

Getting More From Your Scripture Study

John Hilton III, Education Week 2006

Why is it so important to study the scriptures?

The scriptures bring PEACE.

Protection (1 Nephi 15:24)

Easier to feel the Spirit (1 Nephi 1:12)

All things that you should do (2 Nephi 32:3)

Covenants (D&C 20:77,79).

Easier to feel the Spirit (1 Nephi 1:12)

When I served as a stake president... I frequently would ask [in interviews], “Do you remember and keep the covenants you have made?” I do not recall many people answering no. When I would inquire further and ask about their scripture study, some would say, “I do not have time.” Then I would ask about their personal prayers, and the answer often was, “I am not as consistent as I should be.” On some occasions I would then inquire, “Do you, in fact, keep the covenant to always remember Him?” (Elder David A. Bednar, “Understanding the importance of scripture study” <http://web.byui.edu/presentations>).

Helps for your personal scripture study

“It is better to have a set amount of time to give scriptural study each day than to have a set amount of chapters to read...It would be ideal if an hour could be spent each day; but if that much cannot be had, a half hour on a regular basis would result in substantial accomplishment. A quarter of an hour is little time, but it is surprising how much enlightenment...can be acquired” (Elder Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, 11/79, 64).

“As I think about your schedules and the pressures you face at this time in your lives, I can understand why scripture study can so easily be neglected. You have many demands pulling at you. In some cases, just maintaining your social life is a full-time occupation. But I plead with you to make time for immersing yourselves in the scriptures. Couple scripture study with your prayers. Half an hour each morning privately studying, pondering, and communicating with your Heavenly Father can make an amazing difference in your lives. It will give increased success in your daily activities. It will bring increased alertness to your minds. It will give you comfort and rock-steady assurance when the storms of life descend upon you” (Elder M. Russell Ballard, “Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might,” <http://speeches.byu.edu>).

“Recording what we learn and writing about what we think and feel as we study the scriptures helps us to revisit the same spirit that brought the initial insight or revelation and invites even greater understanding than was originally received. Recording our learnings and writing about our thoughts and feelings is another form of pondering and of always remembering him and is an invitation to the Holy Ghost for continued instruction. I personally bear testimony of the power of this principle. As we take the time to write what we think and feel in relation to studying the scriptures, an additional and increased outpouring of insight will come (Elder Bednar, *ibid*).

“For the gospel to be written in your heart, you need to know what it is and grow to understand it more fully. That means you will study it. When I say “study,” I mean something more than reading. It is a good thing sometimes to read a book of scripture within a set period of time to get an overall sense of its message, but for conversion, you should care more about the amount of time you spend in the scriptures than about the amount you read in that time. I see you sometimes reading a few verses, stopping to ponder them, carefully reading the verses again, and as you think about what they mean, praying for understanding, asking questions in your mind, waiting for spiritual impressions, and writing down the impressions and insights that come so you can remember and learn more. Studying in this way, you may not read a lot of chapters or verses in a half hour, but you will be giving place in your heart for the word of God, and He will be speaking to you” (Elder D. Todd Christofferson, *Ensign*, May 2004).

Principles

“As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances” (Elder Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 1993, 87).

The challenge

I plead with you to return to the scriptures in some way that opens your mind and heart to be taught...The Savior gave us the scriptures, paid by prophets at a price we cannot measure, so that we could know Him. Lose yourself in them. Decide now to read more and more effectively than you have ever done before (Elder Henry B. Eyring, “Always,” CES Fireside, 3 January 1999).

The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ and...when you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance...The most important [thing] you can do...is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. (President Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 7, 47).

Resources for powerful talks on scripture study

The following talks all come from the *Ensign* or the *New Era* and can be accessed through <http://lds.org>. Click on “Gospel Library,” “Church Publications,” and then “Magazines.”

“A Discussion on Scripture Study.” Elder Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, July 2005, 22.

“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge.” Elder Richard G. Scott. *Ensign*, November 1993.

“Because we have them before our eyes.” Elder David A. Bednar. *New Era*, April 2006.

“The Power of the Word.” President Ezra Taft Benson. *Ensign*, May 1986.

“Reading the Scriptures.” President Howard W. Hunter. *Ensign*, November 1979.

“Taking Note: Marking the Footnotes in the New LDS Edition of the Bible.” Daniel H., Luene L., and Michelle Ludlow, *New Era*, June 1981.

The following talks are available from <http://speeches.byu.edu>

“Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might.” Elder M. Russell Ballard. 3 March 2002.

“The Scriptures—More Precious Than Gold and Sweeter Than Honey.” President Susan W. Tanner.

The following talk is from a Brigham Young University-Idaho Devotional, and can be found at

http://www.byui.edu/Presentations/Transcripts/Devotionals/1998_01_06_Bednar.htm

“Understanding the Importance of Scripture Study.” Elder David A. Bednar. 6 January 1998.