



SHARING YOUR TALENTS & GIFTS

"Your talent is God's gift to you.
What you do with it is your gift back to God." *Leo Buscaglia*

Women's
Council

2017

Gifts
and
Talents
Study Program

The Women's Council would like to thank you for using this study program. The program has nine topics based on the theme, "Assisting in Developing Gifts and Talents." It is the hope of the Council that where there are branches or missions, domestically and overseas, women will gather together to use this material. Where there is not a branch or mission, if there are two or three - or even one sister - the material can still be used. The desire of the Council is that this program will draw us closer to God, closer to each other, and closer to our goal of the kingdom.

The booklet contains nine lessons. Each lesson will have a worship, study, and fellowship/activity component. In the worship component, you will find scriptures, a hymn, and a short story to help focus your thoughts on the lesson. Next, you will find the study component. The material here will have scriptures, a narrative discussing the topic, and discussion questions to be utilized, if desired. Lastly, you will discover a suggested activity that will provide time for fellowship and interacting with each other. Please adapt and use this material according to your needs and interests. The intention of the Council is that this material will be used each month, starting in September.

Again, the Council would like to thank you for your participation in this program. Whether you are in Iowa, India, Blackgum, or Belarus, we can gain strength knowing where two or three are gathered in the Lord's name, touching on a common goal, the Lord will be there. May God bless you as you study this material.

The Women's Council
2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Praise	4	-
14		
Hope.....	15	- 23
Patience.....	24	- 32
Listening.....	33	- 42
Nurturing.....	43	-
54		
Visiting/Caring.....	55	-
63		
Testimony.....	64	-
75		
Joy.....	76	- 84
Teaching.....	85	- 95

Worship Praise

Scripture: Revelation 5:11-14

Hymn: #16 “Praise Him, Praise Him!”

Hymns and sacred music have always held special meaning to me. In years past, I had the opportunity to sing in Handel’s “Messiah” for several decades. As the choir came to the end of each performance, I was always moved as we sang the words based on the verses from Revelation, ***“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”*** This is a chorus of praise taken up by the countless hosts of heaven speaking of Christ in all his glory. One of the most prolific hymnists in history, Fanny Crosby, certainly understood Christ’s worthiness to be praised as so many of her lyrics were praise hymns. In “Praise Him, Praise Him!” she urges us to praise “our blessed Redeemer,” not because he is good, or even very good, but because of his “excellent greatness.” He is great for many reasons:

1. He possesses the *power* of God (I Corinthians 1:24);
2. To him belong the *riches* (Ephesians 2:7). He possesses all that is necessary to carry out his promises;
3. He has received the *wisdom* of God (I Corinthians 1:24);
4. He possesses the *strength* to overthrow the powers of evil (Matthew 4:10);
5. The day will come when every knee will bow in his *honor* and every tongue confess that he is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11);
6. The will of God bore him, and to him belongs the *glory* (John 1:13-14);
7. While our Redeemer possesses all these things, to him also belongs the *blessing*. He uses all he possesses to bless those for whom he lived and died.

God's gift of his only begotten, our Redeemer, is worthy of our utmost praise. May we always remember, "***...Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever....***"
Praise God!

Written by Pat Walsh

Portions based on thoughts from William Barclay's *The New Daily Study Bible, The Revelation of John*

and *The One Year Book of Hymns* compiled and edited by Robert K. Brown and Mark R. Norton

Study Guide Praise

Written by Vicki Argotsinger

Webster's definition of praise is express warm approval or admiration of. Synonyms for praise are commend express admiration for, applaud, pay tribute to, and speak highly of, eulogize, compliment, congratulate, sing the praises of, rave about, go into raptures about, heap praise on, and write lyrics about. There are many ways and reasons to praise God and Jesus. In this lesson, I want to discuss a few of these and hopefully give you some "food for thought."

Praise to God is what we offer in acknowledgement of God's excellent being. You might think that praise is the same as saying "thank you," but there is a difference. Thanksgiving describes our attitude toward what God has done, while praise is offered for who God is. Psalm 18:3 says, "***I will call upon the Lord, for he is worthy to be praised...***" This is a very important statement. Of course, we are to thank God for the many blessings that he has given us, but we praise him

because he has told us that ***“I AM THAT I AM”*** (Exodus 3:14). In the very beginning of our Holy Scriptures, we are told ***“I am the Beginning and the End; the Almighty God...”*** (Genesis 1:2). II Nephi 1:95 says, ***“For there is a God and He hath created all things...”*** Doctrine and Covenants 17:4a says, ***“...we know that there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, framer of heaven and earth and all things which are in them...”***

All believers are commanded to praise God! In fact, Isaiah 43:21 explains that praise is one reason we were created, ***“This people I have formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.”*** Hebrews 13:15 confirms this, ***“...let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.”*** The word continually is what we need to concentrate on. We all praise God, but do we do it continually. Is praise for our Heavenly Father on our heart, our mind, and our tongues always?

Praise originates in a heart full of love toward God. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, ***“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*** Do you say you are a Christian today? If so, you know that you love God because he first loved you! Without God’s love, any praise you can offer is hollow. Love, born from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, is an essential part of your praise.

How can you bring praise to God? What can you do to make it an integral part of your life? Praise can be expressed in many ways. Many cultures praise him in different ways, but they are praising their God. Here are some ways we can praise our God.

Praise him by lifting your hands toward heaven.

Praise him by singing.

Praise him with your words.

Praise him with dancing and musical instruments.

Praise him in fellowship and worship with other believers.

Praise him with public and personal prayer.

Praise him by studying the Scriptures and his laws.

Praise him by keeping his commandments.

Psalm 34:1 instructs, ***“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”*** II Nephi 3:50 says, ***“Rejoice, O my heart! and cry unto the Lord and say, O Lord, I will praise Thee forever! Yea, my soul will rejoice in Thee, My God and the Rock of my salvation.”***

Praise to God is expressed outwardly through our everyday actions, as well as inwardly in our thoughts. Praise is an act of Christian worship. ***“Wherefore, ye must bow down before Him and worship Him with all your might, mind and strength, and your whole soul ...”*** (II Nephi 11:56)

“Where do I begin?” you may ask. “How do I start praising God?” If praising God is new to you, try praising God for who he is to you, personally. Proclaim that God’s goodness is

without measure; it is abundant and overflowing! Here are some ways to get started. Read and study the listed scriptures and ponder what the Lord is telling us.

Praise God for his holiness, mercy, and justice.

II Chronicles 20:21, Psalms 99:3-4, Mosiah 3:21

Praise God for his grace.

D&C 22: 4, Ephesians 1:6, II Nephi 7:44

Praise him for his goodness.

Helaman 4:48, Psalms 135:3,

Praise God for his kindness.

Psalms 117, III Nephi 10:18

Praise God for his salvation.

Titus 2:11-14, Mosiah 8:66, D&C 6:2

Praise to God can be offered anywhere! In time, it will become as normal as taking a breath. Sometimes we praise God inwardly as in Psalms 9:2, ***“I will be glad and rejoice in thee; I will sing praise to thy name, O Thou Most High.”*** Other times we have opportunity to give glory and praise to our God publicly. Psalms 22:22 says, ***“I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee.”*** Search out opportunities to bring praise to God! It is sometimes easy to praise God outwardly, but having your thoughts continually praising God will take diligence. We must praise God continually to become holy, as he is holy.

Praise to God, while done by his followers freely because of grateful and loving hearts, will one day be offered by everyone! Philippians 2:9-11

says, *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."* When he comes again, all mankind will praise him and acknowledge him as Lord. He is King over all the earth. When we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, our hearts long to praise his name continually.

All nature praises God.

Psalms 148:7-13

The sun, moon, and stars praise him.

Psalms 148:3

The angels praise him.

Psalms 148:2, 1 Nephi 1:7

Even the wrath of men is used by God to praise himself.

Psalms 76:10

Children are to be taught to praise God.

Psalms 78:4, III Nephi 10:21, D&C 68:4a-c

Your praise to God is evidenced through your salvation. 1 Peter 2:9 says, *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* How are you offering praise to God today? Do you know him as your Lord and Savior? If not, why not begin there. Learn more about him so you can become like him.

When others look at you, do they see a reflection of God’s praise? Psalms 113:3 declares, *“From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.”*

I want you to take this lesson very seriously. Not because I wrote it but because we need to not only talk about building Zion, we need to begin getting ourselves sanctified and righteous. As the saying goes, It is easy to talk the talk. We have to be able to “walk the walk.” God is waiting for a group or righteous people to fulfill his Zion. He needs us to respond quickly and completely.

I have listed a group of scriptures from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Please read and study these and add more of your favorite scriptures on praise to this listing. Study and ponder so we can learn to praise the Lord all day long. This will help us become holy. This will help us be like Jesus so we can know him and get prepared for Zion!

Psalms 104:33	II Nephi 3:50	D&C 147:6b
Psalms 105:45	I Nephi 5:199	D&C 157:6c
Psalms 145:3	Mosiah 9:67	
II Samuel 22:4	Ether 3:11	
Isaiah 43:21	Mormon 3:29	
James 5:13		
Deuteronomy 10:21		
1 Chronicles 29:13		

Questions

1. In your own words, define praise.

2. Name at least six things that inspire you to praise God.
3. Describe times that you felt you praised the Lord well. Where was this and what did you say or think?
4. What can you do to increase your efforts to praise God and Jesus?

Fellowship Activity

Praise

Other words that we can use for praise are adoration, devotion and thanks. There are two different activities listed below that will hopefully help us adore and thank our Lord. Please use the one that is best suited for your group or use both activities if you desire.

First Activity:

The goal of this activity is to have the sisters share experiences or examples of praise. This will be done by passing out a piece of paper of examples when praise has occurred. The goal is to have each sister write her name next to one of the examples. It is possible that a sister could write her name beside more than one item. The challenge is to work together so that each woman is able to put her name next to an example. You will find ten examples below, but you may add to the list or repeat as

needed so that the number of examples will match the number of sisters in your group.

Praise Example:

Find a sister who is able to write her name next to the following examples of praise.

1. I am able to give a two-minute testimony of a blessing I received from God this week.
Name: _____
2. I was a convert to the church.
Name: _____
3. I am a third-generation church member.
Name: _____
4. I have had a prayer answered this week. Please share the answered prayer.
Name: _____
5. I have been healed, physically or spiritually.
Name: _____
6. I have witnessed a healing.
Name: _____
7. I can praise God through my singing.
Name: _____
8. I have praised God by playing an instrument at church/camp/reunion.
Name: _____
9. I have praised God by writing poetry about praise.
Name: _____
10. I am able to give a testimony of a blessing I received when I was a child.
Name: _____

Second Activity:

Have the sisters make a bookmark, to mark their favorite scripture of praise. For the activity, you will need the following:

1. Poster board – cut into strips approximately two inches by five inches. Size may vary, according to your preference.
2. Colored pencils or markers
3. Christian stickers (optional)
4. Glitter (optional)
5. Contact paper – for laminating (optional)
6. Yarn – for tassel (optional)

Have the sisters color and decorate their bookmark as desired. If laminating the bookmarks, cut a sheet of contact paper large enough for the bookmark to fit on and be covered by the paper. Press the contact paper to form a seal and to remove air pockets. After the bookmark is sealed, trim the edges of the contact paper to the desired length, being careful not to cut the bookmark. If a tassel is desired, use a hole punch to put a hole in the top of the bookmark, and then thread yarn through it. Cut several pieces of yarn the length you like, for the tassel. Next, tie the yarn pieces in the middle with another piece of yarn. Attach the tassel to the yarn that was inserted into the hole of the bookmark. The tassel should be done after the book mark has been laminated with contact paper.

Written by Marci Damon

Worship Hope

Scripture: Psalms 31:24 and Doctrine and Covenants 11:4b

Hymn: #477 “Let Us Shake Off the Coals”

Ms. Smith sat in her class room at the end of a long day. A heavy sigh escaped her lips as she stared at Sally’s paper. It was the end of the first quarter of second grade and Sally had not shown much progress. Her handwriting, if you could call it that, was barely legible. Her math, spelling, and reading were still at a beginning first grade level. No matter what Ms. Smith had done, she could not seem to teach this student. Sally was a mystery that was beginning to drive Ms. Smith to hopelessness. What was she to do? Ms. Smith put the paper done

and went home. That night she quietly pondered about how she could reach Sally.

As she drove into school the next day, Ms. Smith began to pray. Her prayer focused on God changing Sally so that she could learn. Ms. Smith asked that Sally would be able to sit still, listen, and learn. In frustration, Ms. Smith ended her prayer with, “I can’t do this anymore, God, you are going to have to change Sally. I am at the end of my rope.”

Ms. Smith then heard a voice say, “I have not given up hope in you, why are you giving up hope in one of my creations?” Ms. Smith sat quietly in her car, wondering about what she had just heard. Hope was the key. She had lost her hope.

Ms. Smith bowed her head again and gave another prayer. Quietly she spoke. “Dear Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not having enough hope. Help me to see what Sally can be. Help me to find ways to teach her. Amen.” With renewed strength, she got out of her car and headed for her classroom. When Sally came bouncing into class, Ms. Smith looked up. Instead of seeing Sally as a problem, she noticed Sally’s big smile and how eager she was to be in class. Sally seemed to bring the sunshine right into the class room. Ms. Smith noticed that her attitude towards Sally was changing and with it the way she treated Sally. With every right answer, Ms. Smith was excited and praised Sally. No longer was Ms. Smith looking at what Sally was getting wrong. Instead, she was looking at what Sally was getting right.

A couple of weeks later Ms. Smith sat at her desk after school looking at Sally's paper. It was still sloppy with several mistakes, but instead of being discouraged when she looked at it, she smiled. This time she could see the small improvements and her hope triumphed over her discouragement. Ms. Smith could now see all the potential, all the possibilities, that Sally had. She imagined that she glimpsed what God saw as he looked at Sally. Ms. Smith was ready to face tomorrow, and Sally, with a smile and hope.

Written by: Marci Damon

Study Guide

Hope

Written by Brenda Evans

The 16th century reformer Martin Luther is credited for saying, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." We hope for a sunny day, a puppy to love, a safe trip; but deep inside our soul there is a whisper that hope is more than wishful thinking - that it is deeper, more solid, more meaningful. A dictionary definition of hope is "to desire with the possibility of obtaining." Hope generally expects good to transpire. We state, "Young people give me hope for the future" which suggests expectation, confidence, trust, and

optimism. We also use hope to indicate something we look forward to or deeply desire as in the sentences, “She hopes to live in Zion”; or “I hope you are feeling better soon.” The word, hope, can also be used as a chance for survival or a possible rescue. Here are some examples: “The Coast Guard gives hope for those lost at sea”; and “Our only hope is in Jesus.” When we say, “She always sees the glass half full,” “Look on the bright side,” or “Think positive!” we are simply finding another way of saying “We should hope for the best!” Our understanding of hope thus far includes an anticipation or looking forward to an event or action, a longing for good to be evident, and a confident belief of rescue or chance for survival. Optimism is an over-all characteristic that epitomizes the attribute of hope.

There is, however, a scriptural foundation for hope. Hebrews 6:19 states, ***“Hope is an anchor to the soul...”*** Jeremiah 17:7 says, ***“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.”*** Titus 2:13 describes Jesus as our ***“blessed hope.”*** True Christian hope has a focus of Jesus Christ. In the Book of Mormon, hope is often paired with faith and love. Mormon wrote to us through his son, Moroni, and asked the question, ***“How can you attain faith, save you have hope? And what is it that you shall hope for?”***

Mormon then answers his own questions, ***“Behold, I say unto you, that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of His resurrection to be raised unto life eternal and this because of your faith in Him according to the***

promise; therefore, if a man have faith, he must have hope; for without faith, there cannot be any hope” (Moroni 7:46-48). Mormon is explaining that faith depends on hope and hope depends on faith; however, he goes on to say that we can’t have faith or hope unless we are meek and lowly and believe that Jesus is the Christ and that we have charity. We are to pray diligently and earnestly for this love so we can love as Jesus loves, and this brings hope to our souls (Moroni 7:49,51,53). Concerning this hope, Apostle Arthur Oakman says: “... underneath human frailty and sin there is a better self which waits to spring into life. The man of faith centers his hope in this. Men will eventually respond to the love of God.” Nephi tells us to “...***press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and of all men***” (II Nephi 13:29).

Troubles, difficulties and daily cares can wear us down if we are not always reminding ourselves of God’s goodness to us. Unless we have our eyes focused on the Lord, we will not be able to endure the days that go from bad to worse – those days when our lives are way too frantic; our prospects for peace much too slim; when our emotions seem to reach new lows; when people disappoint us, even turn against us; when the doctor’s prognosis seems grim; the walls close in; our dreams die and our hearts are broken. These are the times we must learn to turn our thoughts to Jesus, our “blessed hope,” and focus on his holiness and goodness, his incomparable greatness, and his powerful love for us. Perhaps that ‘brightness of

hope,' that 'anchor of the soul,' that 'better self,' could be identified as that magnanimous gift of God, the Holy Spirit. As we trust Jesus in the tough times, he imparts hope to us through his Holy Spirit, the Comforter who lives within us to encourage us and to teach us to turn to Jesus and put our hope in him. We can truthfully state that Jesus is our one true hope, the legitimate hope of the world. It is he who rescues us from hopelessness; it is he who fulfills our longings for good to happen in our lives; and he is the One on whom we can have confident expectation for his protection and provision. We look to Jesus with something beyond optimism or desire or positive thinking. We are not just people who see *the glass half full*; we have a hope that overflows the glass! In the book of Zechariah double portions are even promised to those who are *prisoners of hope* – prisoners because of our sins and hope because of turning to the stronghold of the Lord which will never be defeated (Zechariah 9:12).

To understand hope in its scriptural sense, then, is to recognize that hope, faith and love are of Jesus Christ and work together for his glorification. Through the precious gift of the Holy Spirit within us, we develop hope and begin to practice these godly attributes which broaden into righteousness - for the Lord spoke to Moroni saying, ***“I will show unto them that faith, hope, and charity bringeth unto me the fountain of all righteousness”*** (Ether 5:29). Because of our hope, faith and love, we can say “No” to fear, worry, discouragement and doubt and, instead, experience inner peace, assurance, and joy in the Lord. ***“Now the God of hope fill you with***

all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost”
(Romans 15:13).

FOUR CANDLES

The four candles burned slowly. The ambience was soft; one could seem to hear them speaking.

The first candle said “I am Peace. The world is full of anger and fighting, nobody can keep me lit.” Then the flame of peace went out completely.

The second candle said “I am Faith. Most of all, I am no longer indispensable. It doesn’t make sense that I stay lit another moment.” Just then a breeze softly entered the room and blew out Faith’s flame.

Sadly, the third candle began to speak: “I am Love, but these days no one understands my importance, so they simply put me aside. They even forget to love those closest to them. I haven’t the strength to stay lit any longer.” And with a sigh, Love’s flame went out.

Suddenly a child entered the room and saw that the three candles were no longer burning. “Why aren’t you burning? You are supposed to stay lit until the end.” Saying this, she began to cry.

Then the fourth candle gently called out: “Don’t be afraid, I am Hope, and while I am still burning, we can re-light the other candles!” With shining eyes,

the child took the candle of Hope and eagerly lit the other candles.

The greatest of these is Love, but the flame of Hope should never go out of your life. With Hope, each of us can experience Peace, Faith and Love. Let Love, Peace, Faith and Hope always shine brightly in our lives, now and forevermore.

Questions

1. List four characteristics of hope and hopelessness.
2. How does the story of the four candles help you understand hope?
3. What does Paul tell us will help you have hope? See Romans 15:4.
4. Name some of the many qualities of the Holy Spirit that give us hope.
5. When we are discouraged and feeling down and empty, what does the psalmist tell us to do? See Psalm 42:5, 11 and Psalm 43:5.
6. What does Moroni suggest is the cause if we don't feel we have hope and only feel despair? See Moroni 10:16, 29. Why would Moroni feel this is true? Also see Isaiah 59:1-2, Psalm 130, and Titus 2:11-14.
7. Apostle Oakman said that hope sustains the man of faith. Explain.
8. What do the writers of scripture seem to express as our greatest hope? Elaborate.
9. If you encounter someone who is discouraged, what can YOU do to encourage hope.

Resources

II Nephi 13:29-30

Moroni 7:46-53; 10:15-16, 29

Ether 5:4, 6, 29, 32

Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5; 119:114; 130

Isaiah 40:28-31; 41:10-13; 59:1-2; 61:1,3

Zechariah 9:12

Titus 2:11-14

I John 3:2-3

The Doctrinal Message of the Book of Mormon by
Arthur A. Oakman

Encouragement for Life, Words of Hope and Inspiration
by Charles R. Swindoll

A Place of Healing by Joni Eareckson Tada

Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus

Story of the Four Candles (author unknown)

Fellowship Activity

Hope

The activity will require your Scriptures, pens or pencils, and writing paper. The goal of this activity is to see how many scriptures the sisters can find where a promise is given from the Lord from which we receive hope. For example, Doctrine and Covenants R150:8b states that Zion shall come forth like a blossoming flower – the hope of Zion. The scripture may refer to the hope of a healing, the hope of eternal life, or the hope of daily needs being received, etc.

Have the sisters divide into groups, the number in each group will depend on the number in attendance. Set a time limit (10 or 15 minutes is suggested) in which the sisters are to find as many

scriptures regarding hope as they can. Have the ladies write down the scripture reference and the hope that is represented in the scripture. After the time has expired, have the sisters gather back together to share their scriptures with the group. If desired, you can name the group with the most scriptures as the winners.

Written by Marci Damon

Worship Patience

Scripture: II Peter 1:5-7

Hymn #443 “Never Be Discouraged”

The above scripture, known as the “ladder of virtues,” lists attributes which should be added one to another to achieve charity, the true love of Christ. The list begins with faith, *“the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). Next, we add virtue, or excellence; the quality that makes us a good, courageous citizen and friend. Temperance, or self-control is the next rung. That brings us to the attribute of patience; so important and difficult to cultivate, yet key to continuing on the path to charity.

As a young mother, I remember embroidering, framing, and hanging a piece of needlework on our wall. It pictured a mom with her young son standing beside her, tugging at her clothing, wanting her immediate attention. Below the picture were the words, “Lord, grant me the patience to endure my blessings.” We can all identify with that thought. And in that, we can recognize that developing patience is an active process. It is not intended to be a passive and thoughtless exercise in waiting. In fact, we frequently find the words “faith” or “hope” in many of the scriptures that reference patience. Patience begins with a profound belief in God’s word and develops by the faith and hope that his word is true, and that, in his time, his promises will come to pass.

Paul, in Hebrews 12:1-2, provides this thought: “...*let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” Christ knew to wait upon the Lord, and thereby earned his reward.

In closing, consider the following thoughts written by Dieter F. Uchtdorf as you climb the rung of patience on the ladder toward charity: “Patience is not passive resignation, nor is it failing to act because of our fears. Patience means active waiting and enduring. It means staying with something and doing all that we can...working, hoping, and exercising faith; bearing hardships, with fortitude, even when the desires of our hearts are delayed.

Patience is not simply enduring; it is enduring well!”

“For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth” (Psalms 37:9).

Written by Pat Walsh

Study Guide Patience

Written by Linda Gussman

“O rest in the Lord. Wait patiently for Him and He will give thee thy heart’s desires.” Felix Mendelssohn

Patience does not come easily for many of us. It is often a gift that is bestowed to us after years of becoming patient. Sometimes we feel that being patient means that we aren’t doing anything. Often, we act too quickly because we don’t know how long we must wait for our need to be met, or the decision to be made, or our prayer to be answered. In searching the Scriptures, many times the words faith and patience are together. We must

have faith to remain patient. We must have patience to grow our faith.

Patience is waiting, looking, and hoping, expecting, persevering, enduring, bearing, remaining, and abiding. If you see how God is patient, particularly with us, you can see that he is the epitome of patience.

We must practice patience, and even pray for it if we struggle with being impatient. We can ask the Lord to teach us how to wait on him while still moving forward in our faith. We wait for God to fulfill a promise, to comfort during a trial, or to give us assurance of our forgiveness for some sin. In these cases, we must be patient with God. Patience with God involves faith, and to exercise faith is to surrender final control of one's life. To lack faith is to give in to one's desire for control. So, our patience with God will only be as strong as our ability to overcome this desire and surrender every aspect of our lives.

The Scriptures are full of stories of God's people struggling to learn patience:

Abraham and Sarah: Abraham was patient. Sarah was impatient. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham and his wife Sarah did not have any children. God reminded Abraham of his promise for many years. He waited patiently, but still there was no child for them. Abraham, though known as a man of faith, took his wife's suggestion and had a child with Sarah's handmaid. The son's name was Ishmael. But this was not the son God intended for Abraham. Finally, when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90

years old, God gave them their son Isaac. Though it took years of patiently waiting, they received the promise of God. Hebrews 6:15 says of Abraham, ***“And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”***

Job: Probably the best-known story of patience in the Bible is the life of Job. To prove Job’s faithfulness to the Lord, God allowed the devil to destroy everything Job owned (Job 1). Job was a wealthy man. He lost his crops, property, cattle and servants. But most devastating of all was when Job lost his children. However, Job did not blame God. He accepted that God had a plan and would be patient for God to reveal His plan. Often people will refer to “the patience of Job.” He knew God had a plan and was willing to accept what God allowed in his life. In the end, God restored to Job twice as much as he had in the beginning.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.: Joseph was surely a great example of being taught patience while growing his faith. He sought the Lord’s will in his life at a young, impressionable age. It is truly miraculous that he exercised such patience in the Lord as he waited for direction from Him. Joseph had great faith that God would teach, counsel, and guide him, as he took on the enormous responsibility of leading the true church into existence. Because of his patience throughout his entire life, he was protected physically and strengthened spiritually. He is one of our best examples of waiting patiently on the Lord while stepping out in faith.

Suggested Scriptures

Romans 15: 4-5

Psalm 37:7

James 5:7-8

Alma 5:39

Alma 7:40

Alma 16:179

D&C 63:6c

D&C 67:3c

D&C 98:5

Questions

1. Reflect on a time when you learned a lesson in patience.
2. What is your testimony about that experience?
3. Who is someone in your life who has the gift of patience?
4. Think about these women in the Scriptures who exercised great patience... Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Emma Smith. Share how each woman was patient.
5. How is the Lord teaching us spiritual patience as we look forward to Zion?

Fellowship Activity

Patience

In our journey through life, some days do not always run smoothly. Activities that should be simple become complicated by obstacles that get in our way. To demonstrate this, I would like for you to participate in the following activity:

Place a paper plate on your head, and listen carefully to the following instructions. (Pause between each set of instructions to make sure everyone has adequate time to complete each task.)

1. Without looking, draw a straight line across the plate to represent the horizon line.
2. On top of the line, draw a rectangle.
3. On top of the rectangle, draw a triangle with the point on top.
4. Turn this into a church by adding a steeple on top.
5. Draw a stick figure (or stick family for an extra challenge) beside the church.
6. On the other side, draw the sun in the sky.
7. Below the horizon line, draw three squares that represent the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants.

If you would like to score the drawings, use the following guide.

- Give yourself 2 points if your church is on the horizon line, 1 point if it goes through the line.
- Give yourself 2 points if your steeple is on your church, 1 point if it goes through the church.
- Give yourself 2 points if your stick figure touches the ground, 1 point if it goes through the ground.
- Give yourself 1 point if your sun does not touch anything else.
- Give yourself 1 point for each book of scripture that does not touch anything else.

I am sure you could all draw a nice church if you had been able to see what you were drawing. This demonstrates how simple tasks can be made difficult when something gets in your way. This demonstrates how simple tasks can be made difficult when something gets in your way. Obviously, the challenges we face in our daily lives are much greater than the one in this exercise. When this happens, many experts recommend taking a deep breath and counting to ten. I have heard other people suggest taking a moment and reflect on the positive attributes in your life. In addition, you can always turn to God and pray for patience. What do you do when you feel overwhelmed? Turn to the person sitting next to you, and discuss techniques you have used when you have needed patience.

Patience is endurance, perseverance and steadfastness. In John 16:33, it states, ***“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”***

The Lord tells us we will have trials. Yet, it is through this tribulation that we often grow spiritually. So, when you think you cannot endure the challenges in life for one more day, hold on tightly to the Rod of Iron. The Lord has a place for all who abide by his word and live faithfully.

Written by Danelle Woodruff

Worship Listening

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 18:2n, 63:1a;
and Jacob 2:21-22

Hymn: # 410 “Open My Eyes, That I May See” or
#415 “Master, Speak! Thy Servant Heareth!”

A few years ago, my school adopted the
“Leader in Me” program. All teachers were
required to attend training on “The Seven Habits.”
Habit Five is about listening and is titled: Seek
First to Understand, Then to Be Understood.

During the training, we learned about empathetic listening. Listening which requires you to reflect on what the speaker is saying; not to judge, or think about what you will say next, or even relate it to your own experiences. Empathetic listening is purely listening to what a person is expressing and say it back to them in your own words. When you truly listen to what someone is saying, and focus only on their words, you can come to an understanding quickly.

I have a hard time listening. My family knows how I will ask a question and then I will fail to listen to the answer, only to ask the question again a few minutes later. They usually grumble and let me know I just asked that question! I could save my family aggravation, and myself a lot of time, if I would just focus and listen the first time!

Not listening to God can also have ramifications. One night, as I pulled into a parking spot, I had the thought, "Your car is black, no one will see you parked here." I was late for a meeting and opted not to move my car. An hour later, someone came to let me know they had backed into my car. If I had listened to that still small voice, I could have skipped dealing with insurance agents and avoided not having a car for three days. God does watch out for us, but we need to be willing to listen.

Empathetic listening is not hard, but I think we make it hard. Society has trained our brains to always be on to the next thing. To focus on one thing and not allow anything to disrupt you is hard. When we have too many distractions in our lives,

we are not able to focus on what is important: building relationships with our God, our families and friends, and our community. We need to stop and truly listen. Listen as if each word is the most important word you'll hear today!

Written by Alisa Friedrich

Study Guide Listening

Written by James Gates

Suggested Scriptures Readings:

III Nephi 5:1-8; Matthew 25:35-46; and Luke 6:31-33

Our Scriptures tell us the importance of hearing or listening to the Lord. We also know what impact our listening to others can have on their lives. We to are told that when we treat others in

need, we are in the service of our Lord. The third scripture is very familiar. It is often called the “Golden Rule” or the idea that people should treat others in the same way that they themselves would like to be treated.

This quote from my hospice training summarizes the value of the gift of listening: “To listen to another’s soul in a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that a human being ever performs for another.”

In this lesson, you will discuss some of the characteristics of a good listener and why you should consider listening as a gift given to enrich the lives of others.

Do you consider yourself a great, or even a good listener? Have you ever given thought of the difference between one who hears and one who listens? You might be thinking, what is the big deal? What is easier than sitting down and just hearing what a person has to say? Hearing isn’t necessarily listening, nor is it necessarily listening well.

Much of this lesson material comes from training I received during my years as a hospice volunteer and from an article entitled “9 Ways to Master the Art of Listening” by Aleteia Luna.

Here is a list of the most important things you should know about the gift of listening:

1. Make Eye Contact

This first rule is obvious but frequently forgotten. If you don’t look at the person while

they're speaking, you give them the impression that you don't care what they say. By avoiding eye contact, it appears you don't even care about them or what they are saying. On the other hand, eye contact tells them that you care about what they are saying and you are focused on them. It is necessary to walk a fine line with the eye contact. Do not overwhelm the speaker by staring intently, but make sure to meet their gaze from time to time.

2. Don't Interrupt

Remember that you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Maybe you should be listening more and talking less. Let the person speak uninterrupted. To master the art of listening, you need to halt any good thoughts that come to mind and let the person say everything they need to say. Often people simply need someone to talk to, not someone who will interrupt giving their own thoughts and opinions. This does not mean that you don't say anything. Consider the next point.

3. Practice "Active Listening"

Active listening is a means of communication that involves interaction with the speaker and provides proof of your understanding and acceptance. The art of listening isn't simply about staying quiet 100% of the time; it's also about asking questions. These questions are for clarification or for further explanation so that you can fully understand what the speaker is telling you. For instance, questions like these are helpful: "Could you say more about that?" "How did you

feel when that happened?” “Do I hear you saying that (summarize)?” “How do you feel about that now?”

4. Show You Understand

Another great way to show that you understand is to establish your willingness to listen. Simply saying, ‘I’m listening,’ ‘I’m here’ tells the speaker that you are listening. You can also make noises that show you’re in tune with what the person is saying such as “yes,” “yeah,” “mhmm,” and “okay.” This seems trivial, but it’s important to not behave like a zombie and demonstrate some interest and comprehension.

5. Listen Without Thinking

In other words, listen without forming responses in your mind. Be wholehearted and listen to the entire message. It’s very tempting to fill the spaces, after all, our minds think around 800 words per minute, compared to 125-150 words we speak per minute. Don’t miss valuable information by letting your mind wander!

6. Listen Without Judgement

To effectively master the art of listening, it’s extremely important to withhold any negative evaluations or judgments. Make it your goal to be open minded 100% of the time. After all, who wants to open up to a narrow-minded person? It also helps to be mindful of your “shut off” triggers, which are the specific words, looks, or situations that cause you to stop listening. This way, you can prevent yourself from shutting off in the future.

7. Listen to Non-Verbal Communication Signals

About 60 – 75% of our communication is non-verbal. That’s a lot! In order to know whether to encourage the speaker, to open yourself more, or to be more supportive in your approach, it’s essential to know what the person’s body is saying. Do they display signs of discomfort? Are they untrusting of you? Does their body language align with their words? There are many signals and their meanings defined. To learn more about body language simply search the Internet for non-verbal communication.

8. Create A Suitable Environment

It can be difficult to listen to another person when the TV is screaming, your phone is buzzing, and there are thousands of cars passing by. To be a good listener, it is important to give the speaker your full attention. When you remove these distractions and find a quiet place to sit down and listen, it’s much easier to listen empathetically with an open mind and whole heart. Also, when you indicate it would be good to “find a quiet place,” you put importance in the person and what they have to say. Once again, you show care and consideration.

9. Observe Other People

If you’re serious about mastering the art of listening, why not observe other people? One of the best ways to become a better listener is to observe the way people interact with each other, and all the irritating and rude things they do. Create an “annoying habit” checklist and see if you do any of these. If you’re brave enough, you can even ask

someone you trust about what they like and dislike about the way you interact with others in conversation.

CONCLUSION

Becoming a good or a great listener requires a desire to listen with openness, acceptance, positive interest, patience, discipline and giving an understanding that the speaker really matters as a person.

The art of listening is an invaluable life skill. Not only will it help you communicate better with your friends and family, but it will help you succeed in every area of your life.

If the person is telling you something private or important, then you should make it clear that you're a trustworthy person who can keep their mouth shut. Prove that the person can trust you, that whatever is said stays between you two, and that your word is your bond. Gossiping has no place in the work of building the Kingdom.

Questions

1. How does the “Golden Rule” apply to the gift of listening?
2. Do you think there is a difference between hearing and listening? If so, what is it?
3. How is a good listener in the service of the Lord?
4. Why is the statement, “Everyone needs someone to talk to,” true?
5. What message does using “me” or “I” a lot send to the speaker?

6. As a speaker, how do you know when someone is not listening?

Fellowship Activity

Listening

The first activity is called “Bible Telephone.” Many sisters probably played this game as a child, demonstrating how often gossip quickly gets turned into something it did not start out to be. Have several slips of paper prepared with

scripture verses written on them. You could use verses from the lesson, if so desired, and place them in a bowl or other container. Have everyone sit in a circle or around a table. One person picks a slip of paper with a verse on it from the bowl. The person then whispers the verse into the ear of the person next to them. Each person in the groups whispers the verse as they understand it to the next person. The last person to hear the verse repeats out loud what they understood the verse to be. Repeat the game with another verse from the bowl. See how many times the verse is spoken correctly compared to the verse being incorrect.

Another activity that could be done is called “Blind Obstacle Course.” In this activity you will need blindfolds and safe objects (cushions, boxes, or soft plastic cones) to form the obstacle course. Divide people into pairs and have one person from each team blindfolded. The person who is blindfolded must make it through the obstacle course while being guided by their partner’s verbal directions only. After the first person on the team completes the obstacle course, the other partner puts on the blindfold. Again, they must go through the course while being guided only by their partner’s directions. Discuss who listened well, and who tried to go through the course ignoring the directions.

Written by Brandy Lascoe

Worship Nurturing

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants R157:5a

Hymn: #514 “Would You Bless Our Homes”

My grandmother was great at nurturing plants. She could grow anything. She could even get poinsettias to come back year after year. I can remember asking Grandma once how to carry-over a poinsettia. Her answer was simple, “Just put it in the dark during the winter, water it sparingly, and bring it out in spring.” *Simple, I can do that*, I thought. Something must have gotten lost in the translation because my poinsettia died. But Grandma could grow anything; nothing seemed to die on Grandma. Not even the plants that she didn’t want! She was a true nurturer of plants. I wish that I had paid more attention to how grandma grew and took care of her plants so I could grow plants as well as she did.

Grandmother also nurtured her grandchildren. Her ready smiles and hugs could turn any gray day into a day full of sunshine. As wonderful as her smiles and hugs were, it was her ability to listen and give a soft, gentle word of advice that truly made her a nurturer. She had that remarkable ability to make you feel that you were the most important person in the world when you were with her. No matter how trivial your concerns or thoughts might be, she was always willing to listen to what you had to say. And when needed, provide some tender counseling. Grandma’s words didn’t belittle or make you feel stupid. Her words encouraged and at times gently redirected me back to where I should be.

I hope I can learn that same nurturing ability that Grandma showed with her plants and

grandchildren. It will take practice and persistence with failures and successes, but I can hear Grandma's voice saying, "That's it, keep going." I need to keep working on those smiles, hugs, and more importantly, a listening ear and a gentle word of advice when needed. Someday, maybe I will be able to nurture as well as Grandma did.

Written by Marci Damon

Study Guide Nurturing

Written by Cindy Patience

The Women's Council, in outlining these classes, defined nurturing as: "the gift that gives whatever is needed, whenever it is needed along with developing what is required in a person's life, character and spiritual development. It is being a support when needed, a counselor when called upon and a role model at all times. This requires a strong spiritual foundation and courage to help others find that straight and narrow path and maintain that constant, never ending upward movement to God."

The ability to nurture seems to be a natural gift that most women have been blessed with. Because of this, we are often called upon to exercise this gift with our families, our church associations, and even within our vocations. We are here to explore some practical guidelines that we can practice in order to magnify this gift, according to our abilities to do so.

We don't have to look far to find examples of wonderful nurturers in our own experiences. Many of us have been blessed with nurturing parents, or other role models who encouraged and set an example for us. The Scriptures provide many examples of effective nurturing, but and therefore, when preparing this lesson, I turned to my Scriptures for inspiration. Interestingly, my Scriptures fell open to the Book of Ruth. I don't believe that this was a coincidence.

Most of us are aware of the beautiful story of the widow Ruth in the Old Testament. Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, was a widow, and now had lost both of her sons. In Ruth, Chapters 2-4 we learn that even though Ruth's husband has died, she

refuses to return to her people, the Moabites. Ruth remains with her mother-in-law because she has come to love, honor, and respect her. She shows great courage when she chooses to stay by Naomi's side as they return to Naomi's homeland, and she nurtures her beloved mother-in-law providing for her temporal needs. I believe that the reason Ruth made this choice is because Naomi had been her role model and had nurtured her as well, teaching and counseling with her, exemplifying wisdom, love, and steadfast faith.

As we read through the first chapters of the Book of Ruth, we find that Ruth has the gift of giving whatever is needed, when it is needed, to help her mother-in-law, and that Naomi has become a counselor and a role model to Ruth, encouraging and teaching her. We see that both nurtured the other in different and distinct ways.

Life was unusually difficult for widows of that time period, Ruth, wanting to honor Naomi, was willing to take Naomi's nurturing counsel to glean for food in the fields of a righteous relative named Boaz. As a result of Ruth's willingness to nurture by providing for Naomi, and of Naomi's nurturing counsel, Boaz took notice and came to offer them both food and protection. One of the greatest blessings that results from this is Ruth's subsequent marriage to Boaz and the birth of their child named Obed, who becomes like a grandchild for Naomi to love in her old age. Because both Naomi and Ruth used their gift to nurture having the needs of the other in mind, they both were blessed. ***Nurturing is***

at its best when it is a two-way street. Read Ruth 4:13-17.

From this story and other scriptures, we learn some important lessons about how to be effective nurturers. We will explore this topic by organizing this lesson into categories which we'll call "The Be's of Nurturing."

1-Be ready and willing. Sometimes we won't know when the occasion will arise that requires our nurturing spirits to intervene. Being in tune with what is going on around us and ready to respond as needed is key to being an effective nurturer. Both Naomi and Ruth were met with a sudden challenge to help the other. They most likely had not anticipated the death of their husband and son.

a. **Be Available**-We can do this by being easily entreated, and ready to respond when asked even if it means rearranging our schedule. Ruth was easily entreated by Naomi. It was said that she was better than seven sons to her. Read James 3:17.

b. **Be Prayerful**-We can become ready to respond with God's love when we spend time in prayer and study daily, and especially during the times we are called upon to nurture others. Read II Nephi 14:12.

2-Be in tune with the spirit and sensitive enough to become aware of the needs of others. We cannot bear one another's burdens until we have a good sense of what those burdens are.

- a. Be a Listener-**We can do this by welcoming and spending time with and listening to friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and family (in a non-judgmental way), leaving communication open by encouraging others to express their needs and emotions. Listen with love. Use phrases such as, “I hear you” and repeat the words of their last sentence to assure them that you are listening. Don’t be afraid of long, silent moments in your conversations, because this allows the person to think and perhaps resolve details in their own minds. Naomi and Ruth were there for each other to listen to each other’s needs and thus could bear each other’s burdens. By listening effectively, we can learn to also bear each other’s burdens. Read Galatians 6:2.
- b. Be Discerning-**Most of us have been blessed with some degree of the ability to discern, especially when it comes to our children and our families. Sometimes worries go unspoken. Watch for facial expressions and body language. Ruth must have discerned the loneliness that her aging mother-in-law was experiencing and Naomi undoubtedly sensed young Ruth’s need to start a new life. Pray for discernment which only comes through the Spirit of God, and ask for his wisdom and to have the mind of Christ. Read I Corinthians 2:12-16.

3-Be clear on how and who you can best help and encourage.

- a. Be Wise-**After gaining an insight into other's needs, it is good to understand that nurturing doesn't always mean doing everything ourselves. Nurturers can easily become co-dependent and want to take care of everything for everyone in their lives, leaving them exhausted and burned out. Use wisdom. Sometimes there may be a need to refer to scriptural guidance or to someone else such as a priesthood holder, a Christian counselor, or a physician. Neither Ruth nor Naomi tried to be everything to everyone. They each did their part according to their stations in life, without running faster than they had strength. Read Mosiah 2:44-45.
- b. Be an Encourager-** Encouragement is an important key. Sometimes you might discern that the person you want to help would be better off dealing with the problem on their own, for their own growth. Encouragement might be all that is needed in such a scenario. Giving reinforcement for positive actions taken on their own can sometimes be the best way to nurture a person and to show your love and concern. Naomi encouraged Ruth to pursue a new life. Ruth encouraged Naomi by being there for her in her old age. Read Hebrews 10:24.
- c. Be a Peacemaker-**It is easy to allow a nurturing conversation to turn into a "blame game" or a gossip session. When this starts

to happen, try to remember to teach reconciliation. Encourage the person you are nurturing to reach out to those who have offended them directly or to take it to the proper priesthood authority. Unless they have requested specific prayers from others, never share any personal problems that they may tell you with anyone else. (The only exception may be a sure knowledge of the person being severely abused; then you would share your concerns only with the proper authorities.) Don't be a contributor to causing divisions. Read I Corinthians 1:10.

- d. **Be a Good Example**-Standing strong in our own spiritual and moral convictions is important. Without being overbearing or self-righteous, we can set the example for others by demonstrating spiritual fortitude while at the same time gently leading others on the correct paths. Read Titus 2:3-5. Naomi stood firm in her faith with love and thus influenced Ruth to embrace the belief in one true God. Ruth responded by saying, "Your people will be my people and your God my God." We cannot always stop our friends or our children from wandering off the path but we can stay on that path ourselves and hopefully influence them to return. In the Book of Mormon, Alma offered those he taught words of encouragement to stay on the paths of righteousness. Read Alma 5:29-35. Like Alma, we can encourage those we love to

stay on the good paths by encouraging them when they do well and sharing stories and testimonies about the blessings that come to those who follow the Lord.

Questions

1. What does the word “nurture” mean to you?
2. Explain the differences in the ways that Ruth and Naomi nurtured one another. How did they each benefit from the other?
3. What are some of the different and creative ways that you have been nurtured or that you can offer nurturing to others? (keep in mind the different opportunities, talents, and capabilities of a variety of women, including: Sunday School teachers, young women, young mothers, working women and older women).
4. Why is prayer and discernment so important in nurturing others?
5. What are some effective listening techniques we can use when counseling someone we want to nurture?
6. Why is it so important that we stand firm in our faith and set an example when nurturing others? Is it okay to share someone’s problems with others (except for prayer requests and reporting severe abuse)?
7. Explain this statement. “Sometimes nurturing means encouraging others to work out things on their own.” How can we encourage others? Is the person being

nurtured the only one who benefits from nurturing?

Assignment

Think of one person whom you have been concerned about recently. Then plan something that you can do to nurture that person. You could do this in many ways. Here are some examples: a visit, a sincere smile and a hug, offering a listening ear, praying together, sharing a new insight, studying scriptures, cooking a meal, watching a good movie, driving to a doctor's appointment, making a phone call, or sending a card or e-mail message that offers concern and encouragement, etc.

Fellowship Activity

Nurturing

In this activity lotion will be made with the suggestion of sharing your lotion with someone who needs some nurturing. Below is listed the ingredients and directions for making the homemade body butter lotion.

Ingredients: (These can be purchased at Amazon.com.)

12 oz. Shea Butter

6 oz. Cocoa Butter

6 oz. Coconut Oil

Essential Oil (optional)

8 oz. jars (6)

Directions:

1. Melt the Shea Butter, Cocoa Butter and Coconut Oil in a double boiler. (Use a glass mixing jar in a pot of water on the stove instead of a double boiler, if needed).
2. Melt and stir with a stir stick.
3. Once melted, remove from the heat, cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until the mixture solidifies. It will need to be a little firmer than syrup.
4. Whip mixture using a standard mixer, scraping down the sides as you whip.
5. Add any essential oils you may prefer.

6. When it looks like fluffy whipped cream it is ready to be put into jars. Use a plastic spatula to help fill the jar.
7. If you use 8 oz. jars there will be enough to fill 6 jars.

Important Reminder: Once your lotion is made, do not store in the sun or near any kind of heat source, as this will cause the butter to melt.

Written by Brandy Lascoe

Worship Visiting/Caring

Scripture: Luke 10:31-38; Matthew 25:36-41;
Mosiah 1:48-49

Hymn: #504 “Teach Us, O Lord, True
Brotherhood”

Janice had driven her used 1960 Cadillac one weekend to take goodies and visit her two daughters who were attending college out of state. As road trips go, it wasn't considered long, only about one hundred and fifty miles, but the highways were all two lanes passing through many small towns along the way. She left home on a bright sunny Friday morning anticipating being with Donna and Connie. Listening to the radio seemed to make the four-hour drive pass quickly. The weekend was spent sharing good food, laughter, and fun activities with the girls. Time flies when you're having fun.

Early Sunday evening found Janice packing her suitcase and preparing for the return trip. Unfortunately, the late start assured that most of the driving would have to be done in the dark. She felt a little stirring of uneasiness, but after a tearful goodbye to the girls, she buckled herself in and offered a silent prayer for a safe return home.

All was going well the first half of the journey; the radio was good company and Janice felt reassured for her safety because of the earlier prayer. She could see lights from an approaching small town when the car suddenly began making strange sounds and started to lurch. Oh, no! What could be wrong? By jumps and starts the Caddie made it into town and to the curb where it died for good with a final gasp.

Panic was beginning to set in; no businesses were open on Sunday. *What should she do?* She wondered. This was before cell phones! Looking again up and down both sides of the highway, which was the town's main street, she saw a lone light shining from the window of a car repair garage. Praying silently the whole time, she walked toward the garage. Approaching the door, she could hear soft strains of music, and when she glanced through the window, she saw a man seated at a desk doing paperwork. At the sound of her knock, he came to the door and listened to Janice's plight. During the conversation, she discovered that the man was also mayor of the town as well as a fellow member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

That kind gentleman offered his car for the remaining drive home. He said he would repair the Cadillac and call her when it was done so she could return his car and pick up hers. His caring act was a lifesaver for my mother. The rest of the trip proved uneventful and a few days later she received the call that her car was repaired.

Written by Connie Boswell

Study Guide Visiting/Caring

Written by Jonna Patterson

There are some things in life that come very easy to me and conversation with just about anyone is one of those things. I believe that my parents are responsible for that. I grew up in a home where my sisters and I were encouraged to talk and share our experiences with the family. Most of that was done at the dinner table. I recall jockeying for an opportunity to tell of the day's triumphs and tragedies as only the middle child could do in a family of four girls! We all got a chance to share our thoughts (which made us feel important, at least at home). I believe those experiences around that dinner table laid a foundation for a comfort with conversation that I have enjoyed all my life. I mention the ability to converse only because it is the foundation of communication and a pretty important factor in outreach. It is my opinion that family "table talk" is essential in grooming good communicators for the future church.

My patriarchal blessing reminds me that like Nephi of old, I was born of goodly parents. What an amazing blessing that is from the get-go! God's Spirit was resident in our home and my parent's spiritual life as well as their social life was centered around the various services and activities at the old North Minneapolis RLDS Branch where my father was a priesthood member and my mother was active in the Women's Department.

My mother was an excellent cook and shared her hospitality with not just those in the church but also with those in our neighborhood. Her gift for cultivating friendships was a blessing to many.

In the early years of her marriage when her health was fair, reaching out to others was just a matter of juggling the tasks of a busy family and striking a balance. When I grew up and left home, I saw my mom's health decline and her mobility greatly restricted. Reaching out to others took a toll on a body that was breaking down too quickly. The roadblocks that her health seemed to be throwing in the way only seemed to amp up her desire to reach out to others though. By the time she was fifty, she was getting around in a motorized wheelchair due to the advancing stages of crippling arthritis. The new physical limitations did not mean that her outreach to others ceased; it only meant that now with her little motorized cart she could share her meals on electric wheels!

The last twenty years of her life could have been a very lonely time had she not reached beyond her pain to others who were in similar situations.

My mother was acting out a truth that a renowned Christian author has made a lot of money on teaching. We generally love people the way we need to be loved. We have a love language. We generally give others what we are seeking. My mother needed to not be forgotten, so she looked around to people who were not able even if only briefly, to attend church for any reason. Sometimes she reached out to someone who might have become invisible in a busy congregation, and she adopted them. She would call them or write them cheery notes. If she was having a good day, she would (with the help of my father) put together a yummy pot of soup and deliver it to one of her church sisters in distress. Generally, she would have my father make a stop on the way and pick up a bouquet of flowers to go with the soup.

To be sought after whether it is through a card, a phone call or a visit, can be a gesture that says, “You are important to me. I am thinking of you. You are not alone.” These are words that express how most of us feel about each other, but you put “feet” to the words when you reach out with caring gestures. Love is a verb, an action word. To be truly shown it must be acted out.

Recently I have been working on a Bible study on II Timothy. Paul is in prison and he knows that he is soon going to be put to death. He writes to his friend and adopted son Timothy. He mentions those associates who had once walked with him in the gospel but had abandoned him. But then he mentions his dear friend Onesiphorus who had journeyed to Rome to visit him in prison. Paul

blesse his dear friend in II Timothy 1:16-18, ***“May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day!”***

Paul was “often refreshed” by the visits of his old friend Onesiphorus. We know the conditions that Brother Paul was in were most miserable. He was in chains, most likely in filth and darkness. The light that Brother Onesiphorus brought was invaluable; he “searched hard” to find Paul, which must have made all the difference in the world. The visit made enough of an impact that Paul shared the events with Timothy in the letter that Paul meant for Timothy to share with the congregation of the time. The outreach to Paul was a lifeline of encouragement.

The conditions that we women of the church find ourselves in today are not generally as hopeless as Paul’s lot. Whether one of our sisters is housebound by an extended illness or heavily burdened by cares and responsibilities, it is equally a recipe for depression and discouragement and separation. The adversary loves to make us feel like we are alone on this journey and that no one really cares. A loving communication, whether it be a call, a card or a short visit, could bridge the gap which can form when someone is unable to attend services for a time. The longer one is away from the fellowship the more disconnected one feels.

The Scriptures are filled with references that instruct us to bear one another's burdens. We are reminded that when we are in service to our fellow man then we are in service to God (Matthew 25:41). We must remember that keeping the lines of communication open to our sisters in Christ is an integral part of keeping the church healthy and alive. In Alma 16:223-225, we are warned that, ***“If ye turn away the needy and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted ... your prayer is vain and availeth you nothing...”***

The church needs to be assured that we, as women, are doing everything in our power to stay unified and connected. Caring communication with our sisters is the key.

Questions

1. Is there anyone who you have not seen at church for a while? Is there someone who could be “refreshed” by a visit from you? What might keep you from reaching out to this person?
2. If you are not comfortable making a personal visit, or time constraints keep you from moving out in that manner, what could you do to show your concern? We have so many modern ways that make keeping in touch so much easier than it was for our Brother Onesiphorus.

It might be good to remember that Onesiphorus chased every lead until he found Paul. He left no

stone untouched to lift his brother's spirits. I think we can do no less. Be a Latter Day Onesiphorus!

Fellowship Activity

Visiting/Caring

In this activity, we suggest making a "Care Package" for church members who are unable to regularly attend church activities. After making the care package, visit those members. The following items will be needed to make one care package:

- Seven envelopes
- Scrapbook paper
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Little gifts to put inside each envelope (candy, gum, book mark, Sunday's bulletin, quotes, etc.)
- Ribbon (to wrap around envelopes)

Line up your envelopes in a row so that the backside of the envelope is face up. Glue the flap of the second envelope to the front side of the first envelope. Continue by gluing the third envelope flap to the front of the second envelope, and so on until you have all seven envelopes glued together. This will form a line of seven envelopes, with only the first envelope flap showing. Glue scrapbook paper to the inside of each envelope. On the first envelope cover the flap also. This will add color to your care package. Write each day of the week on the envelopes starting with Monday. Now you have a row of envelopes with pockets to fill with fun quotes, a bookmark, chocolate, gum, a small tissue pack, recipes, hard candy, powdered drink mix, tea bags, a picture of Christ, or anything else you like that will fit. On a piece of paper write “Care Package, We Care About You 7 Days a Week”. Fold the envelopes so that they are the size of one envelope. Place the paper on top and tie it together with the ribbon.

Written by Melody Moore

Worship Testimony

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 90:1g & 4 c

Hymn #191 “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus” or #523 “I Love to Tell the Story”

I will never forget the profound experience I had in the summer of 1963 while attending the RLDS Lamoni Stake Reunion; I was seventeen years old. Reunion was held on the campus of Graceland College and we met in the student center for the prayer and testimony service since it was the only room large enough to accommodate the large crowd attending each morning.

This particular day, during prayer service, the Lord spoke through Brother Jerry Runkle to the youth. He said, "This week some of you have been asking to feel my Spirit and at this time I will pour out my Spirit upon your hearts, on some of you who have been asking and on some of you who have not been asking, until you feel that you cannot contain it." I was one who had not been asking, but when Christ spoke those words, his Spirit flooded my heart with such a powerful vibrating energy, I truly felt my heart could contain no more or it would burst. I will never forget that feeling or what he said next. "And by this Spirit judge the truth of all things."

I was not a student of the Scriptures at that time, but with study in the years since, I have discovered that my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever -- the way, the truth, and the life.

This is my testimony of Jesus Christ.
Written by Connie Boswell

Study Guide Testimony

Written by Ralph Damon

From the earliest times of our membership in the Restoration Movement, each one of us has been carefully taught that one of the prime responsibilities for each member: ***“that it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor; therefore they are left without excuse and their sins are upon their own heads”*** (D&C 85:22a).

Whether we were earlier baptized into the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, have melded our membership into the Remnant Church over these past few years, or if we have become recently baptized member of the Remnant Church, this admonition has been set in place by our heavenly Father for every individual who takes the responsibilities to witness of the Christ to those who live and exist around us. Further, it admonishes us that without that testimony which we have being expressed and shared with those who have not become followers of the way, their sins are likely to be attached to our own ultimate presence before God.

Let's see if we can provide some measure of insights into how each one can better share that much-needed testimony of Jesus in our lives. To fully grasp the impact of what it is we can share, we must come to the understanding that our purpose, both as an organized religious body (the Remnant Church) and as individuals (members of that church), is to prepare mankind to be eligible for acceptance and integration into the kingdom of God. And let us more fully clarify that the kingdom we speak of is known as the celestial kingdom and not one of the lesser kingdoms, the terrestrial or telestial kingdoms. Those kingdoms are not where God desires his children to exist eternally. We are the mouthpiece for God and Jesus to others and the agents of witness for the Holy Spirit. Without the words and testimony which we bring to our relationships with others, the full impact of the gospel will never be felt by the whole of mankind.

Our personal witness, and here we can use several words that essentially connote the same thought (witness, testimony, evangelism), must center around our personal witness for and of the Christ. Each saint must have developed, experienced, or cultivated a witness of the divine nature of Jesus or, regretfully, our lives likely will not have changed that much from the “natural” person we once were and so often revert to. Any convincing testimony does not flow from one person’s mind to another’s mind as much as it flows from heart to heart or from life to life. For a true conversion to take place in someone’s life, it must be much more than intellectual agreement on something we may have said or referenced. That true conversion depends so much more upon the change within the heart as it does with the change in the mind. The heart must always be willing to change first, willing to convert to Christ’s way of life.

When we attempt to bear our testimony to others, it must be a testimony based upon our sincere belief and faith that bears fruit in our daily expressions of life. Nothing witnesses more to others than the sincere, humble witness of a quality Christian life. If others can see the life-style difference that we exhibit in our day-to-day activities, that difference speaks so much louder than the moments we have opportunity to talk face-to-face. Even if those we witness to are church affiliated, any personal witness of great quality we can offer goes far beyond any hours they may spend sitting listening to preaching ministry or other

church related activities. All that we do or are becomes a part of that witness. Listen to the guidance the Lord gave to his disciples:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be a light unto the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Therefore, let your light so shine before this world, that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16-18).

If there is the light of Christ in us, it must likewise shine forth from our lives to others. How we react to everyday situations, our relationships with others, our attitudes, concerns, etc., all serve to either hide that light of Christ under our personally-formed bushels, or allows us to place his influence upon us on our own candlesticks and permit the world to see that light.

To truly be effective with our testimonies, we must be motivated by our personal experience with the Christ and his saving power unto us. Further, having a genuine love and concern for every individual we know or come into contact with is vital. Some would call this an ‘unfeigned’ love, without borders or limits. From us, something of the love of God for them must be evidenced in our sincere respect and real concern for their spiritual wellbeing. All of this will then lend a sense of urgency into our witness, our desire to share our testimony. This will empower us to convey that urgency of their acceptance of Christ and his way of

life. But this must be done with wisdom and can only be done as we keep the best interests of our friends in our hearts and prayers and attempt to become, in every way possible, the kind of friends upon whom they feel they can rely.

It is most important to keep this thought in mind as we share our testimonies: Every person is different and responds differently to the same witness or experience. We must do all we can not to be stereotyped in how we tell our stories. Adjusting our approach to those with whom we visit is something to be expected. The same story, told too many times to the same person, can become wearying; be sensitive to an unfavorable or negative response and seek to find ways to overcome that effect. In today's society, our testimonies which would be based upon a particular person or selected book of scripture might be challenging to someone. But few, if any, can disagree to your description of how the Holy Spirit touched your life, or how you came to know the Christ in an intimated way. Finding ways of agreement in religious thought is often so much more important, at first, than deliberating on the differences of religious thought and precept.

When we become eager to share our testimony with others, one bit of caution might be wise to share. Always remember that others have their views of how God works, what his purpose for them might be. All too often we can become a challenge to someone's current state of mind regarding religion and cause them a greater sense of unrest. In our eagerness to "convert" a friend,

family member, or co-worker, we can sometimes forget that, as we do, they have the same privilege to worship, how, where, or what they believe. The purpose of our testimony should always be to guide them to a closer walk, and work, with the Master. Accomplishing that, the work of the Holy Spirit then can move them where it will.

Our testimony should always be one of affirmation, finding ways to present additional information and insight to what the other individual may already know and believe. When posed with differing views of baptism, communion, administration, blessings, or other points of theological interest, an invitation to search the Scriptures can provide a wonderful resource for greater understandings. Of course, that approach can yield great results on several fronts, especially in getting us into the Scriptures in a more deliberate manner. Sharing our testimony with others also implies that we are open and receptive to receiving their testimonies and finding value therein. A discussion of witnessing cannot be a one-way street or monologue – it must find a balance between the two persons sharing together. One of our favorite hymns indicates that the Lord has “more light and truth to break forth from his word,” thus signifying that we have more to learn. Every opportunity to bear our testimony also affords us an opportunity to learn more of the kingdom.

At all cost, witnessing to others should never, ever, result in strained or hurt feelings. Being sensitive to that potential is required so that respect and affection between persons can be maintained. It

is good to remember the adage that “when the heat of argument enters a discussion, reason flees.” The mutual respect for opinions must be guarded carefully if we are to have any opportunity to equally share our beliefs and have an impact upon our friends. It only stands to reason that one of the important attributes in this relationship is having a firm knowledge of the Scriptures, being comfortable in your own personal convictions and having an appreciation for the beliefs of those you are visiting and sharing with.

So, what are the ‘nuts and bolts’ of our testimony? What is it which we should be stressing and presenting to our friends? This may sound almost too elementary but any message we convey to others must be simple, sound, and basic to the gospel. In our eagerness to share, if we are not careful, we can unknowingly go beyond the immediate understanding of those to whom we are sharing. Our testimony must be geared to the ability of others to receive and understand it. Every significant concept must be clear or the next point may likely be lost. There is great wisdom in understanding that we learn, “***line upon line, here a little and there a little***” (Isaiah 28:10). It is by those small steps of understanding that the evidence of your testimony can come alive in others.

Next we must be sure to have a sound understanding of the word of God. If we share our suppositions or personal opinions, and they are then found to be unsupported by further scripture study, that will only weaken our witness. The command to “***be always ready to give an answer with meekness***

and fear to every man that asketh of you a reason for the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:15) is extremely wise counsel. Not only should we present a humble and meek spirit in our ministries, but also exhibit a ‘fear’, a sense of reverence or awe, toward God and his mission which you are undertaking. Remember, there is nothing wrong with saying to someone, “I don’t know but I’ll find out and get back to you with that information.”

Unlike days long ago, information is readily available on the websites of numberless organizations and churches. The Remnant Church also has a very helpful and informative website which can provide a great deal of information to those who seek to learn more. Become acquainted with the resources on this site and be familiar enough with them to point others to specific areas for the edification and knowledge.

But the most important resource of all – for anyone seeking more knowledge – is you, the saint who cares enough to give your very best! The follow-up of a single conversation, or the continuation of a regular study and sharing opportunity, is the single greatest example of witness that anyone can express. Very few, if any, are ‘converted’ by a single conversation or experience. Why should we think that a ‘one-and-done’ conversation or visit will be any more successful? Evangelism is personal! We share not out of duty alone, but are motivated by our love for Christ and for every person whom God places in front of us. That godly love must stimulate us to want to help others know the joy of acceptance and

response to the fullness of the gospel which is made available to all persons through our Lord.

As a closing thought, perhaps the words of Paul to Timothy are appropriate now. Paul's words exemplify his closing thoughts of his ministry and give us a small picture of what perhaps lies in wait for each one who continues to ***“be valiant in the testimony of Jesus”*** (D&C 76:6g). Paul speaks of the duties placed before each one of us and, when fulfilled, the glory which awaits each one.

“For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (II Timothy 4:6-8)

Questions

1. Can you recall some of the early directions or teaching which you were given as you either went through Pre-Baptismal classes or sat through cottage meetings that emphasized the need for sharing your testimony of the Christ? What were some of the main points which you recall that were presented to you?
2. If each member is expected to be able to share his or her testimony of the Christ, what type of testimony

can we assume the church, as a body, can share with the world? Is that corporate testimony any different than our personal one? If so, how?

3. Discuss the thought that it is our purpose to prepare our friends for integration into the kingdom of God. How can we do that most effectively? How can we cultivate the desire to do that for everyone we meet?
4. Consider the terms *witness*, *testimony*, and *evangelism*. Can you find differences between them and how they are used in describing our outreach to the world?
5. Why do you think that a person's heart is crucial to any changes within their lifestyles? Is there a difference in a person's changing their behavior rather than their attitude?
6. Can someone bear an effective testimony if he or she has not had their own personal moment with divinity? How can that person have that moment; what must be present in his or her life for it to take place?
7. Sometimes the opportunity to share your testimony comes from someone else opening that opportunity. Do you have a two-minute testimony ready? Is it current or from years

- ago? Do you need to update your testimony?
8. Is there anyone which you can show 'unfeigned' love toward? Is there someone you can't? What can you do about that?
 9. How can you be sure that your testimony is a testimony of affirmation? What does that word mean to you?
 10. How much time do you spend studying the Scriptures or reading the good books of religious thought? Which do you have more of in your home, magazines and publications from other walks of life or those that uplift your mind toward the kingdom?

Fellowship Activity

Testimonies

In this activity, we suggest that a birthday party be held! You can have as big or as small of a celebration as you would like. Everyone could bring party-type food and decorations to make it as simple or as festive as desired. A simple party may include cookies and punch, while a more festive party may have several different foods with balloons and streamers. The possibilities are endless. While everyone is enjoying the party, encourage the sisters to share their testimonies.

Many themes could be used to guide the testimonies. Encourage the sisters to share their testimonies of their baptisms (their “second birthday”); share a testimony of a blessing that they received today; or share a testimony of when God spoke to them personally. As much as possible, have each person share a testimony of God.

Written by Melody Moore

Worship Joy

Scriptures: Psalms 5:11; Mosiah 2:18-19; and Alma 14:128

Hymn: #9 “For the Beauty of the Earth” or #24 “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

While preparing for this devotion, I spent some time thinking about the times in my life when I felt the most joy. The moment I held my nephew for the first time. My wedding day as I stood among my loved ones to marry the man I love. The day I was hired for my job. Each of these were big events in my life where it is easy to find joy. As I continued to think, my thoughts turned to times when my prayers had been answered or when I had sins forgiven. Then, on to the natural beauty of our world, how I find myself thanking God for a beautiful sunrise, the mountains, or flowers. Big or small, in each of these moments I have experienced joy.

Rick Warren in his May 21, 2014 devotion “The Definition of Joy” states, “Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.” As I reflect on these experiences, I can see how God is tied to each moment. I recall how I thanked God and praised him for his blessings. To experience joy is to know that God loves us. He is always present in our lives and we can rejoice knowing he is in control. What joy will you experience today?

Written by Alisa Friedrich

“Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.”

The Definition Of Joy by Rick Warren

<http://pastorrick.com/devotional/english/the-definition-of-joy>

Study Guide

Joy

Written by Coral Rogers

Joy is a gift from God. Have you ever thought about joy that way? This precious gift is our ability to rejoice, no matter what is going on around us. The world views joy as being happy. Remnant Saints have a much bigger picture of what joy and fullness of joy can be. As we continue to draw apart from the world, we seek fullness of joy as only God can give. Psalms 16:11 reminds us to concentrate on the Lord: ***“Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”***

God doesn't promise earthly happiness, but there is eternal joy in the kingdom of God. II Nephi 6:42 promises, ***“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 for ever.”***

Joy is also an attitude we can choose to have. True joy is unstoppable and never leaves us. Instead, it rescues us. From a campfire song we learn that, “Happiness is to know the Savior/Living a life within his favor/Having a change in my behavior/Happiness is the Lord/Real joy is mine/No matter if teardrops start/I've found the secret--It's Jesus in my heart!” Through our tears, the Holy Spirit speaks to us and lifts us up. We have confidence in God that in times of trouble, his joy

rises up in us. Habakkuk 3:17-18 states, ***“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”*** No matter how treacherous things get, we know Jesus is with us through darkness as well as light. The inner glow of joy in Christ does not diminish in our soul. Despite our circumstances, despite the worst this world throws at us, the joy of the Lord continues. In our suffering, trials and everyday annoyances of life, God still reigns and fills us with his joy - his joy is deeper than any of our circumstances that try to overwhelm us. Philippians 1:25 simply says, ***“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith.”*** There is joy in having faith? Oh, yes. Luke 15:7 shares, ***“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth...”*** Our faith and our joy are directly linked to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross so that we could be redeemed. Romans 5:11 puts it like this, ***“...we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”***

Isaiah 61:2-3 announces, ***“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of***

heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.” Hmmm. “The oil of joy.” Can you imagine a prophet of God pouring holy oil over your head until you are completely drenched? That’s the oil of joy that God provides. It completely covers us until it drives out any sorrow or grief. How does it do that? If we allow God’s oil of joy to work within us, he replaces our grieving sadness with memories of happier times. He wipes away the misery and leaves us with joyful and exciting expectation of things to come. Sometimes we wallow in our pity and despair when that is not what the Lord wants for us. We are reminded of that in Psalm 30:11: *“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.”* When was the last time some of us danced with joy for the Lord? Sometimes it’s physically difficult, such as when we’re in a nursing home or when we’re large with an unborn child, but it’s something we should do within us every single day. Yes, it’s hard to leap for joy, praising God from a hospital bed, but it’s something we’re called to do as we use this gift of joy that God has given to us.

John 16:24 reminds us, *“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”* How often do we feel that the Lord has let us down because things are happening or not happening to us? Do we go to him in prayer? He is anxiously waiting to bless us and wants our joy to be filled and overflowing.

What gives God joy? We find a clue in Nehemiah 8:10, “...***this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.***” God rejoices when we exercise our spiritual strength. We also can find joy in God’s strength. As an experiment, try reading Psalms 21:1 differently. Read the verse to yourself first. Then substitute the words “the king” for your own name and read the verse to yourself again. (Don’t forget to substitute “shall I” for “shall he”.) Then read the substituted verse out loud. It doesn’t matter if you’re on the school bus, at the laundromat, at work, or waiting in line at the grocery store. If you’re in a group, each one should read this substituted verse aloud. (If you’re in a library, say it out loud quietly, and then when you get outside, say the changed verse even louder.) Psalms 21:1, ***“The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice.”*** That was fun! Do you believe it? If not, keep reading it out loud until you do. God is so powerful, yet he shares with us the gift of joy. II Corinthians 9:15, ***“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”***

Questions

1. What fills you with joy?
2. Have you ever been depressed or weighed down, but then God lifted you up and you knew he had a hand in your life?
3. Do you ever pray to God, thanking him for the joy in your life?

4. Have you ever been scared or sad, and then thought of a happy memory? Did you realize that God was helping you to cope?
5. Have you ever felt alone? Did you rejoice when you remembered that God was watching over you?

Fellowship Activity

Joy

Joy comes from God, who loves us and wants us to experience his love. Those who have repented, been baptized and received his Holy Spirit are blessed with the fruits of the Spirit. Joy is one of those fruits. Joy is also an important part of the kingdom of God and will exist wherever believers are present. ***"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"*** (Romans 14:17).

God is the creator of all things that are good. He has given us joy for our pleasure. However, it is easy to get caught up in our busy, daily routines and forget to experience the joy that God has meant for us. Think of some ways that you have experienced joy. Some people find joy in nature--maybe it's a beautiful sunrise or sunset or the song of birds in the early morning. Other people find joy in helping others, singing hymns, listening to the laughter of children, holding a newborn baby, or worshiping the Lord.

There are many ways to experience the joy God has intended for us. In fact, the Scriptures are a great source of joy. To demonstrate and experience the joy found in the Scriptures, I would like for you to take an index card and write down your favorite scripture. If time permits, you can write down more than one of your favorites. (Make sure you have extra Scriptures for people to borrow for this activity. Allow five to ten minutes for people to write down their favorite scriptures.)

Sharing God's love with others can bring joy, too. I would like for you to arrange yourselves in small groups and take turns sharing your favorite scripture. Make sure you share why the scripture means so much to you for there is great joy in sharing and listening to others.

In III Nephi 8:21-22, it states, "***And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise. And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them, Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold my Joy is full.***" Take the time to slow down and experience the joy that God has given you.

Written by Danelle Woodruff

Worship Teaching

Scripture: John 14:26

Hymn: #406 "He Leadeth Me"

Teaching and learning go hand in hand. Learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. Much of what we are taught in school is preparation for being successful in the world, but God has the only instruction manual for true success, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. The Scriptures are our guidebook to eternal life through Jesus Christ. ***"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).

The personal experiences that men and women have had with God from the time of Adam to the present tell of the miracles, face to face talks with God, angel visits, inspiration from the Holy Spirit, and teachings of Christ himself; all testifying of Jesus and showing us the way to come unto the Father. These witnesses are found in The Holy Scriptures, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. ***"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"*** (Doctrine and Covenants 6:3b,c).

Where would we be without these priceless teaching guides--our instruction manual for life?

Written by Connie Boswell

Study Guide

Teaching

Written by Pat Whiteman

We are looking in this lesson to start where we are NOW to become persons who are aware that wherever we are, whether classroom formally teaching, in line at the grocery store, or soothing a crying child, we are teaching. Someone is watching us, perhaps listening to us, learning something from us or about us. We must look at ourselves as honestly and truthfully as possible to see where our abilities **to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world** need improvement. This process may not be easy, but it certainly may be rewarding spiritually to each of us if we try.

Perhaps you think you are better suited to serve in some other area than teaching. Truly, some people are not suited to classroom teaching; there is no shame in knowing yourself well enough to say, “Sorry, classroom teaching is not my area.” Some of us were led by the Holy Spirit to be trained in teaching as a vocation. Others come to teaching naturally, and all of us may be called upon in our daily lives to offer some impromptu teaching to someone along life’s way. All of us are involved in some area, whether family, social, community or business activities, where we may have the opportunity to give some “right now” lessons.

How will you respond? Are you prepared to teach wherever you are? Are you aware of how to prepare to teach in whatever situation God chooses

to use you? Perhaps these suggestions will help you be ready to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever, whenever you may.

I. Preparation: Any task becomes easier if we are prepared. How do we prepare?

Pray - seek the guidance of God (on our knees) that what we are trying to do is truly his will.

Fast - rid ourselves of the negative/wrong elements in our lives; cleanse ourselves so that we may be open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit in our preparation.

Study - armed with the confidence /faith that we are fit to be led, we **study**. If we are going to teach, we must **know our subject: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The place to learn the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Holy Scriptures; we cannot be teachers of God's word if we don't know the word, believe it and live it! **II Timothy 2:15:** *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

Pray and fast that God will direct your study; pray and fast that you may remember what you study; pray and fast that God will lead you to those to whom you are to give the gospel. Read. Take notes. Memorize if you can. Learn all you are able **from the Scriptures** so that when you are presented with the opportunity to “teach,” you are

prepared with God's word, not your own words or opinions or some other person's opinion. **Know your material before you try to teach it.** Study God's word; **teach God's word**, not legends or fables or Shakespeare or some other person's words. **Teach God's words** from the Holy Scriptures that you have learned, through prayer, fasting, and study. **Teach God's words** that you have learned so well that nothing which comes from your mouth may defile you. ***“Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth the man”*** (Matthew 15:10).

Some teachers have found that the test of what they learned in college came the first day in the classroom. We must learn our material so well that it is available to us at all times in all places. Yes, we may have a memory lapse, but if we have studied God's word, we know that the word can be recalled to our minds by the power of the Holy Spirit in time of need. ***“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, that ye may give even as I have spoken.”*** (D&C 43:4a-d).

In all your study, remember what the Lord told his covenant priesthood to preach – repentance and baptism. There are over twenty references to preach repentance on one computer concordance. The Holy Scriptures are what we are to

preach/teach. **Doctrine and Covenants 18:21** says, ***“And I command you that you preach naught but repentance.”***

II. Presentation: A great part of teaching/learning is the teacher.

The person doing the teaching must **be** what he is teaching. Romain Rolland put it this way: “If a man is to shed the light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself.” That is true of anyone, yet more important to those of us who have covenanted to ***“...witness unto thee, O God, the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of the Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them”*** (D&C 17:22d). We must **be** Christ-like for those to whom we want to give the gospel to be drawn to God’s word.

Our countenance must shine with the light of the gospel; our voices must be moderated to bid someone welcome to listen to Christ’s teachings. Our mannerisms must be friendly; our bodies must be clean to show that we are those who ***“believe in Christ, shall also become a delightful people”*** (II Nephi 12:86).

If we are going to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must live the gospel of Jesus Christ. Praying, fasting, studying scripture may be for naught if we do not live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we are going to bring about a change of mind and heart in others, we must be transformed into the beings God through His Son Jesus Christ, has tried

to teach us to be. We must be spotless of the habits of the world and shine forth the love of Jesus Christ with so much brilliance that others will ask, “What makes you the way you are?” Then the door is open and we may teach.

People may remember little of what we say, but they will remember how we acted when we said it. How many times did Christ tell us to become as little children? What better example than the purity of a little one. Remember in many instances that “become as little children” is linked with “humble yourselves.” That for which we have prayed, fasted and studied must have become so ingrained in us that we **are** that light of the gospel to the world. ***“If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.”*** (D&C 42:8a).

We pray, we fast, we study, study, study. Our faith grows. We become what we have learned and we polish our being to be a light to the world. We live lives in our homes that exemplify what we have learned. We are prepared to teach at any opportunity in our lives. We try to so live that our co-workers notice; the people in the grocery notice; the people walking on the street notice. Then we wait for the faith that has become knowledge to be put to use.

We await the place and the time God chooses us to teach. This is how we will become the teachers Christ asks us to be. We do all we can to prepare and to be ready to present the gospel, then we have faith that we may endure to the end doing what we have been commanded. ***“Prosecute the missionary work in this land and abroad so far***

and so widely as you may. All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and to the intent that all may labor together, let him that laboreth in the ministry and him that toileth in the affairs of the men of business and of work labor together with God for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all” (D&C 119:8a,b).

Questions

1. What is the gospel? Why did Jesus come into the world? (D&C 76:4g-k)
2. What is the glory of God? How do we receive the fullness of God’s glory? (D&C 90)
3. What is truth? (3 things) Where do we get truth? (D&C 90:4, 5, 6)
4. What is the testimony of Jesus Christ? (Revelation 19:10; D&C 8) How are we to ask? (D&C 8:2)
5. What are we to teach the children of men? (D&C 6:4b; 43:4b, c) Where are we to teach? (Alma 14:113)
6. When did Jesus know it was his time to preach? (Matthew 3:24-26, 40-46)
7. What lesson about being a teacher may we learn from Matthew 15:7-19?
8. What did Jesus teach on the Mount? (Matthew 5, 6) What encouragement may we receive from Matthew 6:26?
9. What were Jesus’ disciples to teach to the world? (Matthew 7) How does this apply to us?

10. What did Paul teach? (Acts 18:11) What should we teach? Where do we find what to teach?
11. How did Alma teach and what was the result of this teaching? (Alma 6:5, 11-42)
12. What did Ammon teach the people of King Lamoni? (Alma 13:28)
13. What is the importance of Mosiah 8:89-91 to those who may teach?
14. In Mosiah 9:51-54, who gave the authority, who ordained priests, and what teaching process was given?
15. In D&C 42:5, (given to the elders) what must men have to preach the gospel? How will the teaching material be given? How long is this instruction to be followed?
16. If we are successful in our learning/teaching, for what may we hope? (D&C 83:4b; 85:1c, 2)

Fellowship Activity Teaching

Jesus teaches us many important lessons in the Scriptures. He teaches us about God's love, he instructs us how to live our lives, he outlines a path for us to obtain eternal life, and much more. As Christians, it is our job to share these lessons with others. In II Nephi 15:12, it says, "***And if ye shall believe in Christ, ye will believe in these words; for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good.***"

Jesus often used parables to express ideas. In the Bible, there are forty-six parables. Today, we are going to use some of those parables, along with other teachings of Christ, to demonstrate lessons that we have learned. Also, we will share with others who taught us these lessons about Christ. *(Before the activity begins, cut the following sentences into strips of paper and place them in a box for volunteers to draw.)*

Parable: Sower of seeds into four types of soil.

Parable of the prodigal son.

Parable: The Good Samaritan

Ten Commandments: Do not kill.

Repent and be baptized.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Man shall not live by bread alone but by God's words.

The Lord's Prayer.

Parable: Three servants given talents.

Parable: Weeds among good plants.

Ten Commandments: Do not steal.

Take up your cross and follow me.

Forgive others 70 times 7.

Love one another.

Parable of the lost sheep.

I would like for a volunteer to draw one of the slips of paper out of the box. Then draw a representation of the lesson on a dry-erase board

using pictures only-- no words! Everyone else will try to guess what lesson the picture represents. The first person who guesses correctly becomes the next artist. But first, they must share with the group what the lesson teaches us and who taught them this story. For instance, was it a Sunday School teacher, a parent, or a priesthood member? If you cannot remember specifically who taught you the lesson, can you remember where you learned it, such as church, Vacation Bible School, church camp, etc.? Continue drawing and sharing as long as time allows.

In closing, remember it is our job to teach others about God's love and share his lessons with others. Perhaps, the best lesson we share with others is by the way we live our lives. ***"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness"*** (Psalms 143:10).

Written by Danelle Woodruff

