

D&C Lesson # 23
Seek Learning, Even by Study and Also by Faith
(As revealed in D&C 88; 93; 130)
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. D&C 88 was once frustrating to me. It contains many beautiful scriptural verses, but I had difficulty getting my head around how everything fit together. Then, things changed.

A. As often happens in studying scripture, **I found more sense when I connected it to a previous revelation.**

B. **In this case I realized D&C 87 which had been received just two days prior was a revelation concerning the Terrible Wars of the Last Days.** That revelation began with the prophecy of the Civil War. It then spoke of terrible, succeeding wars. [And surely the succeeding wars were the most terrible in the history of the world, with millions slaughtered in the holocaust, and the usage of the most terrible weapons of all time, including the nuclear bomb].

C. The significance of these Last Days Wars, as given in D&C 87, is that **eventually such wars will lead to the final terrible destruction which accompanies the Second Coming of Christ.**

II. We should now see the importance of the Lord giving **the “Olive Branch”** in D&C 88, which is a promise of blessings, in spite of all these terrible Last Days Wars: **a promise of comfort and peace to His faithful saints.**

A. When we look at the revelation as a whole, it is a promise that those who endure all things of the last days and stay worthy, will inherit all things promised by the Lord. And after revealing how great those blessings are, He tells us things necessary to achieve those blessings.

B. At the end He reveals the quality of wisdom His Saints should seek. He commands the establishment of a “School of the Prophets.” For His worthy priesthood leaders can in fact all become prophets. [This should not amaze us, for, as previously revealed, we can eventually become like the Father Himself].

C. The Lord then commands the Saints to build the Temple --- to be a place of learning for those “prophets.”

D. Finally, in the end, He reveals the way in which men can reach the level of intelligence and wisdom desired or required to be a prophet, and eventually like the Father Himself. [His earlier speaking of the Savior as “Light” which governs all things, seems a witness of the intelligence of Christ who created and governs all things through the Light of His knowledge, wisdom, virtue, righteousness and power].

E. Understanding how the particular theme of “Learning” fits into the whole revelation, we can study that theme better.

II. The Prophet Joseph Smith in many places revealed our “Lodestar for Learning.”

A. He taught its vital principles:

1. “The glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36).

2. “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. 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 130:18-19).

3. “For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence: wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth: virtue loveth virtue: light cleaveth unto light...” [God] comprehendeth all things...” (D&C 88:40-41).

4. We can recognize from these statements that to become as God, our Eternal Father, which Joseph and previous prophets have revealed can be our destiny, **the seeking of wisdom, light and intelligence will not only become a glory to us in the Celestial Kingdom, but also bring us closer to our Father who is in Heaven. He naturally cleaveth in particular to those who are like Him.**

III. However, not only did the Lord reveal through Joseph this Lodestar of Learning, but He revealed what kind of intelligence, etc., we ought to seek.

A. First He laid out the concept that we should seek for all true knowledge. Obviously we will be uplifted and become more serviceable to others by any correct knowledge which we obtain.

1. Joseph, for example, not only sought and learned Hebrew, but he was taught and received much knowledge concerning the very makeup of the universe itself. **Remarkably, he came to understand things which have only recently come to the understanding of modern scientists.**

a. For more specific details in the area of astronomy, see Richard Ingebretsen, *Joseph Smith and Modern Astronomy*.

2. We should understand that not only Joseph Smith, but other prophets were blessed to know many things of the universe. The Book of Abraham reveals that he understood principles of astronomy far ahead of his time. In fact, he, as Joseph, taught to others things he knew.

3. The more I learn about how all things were made to bring to pass the existence and salvation of man, the more I marvel at the knowledge and wisdom behind God’s creations

III. By counseling us to “Seek learning, Even by Study and **Also by Faith**” the Lord revealed a special key of how to achieve what is the most important learning --- that of great **spiritual** truths.

A. Joseph Smith has blessed us most by being an example of how to “**learn by Faith.**”

B. While it means we should exercise faith as we study, it likely means even more than that.

C. Joseph Smith **learned more through “study by Faith” than he did through books.**

D. Joseph, from the beginning, demonstrated we can learn more by seeking knowledge from God the Father than we can from the studies of men.

1. Thus He did not seek to know God by his own or other men’s thoughts, but by “asking of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.”

E. He later revealed to us “Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and the mysteries of God shall be *unfolded unto you*” (D&C 6:7). (Note the terms “unfolded unto you.”)

F. He also revealed, in D&C 89, that living the Word of Wisdom will lead to “great treasures of knowledge.”

IV. What D&C 88 offers is not the key to the wisdom of men, **but the key to the wisdom and knowledge of God** --- who created all things and who will forever control all things.

A. Joseph showed us that as we desire with all our hearts to know the things of God, *with an eye single to His glory*, [for the purposes of our desire to learn are extremely important], **He will very often bring the sources of such knowledge into our hands, which we then ought to pursue with diligence.**

B. Beyond Joseph’s first example of asking God and receiving the First Vision, he continued to study, constantly desirous to fully know God’s truths. **And the Lord “unfolded them unto [him].”**

C. Thus he continually received revelation through the receipt of golden plates, [which he then had to translate], through direct revelation, through ancient Egyptian papyri which miraculously came into his hands, [which he also had to translate], and through the ministering of angels. To “Seek Learning, even by Study and also **by Faith**” means to study with faith as we study, *but also to have faith the Lord will lead us to the truths we are seeking, in one way or another.*

D. I once read, in contrast, the story of a young man, raised in the church, who had felt its teachings no longer worthy of his continued attention. He had made contacts with someone who controlled a large library, and who, noting his interest in study, gave him access so he could pursue all books to his desire. He expressed his joy at receiving what he thought was the key to all the wisdom of men. Though still excited, after pursuing his studies in this way, he acknowledged that he had not yet learned the answers to the key questions of life, though he thought he had come to a vague understanding of what might be one of its key principles.

Obviously he had fallen into the trap which the Lord warned of, of “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of truth” (2 Timothy 3:7). It is when we “Seek Learning by Study and also *by Faith*” that we are **led to the greatest spiritual treasures, by the Lord Himself through His Spirit.**

V. While the counsel given in Section 88 to “Seek Learning by Study and Also by Faith” is meant for us today, **its promises were specifically fulfilled in the Kirtland Temple.**

A. Elder Neal A. Maxwell once told a Kirtland Institute teacher, and recognized Kirtland historian, Karl Ricks Anderson, that there was a “Motherlode of Christology” in Kirtland. He asked him to pursue it.

B. Recently, Brother Anderson released the results of his study, *The Savior in Kirtland*. In that book he details much that was received by the Saints during the five years they were in Kirtland, but particularly what knowledge was poured out upon them in the Kirtland Temple, when they had completed it.

C. When it is laid before one’s eyes, it is impossible to ignore what great blessings of knowledge came forth to the Saints because they obeyed the Lord’s counsel to build the temple and to seek the Learning there that He had promised them. **In commanding His people to “Seek Learning by Study and Also by Faith” the Lord was preparing them for the greatest outpouring of truth likely ever bestowed upon mankind. For knowledge, keys and authority from all previous dispensations were given in that temple.**

This great outpouring was not just given to a few leaders, but to many leaders. And hundreds of other saints, soon and later, became recipients of much truth bestowed at that time. In fact, we latter-day Saints are still being blessed by their seeking of truth by the means outlined.

We will be even more blessed by taking upon ourselves the counsel to pursue Truth in a similar manner.

If we have faith to ask of God, nothing wavering, and work in any way we can to understand, layers upon layers of truth are still awaiting the eyes and ears of such who seek, with an eye single to the glory of the Lord. And as promised, He will “unroll truth unto us.”