

-December 31 – January 6
We Are responsible for Our Own Learning

The purpose of this resource is in addition to the *Come, Follow Me – For Individuals and Families* manual provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This resource should not be used in place of the manual, but may supplement your study and preparation of the lessons provided by the Church. This is not an official publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This resource has not attempted to include everything from the study manual. It is only an additional resource to use in your study of the scriptures and of the gospel doctrine lessons at church and at home. It is hoped that this resource proves of worth to at least one. Scriptures that are colored in purple and with ~~strike-throughs~~ are to show the changes made by the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of the Bible.

For comments and/or suggestions, you may contact me: Brad Constantine, (916) 759-5743 or bwconstantine@outlook.com. I look forward to your comments and suggestions to improve this resource.

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* is to help you come unto Christ and become more deeply converted to His gospel. This resource can help you understand the scriptures and find in them the spiritual strength you and your family need. Then, in your Church classes, you will be prepared to share insights and encourage your fellow Saints in their efforts to follow Christ.

Record your impressions:

“What seek ye?” Jesus asked His disciples (John 1:38)

This is the JST version: 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following **(him)**, and sai~~(d)~~**(d)**th unto them, What seek ye? They ~~said~~ **(say)** unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

You might ask yourself the same question – for what you find in the New Testament this year will greatly depend on what you seek. “Seek, and ye shall find” is the Savior’s promise (Matthew 7:7)

JST: 7 ¶ **(Say unto them, Ask of God;)** ^aAsk, and it shall be ^bgiven you; ^cseek, and ye shall find; ^dknock, and it shall be opened unto you:

So ask the questions that come to your mind as you study, and then seek diligently for answers. In the New Testament you will read about the powerful spiritual experiences of disciples of Jesus Christ. As a faithful disciple of the Savior, you can have your own powerful spiritual experiences as you accept the Savior’s invitation, found throughout this sacred volume, “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22).

Ideas for Personal Scripture Study

To truly learn from the Savior, I must accept His invitation, “Come, follow.”

Matthew 19:16-22 (along with the other comparable Gospels side by side):

JESUS TEACHES A RICH YOUNG RULER		
<p>16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have ^aeternal life?</p>	<p>17 ¶ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (This same question was asked in Luke 10:25-37 by a lawyer. Matthew 19:16-22 is a different version of this same story. The answers for each were different. One needed to love his neighbor, the other to not rely on his riches.)</p>	<p>18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit ^aeternal life?</p>
<p>17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? <i>there is none ^agood but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into ^blife, keep the ^ccommandments.</i></p>	<p>18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? <i>there is none (is) ^agood but one, that is, God. (Jesus does not accept the compliment, but defers it to His Father. When we are given compliments, don't take it personal. It may only be because of your calling or talents, but God should always get the credit for any accomplishments others may see in us.)</i></p>	<p>19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none <i>is ^agood, save one, that is, God. (Don't take compliments personal.)</i></p>
<p>18 He sai(d)th unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no ^amurder (not kill), Thou shalt not commit ^badultery, Thou shalt not ^csteal, Thou shalt not bear ^dfalse witness, 19 ^aHonoꝛ thy father and <i>thy</i> mother: and, Thou shalt ^blove thy ^cneighbour as thyself.</p>	<p>19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit ^aadultery, Do not ^bkill, Do not ^csteal, Do not bear false witness, ^dDefraud not, ^eHonour thy father and mother.</p>	<p>20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit ^aadultery, Do not ^bkill, Do not steal, Do not bear ^cfalse witness, ^dHonour thy father and thy mother.</p>
<p>20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?</p>	<p>20 And he (the man) answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.</p>	<p>21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.</p>

<p>21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be ^aperfect, go and sell that thou hast, and ^bgive to the ^cpoor, and thou shalt have ^dtreasure in heaven: and come and ^efollow me. (Bruce R. McConkie: There is no blanket instruction which applies to all men that they should sell their property and use the money for the poor. This was a specific instruction needed by a particular person who was covetous by nature. His personal inclinations and desires were such that he needed the spiritual testing that such a course would require. DNTC, 1:556)</p>	<p>21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and ^agive to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross (^a symbol for sacrifice), and ^bfollow me. (Live the law of consecration. Joseph Smith: A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation... The faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. Lectures on Faith, 6:7)</p>	<p>22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou (lackest) one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the ^apoor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.</p>
<p>22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had ^agreat (many) possessions.</p>	<p>22 And he (the man) was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (That to which we are most attached, where our hearts are, that is exactly what the all-wise God might ask us to give up, to determine our commitment and thus go on to perfection. Verses by Verse, the Four Gospels, p. 432. Joseph F. Smith said: "No man can obtain the gift of eternal life unless he is willing to sacrifice all earthly things in order to obtain it. Gospel Doctrine, p. 261. This wealthy youth has his riches and now he wants to obtain a hope in Christ, but Jacob, knowing the danger of this sequence of events, said, "But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them, and ye will seek them for the intent to do good." Jacob 2:18-19. Ted Gibbons, Lesson 17, p. 2.)</p>	<p>23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.</p>

The Savior's teachings (see Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35)

3 Nephi 13:14 For, if ye ^aforgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Jeffrey R. Holland: "Life is too short to be spent nursing animosities or in keeping a box score of offenses against us... We don't want God to remember our sins, so there is something fundamentally wrong in our relentlessly trying to remember those of others. When we have been hurt, undoubtedly God takes into account what wrongs were done to us and what provocations there are for our resentments, but clearly the more provocation there is and the more excuse we can find for our hurt, all the more reason for us to forgive and be delivered from the destructive hell of such poisonous venom and anger. It is one of those ironies of godhood that in order to find peace, the offended as well as the offender must engage the principle of forgiveness." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 83 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 423) We are to forgive to be forgiven. To wait for them to repent before we forgive and repent is to allow them to choose for us a delay which could cost us happiness here and hereafter. Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, Nov 1999, 34.)

Matthew 6:14 For if ye ^aforgive men their trespasses, (who trespass against you,) your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye ^aforgive not men their trespasses, neither will your (heavenly) Father forgive (you) your trespasses. (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 64:1-14. Spencer W. Kimball: Remember that we must forgive even if our offender did not repent and ask forgiveness. It frequently happens that offenses are committed when the offender is not aware of it. Something he has said or done is misconstrued or misunderstood. The offended one treasures in his heart the offense, adding to it such other things as might give fuel to the fire and justify his conclusions. Do we follow that command or do we sulk in our bitterness, waiting for our offender to learn of it and to kneel to us in remorse? And this reconciliation suggests also forgetting. Unless you forget, have you forgiven? No bitterness of past frictions can be held in memory if we forgive with all our hearts. CR, Oct 1949, 132-33. B.H. Roberts: Since the Lord requires so much mercy, such a generous spirit of forgiveness in his children, may it not be reasonably concluded—inasmuch as every noble quality that man possesses, is, in Deity, enlarged and perfected—that God is infinitely more forgiving than he has commanded his children to be? Man may drive compassion from his heart, God never will. ...Because of the loving kindness of our Father in heaven, as abundantly manifested in his willingness to pardon our transgressions, let us not lay the flattering unction to our souls that we can go on sinning, carelessly and recklessly, without making an effort to resist evil. *The Gospel and Man's Relationship to Deity*, 134-35)

Matthew 18: 21 ¶Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I ^aforgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus sai(d)th unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until ^aseventy times seven. (This means that we are to forgive perfectly, completely.)

23 ¶Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which (who) would ^atake account (Gr settle accounts) of his ^bservants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. (millions of dollars. Herod's yearly income was 900 talents.)

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

26 (And) The servant ~~therefore fell down, and worshipped~~ (besought) him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. (The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him.)

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him ^aan hundred pence: (approximately three months' wages of a poor working man) and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

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

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

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very ^asorry, (Gr distressed) and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

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

33 ^aShouldest not thou also have had ^bcompassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had ^cpity (Gr compassion) on thee?

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

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts ^aforgive not every one his brother their trespasses. (If we want to be forgiven, we must forgive. What would Jesus answer if you asked Him what you must do to repent? Ask Him, and forgive others.)

An example from His life (see Luke 23:33-34):

THE CRUCIFIXION			
MATTHEW 27	MARK 15	LUKE 23	JOHN 19
		32 And there were also two other, ^a malefactors, led with him to be put to death.	18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.
33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of ^a skull (burial),	22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull (burial).	33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary,	(Jesus was not crucified on a hill, but most likely on a well traveled road where many people would see it.)
34 ¶ They gave him ^a vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof (the vinegar), he would not drink.	23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. (vinegar mingled with gall; and when he had tasted the vinegar, he would not drink.)	(Jesus refused to drink the wine because of the deadening agent in it. He wanted His full faculties during the ordeal on the cross.)	
38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right	25 And it was the third hour, and (when) they crucified him.	There they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the	(9 am)

hand, and another on the left.	27 And with him they crucify ^(ied) two ^a thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the scripture was ^a fulfilled, which sai ^(d) th , And he was numbered with the transgressors.	right hand, and the other on the left.	
THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS			
37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the writing was,	26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, (And Pilate wrote his accusation and put it upon the cross,)	38 And a superscription also was written over him	19 ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put <i>it</i> on the cross.
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew.	THE KING OF THE JEWS.	in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE ^a KING OF THE ^b JEWS.	And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
			20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, <i>and</i> Greek, <i>and</i> Latin.
And the chief priests said unto Pilate. It should be written and set up over his head, his accusation, This is he that said he was Jesus, the King of the Jews.	(There were certain of the chief priests who stood by, that said unto Pilate, write, that he said, I am King of the Jews.		21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.
But Pilate answered and said, What I have written, I have written, let it alone.)	But Pilate said unto them, What I have written, I have written.)		22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
FIRST WORDS FROM THE CROSS: FATHER, FORGIVE THEM			
		34a ¶ Then ^a said Jesus, Father, ^b forgive them; for they know not what ^c they do. ((Meaning the	

		soldiers who crucified him,))	
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I am responsible for my own learning.

John 7:17 If any man will ^ado his ^bwill, he shall ^cknow of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. (Are we willing to put the Lord to the test and live his teachings to see if they're true?)

1 Thessalonians: 21 ^aProve all things (examine, put to the test); hold fast that which is good.

James 1:5-6, 22 **Scripture Mastery:** 5 ^aIf any of you lack ^bwisdom, let him ask of God, that ^cgiveth to all *men* liberally, and ^dupbraideth (reproaches, censures) not; and it shall be given him. (Written to Joseph Smith, and to all of us. This scripture launched the dispensation of the fullness of times. President Spencer W. Kimball said: Because the fourteen year-old boy went out in the woods to pray, having read in the scriptures...because he did live the revelations from on high, we have the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have all of the blessings that can make us the happiest people in the whole world, because a boy of fourteen went out into the woods to pray. CR, Melbourne Australia Area Conference 1976, p. 23. JS-H 1:12-13, 26: 12 **Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine.** It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible. 13 At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to “ask of God,” concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture. 26 I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided. **This single verse of scripture has had a greater impact and a more far reaching effect upon mankind than any other single sentence ever recorded by any prophet in any age. It might well be said that the crowning act of the ministry of James was not his martyrdom for the testimony of Jesus, but his recitation, as guided by the Holy Ghost, of these simple words which led to the opening of the heavens in modern times. And it might well be added that every investigator of revealed truth stands, at some time in the course of his search, in the place where Joseph Smith stood. He must turn to the Almighty and gain wisdom from God by revelation if he is to gain a place on that strait and narrow path.** DNTC, 3:246-7. How has the First Vision affected your life? What might be different in your life if Joseph Smith had never followed the prompting of the Spirit to pray? How does asking for wisdom differ from what we often request in prayer? What is the difference between asking Heavenly Father to solve your problems and asking for the wisdom to deal with problems? How could asking for wisdom bring more power to our personal prayers?)

6 But let him ^aask in ^bfaith, nothing ^cwavering (doubting, hesitating). For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

22 But be ye ^adoers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (What does it mean to be a doer of the word?)

James 2:17-18 **Even so ^afaith, if it ~~hath~~ (have) not ^bworks, is dead, being alone. (Faith and works are like two oars of a row boat. You need both to move forward.)**

1 Nephi 10:17-19: 17 And it came to pass after I, Nephi, having heard all the ^awords of my father, concerning the things which he saw in a ^bvision, and also the things which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost, which power he received by faith on the Son of God—and the Son of God was the ^cMessiah who should come—I, Nephi, was ^ddesirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things (In speaking of making one’s calling and election sure and subsequently gaining the blessings of the Second Comforter – the right to the literal presence of the Savior – Joseph Smith taught: “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them. TPJS, p.149), by the power of the ^eHoly Ghost, which is the ^fgift of God unto ^gall those who diligently seek him, as well in times of ^hold as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men. **(Those who live worthy of the companionship of the Holy Spirit – whenever and wherever they may live – are blessed equally with those who experienced the Savior’s ministry among them in mortality. DCBM, 1:72)**

18 For he is the ^asame yesterday, to-day, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him.

19 For he that diligently ^aseeketh shall find; and the ^bmysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the ^cHoly Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the ^dcourse of the Lord is one eternal round. (The Father knows the past, present, and future, since all their dimensions are continually before Him, said the Prophet Joseph Smith, constituting “one eternal now.” TPJS, in *One More Strain of Praise*, p. 47)

2 Nephi 4:15 And upon ^athese (the small plates) I ^bwrite the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. For my soul ^cdelighteth in the scriptures, and my heart ^dpondereth them, and writeth them for the ^elearning and the profit of my children.

Alma 32:27 But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties (Gordon B. Hinckley: “Far more of us need to awake and arouse our faculties to an awareness of the great everlasting truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of us can do a little better than we have been doing. We can be a little more kind. We can be a little more merciful. We can be a little more forgiving. We can put behind us our weaknesses of the past, and go forth with new energy and increased resolution to improve the world about us, in our homes, in our places of employment, in our social activities. We have work to do, you and I, so very much of it. Let us roll up our sleeves and get at it, with a new commitment, putting our trust in the Lord.” (*Church News*, 04/08/95)), even to an experiment upon my words (My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John 7:16-17), and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than ^adesire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words. (We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that 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. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment; he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same. TPJS, p. 51)

D&C 18:18 ^aAsk the Father in my ^bname, in faith believing that you shall receive, and you shall have the Holy Ghost, which manifesteth all things which are ^cexpedient unto the children of men. (Joseph Fielding Smith: **If members of the Church would place more confidence in the word of the Lord and less confidence in the theories of men, they would be better off.** I will give you a key for your guidance. Any doctrine, whether it comes in the name of religion, science, philosophy, or whatever it may be, that is in conflict with the revelations of the Lord that have been accepted by the Church as coming from the Lord, will fail. It may appear to be very plausible; it may be put before you in such a way that you cannot answer it; it may appear to be established by evidence that cannot be controverted, but all you need do is to bide your time. Time will level all things. You will find that every doctrine, theory, principle, no matter how great it may appear, no matter how universally it may be believed, if it is not in accord with the word of the Lord, it will perish. Nor is it necessary for Us to try to stretch the word of the Lord to make it conform to these theories and teachings. The word of the Lord shall not pass away unfulfilled. . . . The theories of men change from day to day. . . but the word of the Lord will endure forever. (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, October 1930, pp.155-56.))

D&C 58:26-28 **SCRIPTURE MASTERY:** 26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is ^acompelled in all things, the same is a ^bslothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. (Ezra Taft Benson: **Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded "in all things." This attitude prepares men for godhood.** Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward. CR, Apr 1965, p. 121-22. The desire to do that which is right and proper ought to be innate to the soul. "Virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy" (D&C 88:40). To be devoid of such virtues is to be devoid of the Spirit. When we have been compelled to do a particular work, we typically do it according to the letter of the law, which "letter killeth"; but if our offering is freely given, that spirit will give it life (2 Corinthians 3:6). The virtue of all actions is in the motive behind them. Revelations of the Restoration, 423)

27 Verily I say, men should be ^aanxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; (Marvin J. Ashton: When the wise counsel "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27) was said, the time structure referred only to now, today, and without delay. **How unwise are those who want to delay repentance until tomorrow. With each passing day the process becomes more difficult to pursue. Most of our hurts and misunderstandings could be cleared away if treated today instead of waiting for them to go away tomorrow. To live more fully each hour and to glean the most from each day is wisdom.** How unwise we are to waste our todays when they determine the significance of our tomorrows. We should wisely live a day at a time because that is all we have. While our families are available to us we should take time to develop oneness, unity, and character. Girls of today are the women of tomorrow. Boys of today are the men of tomorrow. The kind of men and women we produce for the future depends on how they are taught to use today. How fortunate a child is to be raised in a home where love, respect, honor, integrity, and commitment are appropriately displayed each day. Mothers and fathers, we invite you to enjoy the fruits of improved parent-child relationships beginning now. Mothers and fathers classified as truly wonderful by

appreciative children earn that rating by daily performance rather than by threat, procrastination, or purchase. We never give our children a lift when we give them a free ride. (CR, April 1975, p. 127.)

28 For the power is in them, wherein they are ^aagents unto themselves. (As an agent unto yourself, you have the power of self-action. That is, you determine how you are going to act or what you are going to do. In the dictionary of Joseph Smith's day, agency was defined as "exerting power" or the "state of being in action." An "agent" was defined as one "entrusted with the concerns of another." The dictionary cited as examples an attorney or a minister (Webster, Dictionary, 1828, s.v. "agent"). There is no hint or intimation that the word has anything to do with choosing or the freedom of choice. Teaching this principle, Joseph Fielding Smith said: **"I have heard people say, and members of the Church too, 'I have a right to do as I please.' My answer is: No, you do not. You haven't any right at all to do just as you please. There is only one right that you have, and that is to do just what I read to you: keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has a perfect right to tell us so. We have no right to refuse. I do not care who the man is; I do not care where he lives, or what he is— when the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to him, he has no right to refuse to receive it. He has the privilege. He is not compelled to receive it, because our Father in heaven has given to everyone of us, in the Church and out, the gift of free agency. That free agency gives us the privilege to accept and be loyal to our Lord's commandments, but it has never given us the right to reject them. Every man who rejects the commandments of our Father in heaven is rebellious"** (Conference Report, April 1967, 120-21). Scripture speaks of our being moral agents (D&C 101:78). **A moral agent is someone who is obligated to act morally. To act morally is more than being moral. All infants are moral beings; they simply cannot do things that are wrong. They are not, however, moral agents because they do not have the power to act, the power to bring about change. The more mature the child, the greater his or her agency and ability to grow up into the power to act for himself, to make his own choices. Similarly, as we grow in intelligence—meaning light and knowledge—in obedience, and faith, our agency grows proportionately. To increase in faith and knowledge of spiritual things is at the same time to increase in agency. Thus, God becomes the perfect example of a moral agent. No one has a greater power to act in a responsible and moral manner than he does. Salvation can be granted only to moral agents, for only moral agents have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and they alone have the capacity to be righteous.** Revelations of the Restoration, p. 424) And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their ^breward.

D&C 88:118 And as all have not ^afaith, (The knowledge of God and those things associated with him must precede faith. We cannot exercise faith in that of which we have no knowledge. Therefore, the Saints are to teach one another that faith might increase among their number. It naturally follows that there is no place in a Church classroom for that which is not productive of faith. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 649) seek ye diligently and ^bteach one another words of ^cwisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best ^dbooks (The Lord's people are to be a literate people. They should be constantly reading good books. As to "the best books," men and women of faith and goodness will always write them. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 649) words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith. (Much learning would come to Latter-day Saints were they to couple their study with greater faith. For instance, the revelations of the Restoration—including the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price and the Joseph Smith Translation—can unlock an immeasurable amount of knowledge about the teachings of the Old and New Testaments if we have the faith to allow them to do so. Were we as a people less concerned with having everything that we are told by revelations conform to the findings of the science of our day, our understanding of the origin of man and life beyond the grave would be greatly enhanced. We too are entitled to that same Spirit and the same knowledge known to Joseph Smith and the great prophets of dispensations past in which they, clothed in the robes of righteousness, have had the mysteries of heaven unfolded to them. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 649)

I need to know the truth for myself.

Matthew 25:1-13 **PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS**

1 (And) ^aTHEN (, at that day, before the Son of Man comes,) shall the kingdom of heaven (shall) be likened unto ten ^bvirgins, (According to Jewish authorities, it was the custom of the East to carry in a bridal procession about ten such lamps. In Palestine, ten was the number required to be present at any office or ceremony, such as at the benedictions accompanying the marriage ceremonies. MM, 3:466) which (who) took their ^clamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five (of them) were foolish. (“Surely this parable is not intended to divide half the saints into one group and half into another. But it does teach, pointedly, that there are foolish saints who shall fail to gain the promised rewards.” DNTC, 21:685)

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: (Olive oil was used anciently for culinary, cosmetic, funerary, medicinal, and ritual purposes. Its most important use, though, was to provide light. It provides the clearest, brightest, and steadiest flame of all the vegetable oils. Verse by Verse, the Four Gospels, p. 531)

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried (In last week’s lesson of Matthew 24, the idea that the Lord delayed his coming, is again mentioned in this parable.), they all ^aslumbered and ^bslept.

6 And at midnight (And then at midnight, while the world sleeps – a most unlikely hour for a bridegroom to come and claim his bride – behold he cometh and his reward is with him. MM, 3:467) there was a cry made, Behold, the ^abridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their ^alamps. (The common household oil lamps of 2000 years ago had enough capacity for an evening’s light. It was small enough to be cradled in the palm of the hand and was about an inch or slightly more in height. It had a hole in the middle of the top for oil. The oil lamp also had an elongated spout like extension where the cotton string wick protruded. Extending the wick provided a brighter flame while consuming the oil faster. Trimming the lamp meant extending the wick just enough to keep a flickering flame and using a minimal amount of oil. When more light was needed, a pin could be used to pull the wick out a little further, thereby increasing the light. In the parable of the ten virgins, they were invited to light the way of the bridegroom. The foolish virgins may have used up too much light on themselves early in the evening and were left unprepared for the Master when He arrived later. Daniel Rona, New Testament Supplement, p. 104. **If they had been dedicated to serving Him, they would not have wasted their oil.**)

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps ^aare gone out (Gr are going out). (The five foolish virgins thought that their meager supply of oil was sufficient when they went out to meet the Bridegroom, but found they were not prepared for a longer usage of their oil.)

9 But the wise answered, saying, ~~Not so~~; lest there be not enough for us and you: ~~but~~ go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ^aready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was ^bshut (Gr locked)

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open (un)to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I ~~know you not~~. (Ye knew me not.)

13 ^aWatch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. (Though all ten have every intention of meeting the Lord, only those who have thoroughly prepared their vessels to take up their light and let it shine once the Bridegroom arrives will be allowed to join him on the path that leads to the sacramental altar of the wedding feast. The theme of being watchful was taken up in Matthew 24 last week. “Spencer W. Kimball “I believe that the Ten Virgins represent the people of the Church of Jesus Christ and not the rank and file of the world. All of the virgins, wise and foolish, had accepted the invitation to the wedding supper; they had knowledge of the program

and had been warned of the important day to come. They were not the gentiles or the heathens or the pagans, nor were they necessarily corrupt and reprobate, but they were knowing people who were foolishly unprepared for the vital happenings that were to affect their eternal lives. They had the saving, exalting gospel, but it had not been made the center of their lives. They knew the way but gave only a small measure of loyalty and devotion. I ask you: What value is a car without an engine, a cup without water, a table without food, a lamp without oil? Rushing for their lamps to light their way through the blackness, half of them found them empty. They had cheated themselves. They were fools, these five unprepared virgins. Apparently, the bridegroom had tarried for reasons that were sufficient and good. Time had passed, and he had not come. They had heard of his coming for so long, so many times, that the statement seemingly became meaningless to them. Would he ever come? So long had it been since they began expecting him that they were rationalizing that he would never appear. Perhaps it was a myth. Hundreds of thousands of us today are in this position. Confidence has been dulled and patience worn thin. It is so hard to wait and be prepared always. But we cannot allow ourselves to slumber. The Lord has given us this parable as a special warning.” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 252-253.) **In the parable, oil can be purchased at the market. In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures – each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity – these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps.”** Faith Precedes the Miracle, Spencer W. Kimball, p. 256) **(D&C 45:56-57: 56 And at that day, when I shall come in my ^aglory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten ^bvirgins. 57 For they that are wise and have received the ^atruth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their ^bguide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the ^cfire, but shall abide the day.)**

Luke 11:9-13 9 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.

10 For every one ~~that~~ (who) asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you ~~that~~ (who) is a father, will he give him a stone? or if ~~he ask~~ a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **(Can we take the gifts that God has given us and turn them into stones or serpents or scorpions? How? Remember, God always gives us good gifts. But we can turn them into bad gifts by our bad attitude.)**

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give **(good gifts through)** ^athe Holy Spirit to them ~~that~~ (who) ask him? (James E. Talmage: The Lord's lesson was, that if man, with all his selfishness and disinclination to give, will nevertheless grant what his neighbor with proper purpose asks and continues to ask in spite of objection and temporary refusal, with assured certainty will God grant what is persistently asked in faith and with righteous intent. No parallelism lies between man's selfish refusal and God's wise and beneficent waiting. There must be a consciousness of real need for prayer, and real trust in God, to make prayer effective; and in mercy the Father sometimes delays the granting that the asking may be more fervent. But in the words of Jesus: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Jesus the Christ, 435)

John 5:39 ¶ ^aSearch the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which ^btestify of me. (“Gospel scholarship is woefully lacking both in the Church and in the world. There is only a handful of people now living who have an intelligent and comprehensive working knowledge of

the recorded revelations. None know as much as they should. Many of the rising generation in the Church take the gospel and its truths for granted without ever coming to a personal knowledge of the basic doctrines of salvation.” DNTC, 1:201. Jesus rebuked and condemned the unbelieving Jews, saying, in a sense, that they searched the scriptures because in them they thought they had eternal life, but the scriptures testified of him. (The Greek text itself suggests the following translation, in modern terms: Just knowing the scriptures, you mistakenly think you have eternal life.) In truth, the rabbis taught that study of the words in scripture brought eternal life. Hillel said, “He who has acquired words of Torah has acquired for himself the life of the world to come” (Pirke Aboth, II:8, page 48) Jesus is contradicting the erroneous rabbinic notion, and saying, essentially, that if they really understood the words of life and had the accompanying Spirit with them, they would have recognized him on whom all the scriptures testify. Verse by Verse, The Four Gospels, p. 267.)

John 7:14-17 **JESUS TEACHES AT THE TEMPLE**

14 ¶ Now about the midst of the feast (perhaps about the 4th or 5th day of the feast. Elder McConkie said: “Without warning he was there; his arrival was then as the Second Coming will be. MM, 3:125. It is my opinion that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will occur during the month of October, during the time when the Feast of Tabernacles would be celebrated. Just as He came suddenly to the temple during the feast, so He will come suddenly at the Second Coming.) Jesus went up into the temple, (One must climb some stairs to enter the temple.) and taught. (This is the last time that the Feast of Tabernacles will be legally approved for worship by God, until its millennial restoration, when not only the Jews, but all nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, according to the new rituals and performances that are part of that eternal fullness which supersedes the lesser Mosaic system. MM, 3:122)

15 And the Jews ^a marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (Where are his credentials? He was taught by His Father. Joseph Smith also did not have much worldly education. He was taught by heavenly messengers.)

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My ^a doctrine is not mine, but his that ^b sent me.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY: JOHN 7:17 17 If any man will ^a do his ^b will, he shall ^c know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. (Are we willing to put the Lord to the test and live his teachings to see if they're true?)

Acts 17:10-12 10 ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and ^a searched the scriptures daily, (This is the only place in the standard works where it says searching the scriptures daily.) whether those things were so. (These Jews were ready to learn the gospel and accepted it. (Like the Berean saints, we must be ready and willing to accept the instructions of true prophets. "Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind," says latter-day scripture (D&C 64:34) "and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion." What were the Bereans ready and willing to do? To receive the word of the Lord and to act upon it. Also, the Berean saints followed the sound practice of testing the teachings of Paul against the scriptures. They "searched the scriptures daily" in order to verify the words of Paul. The Greek term translated here as "search" actually means "to scrutinize closely, to examine"; apparently, a key difference between the Thessalonian and the Berean Jews was this habit of closely examining the scriptures in search of truth. Latter-day Saints must also make a habit of scrutinizing the scriptures on a daily basis if we wish to be attuned to the voice of truth as the Bereans were. Breck Englund, Lesson 31)

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 9 But as it is written, ^aEye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath ^bprepared for them that love him. (Revelation is for everyone in the Church. “Thus saith the Lord” – to every member of his Church – “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; 121:26-28) Joseph Smith said: “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them. TPJS, p. 149. DNTC, 3:320-21. Neal A. Maxwell said: “We are not now ready for all things the Lord has prepared in the City of God for them that love Him. (See 1 Cor. 2:9.) Our present eyes are unready for things which they have not yet seen, and our ears are not prepared for the transcending sounds and music of that city. “The trek will be proving and trying. Faith, patience, and obedience are essential (see Mosiah 23:21; Abr. 3:25), but he who completes the journey successfully will be immeasurably added upon. (see Abr. 3:26.) And he who does not will have subtracted from the sum of his possibilities. “When we arrive home, we shall be weary and bruised. But at last our aching homesicknesses will cease. Meanwhile, our mortal homecomings are but faint foreshadowings of that Homecoming!” (“Called and Prepared from the Foundation of the World,” Ensign, May 1986, 36))

10 But God hath ^arevealed them unto us by his ^bSpirit: for the ^cSpirit ^dsearcheth (explores, investigates) all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man ^aknoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God ^bknoweth no man, ^cbut (except he has) the ^dSpirit of God.

Alma 5:45-46 45 And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I ^aknow of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that **I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true.** And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

46 Behold, I say unto you **they are made ^aknown unto me by the Holy Spirit of God.** Behold, **I have ^bfasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself.** (Even though Alma had seen an angel, he needed to obtain a spiritual witness of the truth.) **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 ^crevelation which is in me.** (Robert L. Simpson said: Testimonies built on miracles alone are at best shallow and can only be perpetuated by other miracles. Such is not the eternal process considered best for the acquisition of a testimony that can withstand ...troubles (New Era, March 1972, p. 4).)