever the Lord has had a people of his own; whenever there have been those who have hearkened to his voice and kept his commandments; whenever his saints have served him with full purpose of heart—there has been Zion.

"Our first scriptural account relative to Zion concerns Enoch and his city. That prophet of transcendent faith and power lived while father Adam yet dwelt in mortality. It was a day of wickedness and evil, a day of darkness and rebellion, a day of war and desolation, a day leading up to the cleansing of the earth by water." *Come: Let Israel Build Zion*, p. 116

Does not the status of Enoch's day reverberate today? Are we not in a similar state, ripe to build a Zion people amidst a wicked and perverse generation in preparation for another

cleansing, this time by fire? We saints who have been so successful in laying up for ourselves treasures on earth, will we now seek to lay up treasures in heaven?

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Matthew 19:29

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” Proverbs 19:17

“Time and time again I have left hansom property to be inherited by our enemies.

“Suppose we are called to leave what we have now, should we call it a sacrifice? Shame on the man who would so call it; for it is the very means of adding to him knowledge, understanding, power and glory, and prepares him to receive crowns, kingdoms, thrones and principalities, and to be crowned in glory with the Gods of eternity. Short of this, we can never receive that which we are looking for.” Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 2:7

Do we rich men not know one another? Will we not seek out each other to combine our means to perform a good work? (“And let the bishop search diligently to obtain an agent, and let him be a man who has got riches in store—a man of God, and of strong faith— “ D&C 90:22). This cannot be the work of one man lest he should glory in his own efforts. This work must come forth out of humility, brotherly love, compassion and meekness, and not to the glorification of one man. Who will be the first to give up of our excess and provide a beginning for the Lord’s people to live the law of consecration that the Lord may prove his worthy members, faithful, humble, full of love, prepared to live the law of consecration that he may bring forth his New Jerusalem? (“And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb...” 1 Nephi 13:37). You remember Zion’s Camp where several brethren took their journey not to combat their foes but to prepare leaders to fulfill the work of the Lord, and a people for the rigors of what lied ahead in saving thousands of people alive during their trek to the Salt Lake valley. This is a work with a purpose not unlike that of Zion’s Camp. Who will pioneer the great work of preparing a people for the redemption of Zion, of which Joseph Smith sought so earnestly for in his day?

Elder Orson F. Whitney taught of the life and attitude the law of consecration was to engender:



“The Law of Tithing was given to supersede, for the time being, a greater law known as the Law of Consecration, the object of which was and is to sanctify the Lord’s people and ‘prepare them for a place in the celestial world’. To that end it was designed to do away with selfishness, greed, pride, envy, poverty, and all the ills that spring from such conditions. For none of these things can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. It was to institute an order of equality and consequent unity, in which *every man, employed at that for which he was best fitted, would be ‘seeking the interest of his neighbor and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.’* (Italics added) (In Conference Report, Apr. 1931, pp. 65–66.)

To prepare such a people it will take the building of houses wherein the poor have their talent, but they have not the means to buy the materials. Those who have means can provide the land and materials even if it must be through loans without interest or that which is equal to the level of inflation, and the poor will provide the labor. “Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” (Deuteronomy 23:19-20). It will take the building of industries. The rich will know the industries needed to sustain such a community and can provide talents that will create more wealth through their industry, and the poor will utilize their talents to make this industry successful. The profits of those industries will be used to build more industries and fulfill the needs of the Lord’s people. Thus all men work and bring to fruition the desire of the Lord. All contribute of their time, talents and means to make Zion flourish. If one is without work, let him sweep streets, repair roads or serve the community and pay him from the funds contributed to the society until he is employed again in the work of his desire. The Lord’s economy is such that every person can produce much more in excess of what they could ever use or consume themselves, but it is the greed and gluttony of the rich man, who takes that excess and claims it as his just reward for the meager service he provides. Is there a tycoon living who amassed such wealth on the labor of his own hands? No, he has taken the labor of many others and claimed their abundance for himself. “...Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? (where God dwells) who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he *that despiseth the gain of oppressions...*” (Italics added) (Isaiah 33:14-15).

They who have the money to start a community, who will live the law of consecration, if they will combine their means and efforts with other men of talent to begin such an

enterprise, it is the promise of the Lord that this enterprise will prosper (Moses 7:18) and will be the means of beginning a Zion society in preparation for the Lord's return; who will not come until there is a people prepared to receive Him as well as the people of the New Jerusalem which will come down from heaven. "Hear this, O Earth! The Lord will not come to reign over the righteous, in this world, . . . until everything for the Bridegroom is ready" (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. V., p. 291). Those who will begin this project will seek the inspiration of the Lord and save they follow the inspiration and guiding hand of the Spirit it shall fail. How it will be governed will be inspired of the Lord. Those who will come unto it will be inspired of the Lord. "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." (3 Nephi 12:6). However, the desire will come from you and without the desire of a people to live by the Lord's celestial laws, it will not happen. "And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and *desires* which are in God." (Italics added) (Alma 18:35). The people in Joseph's time could not have this law because of their selfish objectives. As the angel Moroni told Joseph of the value of the golden plates but knew Satan would tempt him because of their monetary value he said, "This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom; otherwise I could not get them." (JSH 1:46) so will it be with this enterprise; you must have no other motive than the building of a Zion society or it will fail.

President Spencer W. Kimball felt the church was ready to move forward but knew that although the church organizationally was prepared to move forward, it would take individuals acting on their own initiative to move this work forward:

"Now, my brothers and sisters, it seems clear to me, indeed, this impression weighs upon me—that the Church is at a point in its growth and maturity when we are at last ready to move forward in a major way. Some decisions have been made and others pending, which will clear the way, organizationally. But the basic decisions needed for us to move forward, as a people, must be made by the individual members of the Church. The major strides which must be made by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals.

"We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward. Let us quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to others—whether in our own families, wards, or neighborhoods. We have been diverted, at times, from

fundamentals on which we must now focus in order to move forward as a person or as a people.

“Seemingly small efforts in the life of each member could do so much to move the Church forward as never before. . . .” Ensign, May 1979, p. 82

Brigham Young taught:

“The length of time required ‘to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion’ is strictly up to us and how we live, for creating Zion ‘commences in the heart of each person.’” *Journal of Discourses*, 9:283.)

“If the people neglect their duty, turn away from the holy commandments which God has given us, seek their own individual wealth, and neglect the interest of the kingdom of God, we may expect to be here quite a time—perhaps a period that will be far longer than we anticipate.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 11:102.)

The number of missionaries serving in the field during President Kimball’s tenure has not changed from the number enlisted today, yet the church has increased exponentially because of the efforts of individual members. So shall it be with the law of consecration and the New Jerusalem. The church organizationally is prepared to build Zion but it must wait on the individual member to show a willingness to live the celestial law before its fulfillment can be realized. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “Love is one of the chief characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God. A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.” (*History of the Church*, 4:227.)

All that is spoken of above will come through revelation to those seeking the further light and knowledge he promised to send us. “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb...” (1 Nephi 13:37). Do not error and judge these things to be of man or the desires of one man but let your mind be open to the Lord in directing you as to whether or not you are to be part of such an enterprise. Furthermore, although there are references pertaining to the building up of the center stake of Zion (the New Jerusalem), this endeavor does not coincide with that acme goal but only the building of a people intent on living the law of consecration to prepare a people ready for the New Jerusalem when it comes. A people living the law of consecration can occur wherever there is a people, who will build such a society, anywhere in the earth. President Lorenzo Snow taught:

“Wherever there is a people of God, the principles of the United Order are applicable if they would receive and obey them. Some have thought that the United Order was to be kept only by the people who should go up to the land of Missouri. Now this, I believe, is incorrect. It would seem very singular that the Latter-day Saints, when they receive the Gospel, should not have the privilege of uniting themselves, according to the principles of the celestial law, and that Jackson County should be the only place where this law might be observed.” *Journal of Discourses*, 19:343

President Stephen L Richards said, “Zion is primarily a condition, not a place. There are places called Zion, but they are so called only because they have been or will be gathering places for Zion people. As you have read, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall,” and “We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object”” (*History of the Church*, 2:52).

“And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.” 1 Nephi 13:37

If you seek to build this society you must have these ideals in mind for it to succeed:

There will be at least three men of wealth to start such a society.

Those involved must be pure in heart.

Everyone involved (poor and rich) must be willing to give all they have (meaning all their excess as well as their talents).

Everyone involved must be willing to serve and share his/her talents.

Everyone involved must have faith in the Lord and in the brothers and sisters of their society.

As president Spencer W. Kimball said: “For many years we have been taught that one important end result of our labors, hopes, and aspirations in this work is the building of a Latter-day Zion, a Zion characterized by love, harmony, and peace—a Zion in which the Lord’s children are as one.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1978, 119-124).

Everyone who comes understands that all excess of funds and profits of their industry go toward the building up of their society, to create new industries, jobs, housing, parks, needs of the community, etc.

The building of a Zion society must also take into consideration; when the Lord comes, he will bring the people of Enoch with him as well as others so not only must this society prosper the people within it, it must be successful enough to prepare for their numbers to potentially double (or more) when the Lord returns bringing the people of Enoch with him.

The value of a man's labor will not coincide with the values the world has set. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Colossians 4:1). A man ought to be paid according to that which can pay for the support of his family without his wife working for income to pay their bills. A janitor is as necessary as a CEO and could be respected and appreciated for his work, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3)

As in the church where the Bishop may next teach nursery, so could the industry of Zion be. All men could be productive and happy but also humble and meek. Therefore, people should be able to change jobs when a job becomes tedious and those of higher status or easier labor should be willing to give up their posts to others when they are qualified. Thus the CEO of a technology company, after a few years may become a carpenter or farmer for a few years if he so desires.

People should be able to work part of the time on that which they enjoy and part of the time where they are needed.

The mantra of this society could be, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." 1 Corinthians 10:24.

10% of your increase will go toward your tithing for the church and the excess (after your wants and needs, inasmuch as your wants are just (D&C 88:17)) will go to the community until the church adopts the law of consecration, then we must be prepared for this program to eventually be turned over to the leaders of the church or as Christ shall direct.

Unjust wants are those which make one man appear above another. Unjust wants include expensive jewelry or unnecessary self-adornment; unnecessary or expensive vehicles; houses bigger than what is needed for your family and/or vocation; immodest clothes or that which makes one appear better or of a higher class than others; land greater than what is needed for their industry or common use; and unused tools (tools rarely used could become communal property as well as vehicles or instruments of entertainment).

President Kimball explained:

“As important as it is to have this vision in mind, defining and describing Zion will not bring it about. That can only be done through consistent and concerned daily effort by every single member of the Church. No matter what the cost in toil or sacrifice, we must do it....

“First, we must eliminate the individual tendency to selfishness that snares the soul, shrinks the heart, and darkens the mind. . . .

“. . . It is incumbent upon us to put away selfishness in our families, our business and professional pursuits, and our Church affairs. . . .

“Second, we must cooperate completely and work in harmony one with the other. There must be unanimity in our decisions and unity in our actions....” Ensign, May 1978, p. 81

As Brigham Young explained:

“. . . Zion can be built up only among those who are pure in heart, not a people torn by covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people. Not a people who are pure in appearance, rather a people who are pure in heart. Zion is to be in the world and not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security, nor paralyzed by materialism. No, Zion is not things of the lower, but of the higher order, things that exalt the mind and sanctify the heart.

“Zion is ‘every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.’ As I understand these matters, Zion can be established only by those who are pure in heart, and who labor for Zion, for ‘the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.” Ensign, May 1978, pp. 79–80

If there be faithful men in the church, desirous to live according to a Zion society, the Lord has given us the way. He awaits our desire to live as the God’s live and to trust in the Lord that He will prosper His people that all may rejoice and none lack. In such a society too, will the manifestations of the Lord’s power be revealed. His knowledge shall abound and those things which have been hidden will come forth out of obscurity and the Lord will reveal all his mysteries. These Zion people will grow in faith, in spirit, in love and charity and then will the Lord have a people prepared to receive his full knowledge when he appears.

It is incumbent for us to understand that the rich required to start such a society need not come from millionaires, only from those blessed with that which exceeds their needs. A Zion society can be created even among the impoverished so long as enough people who have a little more than they need will prove faithful to start and live within the Zion society. Once

started remember, all those who enter must be pure in heart and intent, willing to work for the benefit of others and to serve others, “They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion.” (D&C 101:18) in this none will fail. “And it came to pass that they did repent, and inasmuch as they did repent they did begin to prosper.” (Helaman 4:15).

“And they taught, and did minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another.

“And it came to pass that they did do all things even as Jesus had commanded them.” 3  
Nephi 26:19-20

Finally, it is the fear of the rich, as they so believe, that by giving up their excess they will lose the security of money for their family. There is no greater security than that which exists in a Zion society for who will steal from you when they all have enough and to spare? Who would allow your family to go without when you have given so much? Who will molest you when you do not have the ‘show of wealth’ that once made you a target to the mischievous? Who can wish for your downfall or attempt to trump you when they see you as their equal? A Zion society is to be as a temple society wherein, when you enter, all appearance of status, position, wealth, poverty or superiority is left in the locker, and everyone shines in the vesture of a glorious brotherhood. Does this mean the people of Zion are to be dressed uniformly? No. It does mean that should a better quality of apparel come then all should have access to it; should a faster service be provided then it should be provided to all; should objects of adornment be accumulated, they should be distributed to all who would have them, that none are seen to appear more privileged than another.

To all brethren, rich and poor, let the love of our Lord live within us and let us find joy and rejoicing in the great plan of our God, which is to prosper all His children and let Zion flourish. What greater happiness could be ours than to live the life of our Lord? to bless one another and help one another and receive the greater manifestations of the Spirit. What a wonderful blessing to be able to live in such a community with brothers and sisters who will eschew worldliness and the plan of the Devil; who desire the righteousness of the Lord’s plan of happiness, of which this wonderful Zion community (ruled by the law of consecration and the Lord’s commandments), reigns supreme.

“And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.” 4 Nephi 15:16

In respect to the theme of this book, should we live in a Zion society, we would be better prepared to receive revelation and understand the mysteries of God and maybe, like the people of Enoch, collectively enter the path to God that we may all come unto him and have our callings and elections made sure. Could such an experience happen while we remain scattered in the world, among the worldly? May we all finally espouse the perfecting of the saints, while in the work of the ministry, to the edifying of the people of Christ, that we may all live in the unity of the faith, in the knowledge of the Son of God, and show ourselves worthy in measure and stature, of the fulness of Christ.



## Epilogue

Remember, this is a process, a journey we all have commenced, but must choose the speed of our progress. We begin in the world (even if we are born in the church) where we are introduced to evil, and the riches and pleasures the world has to offer. We are then introduced to Prophets and scripture wherein the Holy Ghost will bear record. This is our first spiritual choice and preparatory stage of development. For those who receive the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, they enter the path toward God wherein the Prophets and scriptures become our guide to help us learn all things necessary to continue on that path toward God until we progress to the point where we can envision and choose for ourselves to seek the path to God. Once we have learned the foundation of knowledge the Prophets, scriptures and the temple will give us, if we continue to diligently seek for the further light and knowledge of the Father, while living the gospel of love, the Lord will eventually put us on the path to God.

In order to progress we first need to know there is a stratum to progress to. Our ultimate stratum is to have our calling and election made sure but the details of how this is accomplished is not clear. Therefore we must open our eyes to new possibilities and understanding, which means we should be looking for that which we don't understand. We must also realize that not everything is given to us in the scriptures or in the teachings of the Prophets because they have been constrained not to teach certain principles. Therefore, should we receive these additional principles, we too are bound not to teach them until the Prophet says otherwise. When we receive these additional principles we must live them or that will be the end of our progression. As revelations come we recognize that we have no authority to receive revelation beyond our callings and it is not for us to force our knowledge upon others. As we continue to receive revelations and abide by the principles taught in those revelations, eventually, the Lord will teach us directly. Hopefully now you have found there is more to learn which is not speculative but truth. Also, this higher knowledge and the mysteries of God will be taught by the Spirit and ultimately by the Lord himself. If you will now seek this greater level of understanding and be open to *all* of God's laws and blessings, know that it is only through revelation you will find it and this or any other book or scripture will not remove you from the path toward God and take you to God. When you begin receiving these revelations, that does not mean you stop reading the scriptures or listening to the Prophets because many of your revelations may come because of what you continue to

read or listen to. Remember, this path is only to be found through revelation and that revelation only comes when you are anxiously engaged in the works and the will of the Lord, until you receive that ultimate revelation directly from the Lord himself, that puts you on the path to God.

If you would like to comment or contact the author of this book, please write to: [mormonanonymity@yahoo.com](mailto:mormonanonymity@yahoo.com) but please respect the fact that the identity of the author will remain anonymous.