

STANDING AS A WITNESS

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Can anyone do justice to the majesty and mission, let alone the Atonement, of Jesus Christ? Even the most spiritually gifted don't have the words or the understanding to fully communicate who the Savior is and what He did for us. On the other hand, the Holy Ghost can bear witness of Him with such clarity and power that we can each know, without question, that Jesus Christ is our Savior. I pray that the Spirit will whisper truth to all who desire to know more and feel more about Him. The Spirit is always the teacher.

A couple of years ago, I was meeting with one of my evangelical friends in Boston the week prior to the week of Easter. As we concluded and pulled out our smartphones to check calendars for a follow-up meeting, my friend said,

“Well, we can’t talk next week, that’s Holy Week. It will have to be after that.” I then made the mistake of asking, “Do you not work at all next week?” When he looked at me as though I were an infidel, I quickly shifted and asked how he and his family observed Holy Week. They had a full slate of activities planned—some as a family and some at their church. I found myself wondering why we as a people—who look to the Savior as the center of everything we believe and do—don’t seem to be as engaged in celebrating Easter as others are. I hope the reason is that we seek to worship the Lord and make Him the center of our lives every week of the year. But I was moved by my friend’s devotion. What the Savior did for us in the Garden of Gethsemane, on Calvary, and in the Garden Tomb ought to mean that much, and more, to all of us.

The Prophet Joseph Smith put the significance of those events in perspective: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”¹

In his vision of the redemption of the dead, President Joseph F. Smith saw the delight of those on the other side of the veil who had departed “mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection.” He said, “I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand. They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.”² No wonder President Gordon B. Hinckley called what we celebrate at Easter the “greatest victory of all time, the victory

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Harry Anderson, Christ in Gethsemane. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

over death. . . . Towering above all mankind stands Jesus the Christ, the King of glory.”³

With those words as a foundation—that “towering above *all mankind* stands Jesus the Christ”—may I share two recent experiences? Last year during the Christmas holidays, I attended an event where Elder Quentin L. Cook spoke. The audience that night was filled with men and women who

have devoted their lives to the Lord. It would be impossible to calculate the breadth and depth of service that particular group has rendered as General Authorities, general officers, and priesthood and auxiliary leaders on every level of Church government. On the face of it, you wouldn't think that audience needed motivation to testify of truth. And yet that night Elder Cook told us that we needed to do two things much better: first, defend the Prophet Joseph Smith; and second, bear witness that Jesus is the Christ.

Elder Cook didn't stop there. He brought with him a white-gloved archivist from the Church History Library who displayed two intriguing artifacts: a page of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon and a journal written in Joseph's hand. I had seen pages from the original Book of Mormon manuscript before, but this time something struck me—probably because the manuscript page was displayed side by side with the journal, which was open to an entry Joseph had made. The journal page had changes—words crossed out, insertions, and so on—but there was not one word changed on that long page of Book of Mormon manuscript. Not one.

That caught my attention. I've been in the publishing business for almost forty years and have worked with many of the most spiritually gifted communicators in our culture: talented and inspired leaders, thinkers, speakers, and writers. I have sat across the desk from all of them and reviewed literally thousands of their manuscripts. But in all these years, one thing I have never seen is a manuscript with no changes. I have had authors tell me their words are perfect, but they never are. It is much more typical for even the most gifted

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writers to write and rewrite ad nauseam. And yet, on that December evening, I was looking at an unchanged manuscript page recorded by scribes as Joseph translated the book by inspiration.⁴

For me, it was a piece of evidence supporting the Prophet's account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Even still, my witness of that sacred book is not based on seeing manuscript pages. A spiritual witness is never based on tangible evidence. A witness of truth comes as the Holy Ghost speaks to our minds and to our hearts.⁵ Revelation necessarily includes both, because intellect alone cannot produce a testimony. You cannot convince yourself of something your heart does not feel. It is only when the Spirit bears witness to our hearts and minds in the way only the Holy Ghost can that we can know for sure that something is true.

Turning now to my second experience, I have a dear and devout friend, not of our faith, whom I met years ago when we served together as delegates to a commission at the United Nations. In that foreign environment, she took me under her wing, and we have been friends ever since. My friend recently had an assignment that brought her in and out of Utah for several months. I didn't realize it, but she was in Salt Lake City the weekend of the general women's meeting last spring. A friend offered her a ticket to the meeting, and she went alone. Not long afterwards, we had lunch together, and she told me she had attended our meeting and was still thinking about it. I asked what had lingered with her, and she said, "Well, there are four things. Let me list them in ascending order of importance.

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“First, everyone was *so* friendly. I felt very welcome. Second, I was surprised to find every woman in Sunday dress. I never see that at church these days. Third, I loved that everyone who spoke quoted scripture. I wish more of that happened in my church.” Then she paused and said, “Most of all, I was taken with the fact that everyone said that they ‘witnessed,’ or something like that. What was it they said?” I responded that each speaker had borne witness that Jesus is the Christ and that His gospel has been restored. She paused again, as if trying to take it all in, and then said, “I have never heard anything quite like that before. That moved me.”

I have not been able to stop thinking about the intersection of these two experiences: Elder Cook’s charge to bear witness of Christ, and my friend’s reaction to hearing faithful men and women do so. Consider the miracle of it! As men and women who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost,⁶ we can know things. In a world filled with loud and articulate but often misinformed voices, we can discern what is true and what is not.

At times, when one of life’s blows has left me reeling spiritually, I have said to myself, “Sheri, what do you know for sure?” And then I list those things: “I know that God is my Father, that Jesus is the Christ and that His Church has been restored. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, and that priesthood power is real. I know the living prophet is a prophet.” Some days, I can’t go much further than that. But because the Spirit has borne witness to me of those truths again and again, I know they are true. So I have a foundation to fall back on and to build from.



Jon McNaughton, The Savior. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

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We can bear witness only of what we know. We cannot testify of a wish or a hope or even a belief. We can express a hope, a wish, or a belief. But in order to bear witness of something such that the Holy Ghost ratifies our words, we must know what is true by the confirmation of the Spirit to our minds and hearts. Thus, we cannot stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ unless we can bear witness of Him. And we can bear witness only if we receive a witness from the Spirit that the Savior indeed “rose again the third day”⁷ and that Jesus Christ is exactly who the prophets and apostles say He is. We can defend the faith only if we have faith.

This, then, begs two questions: How do we gain an unyielding spiritual witness that Jesus is the Christ? And what happens to us when we understand what He did for us?

First, how do we gain a witness that Jesus is the Christ? According to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “The Atonement of Christ is the most basic and fundamental doctrine of the gospel, and it is the least understood of all our revealed truths. Many of us have a superficial knowledge and rely upon the Lord and His goodness to see us through the trials and perils of life. But if we are to have faith like that of Enoch and Elijah, we must believe what they believed, know what they knew, and live as they lived.”⁸

How can we know what Elijah and Enoch knew about Christ? I believe the answer to that question lies in another question: Are you willing to engage in a wrestle? In an ongoing spiritual wrestle? The requirement to wrestle spiritually is not unique to our day. Enos described the “wrestle which [he] had before God, before [he] received a remission of [his] sins.”⁹ Alma described “wrestling with God in mighty

prayer, that he would pour out his Spirit upon the people” of Ammonihah.¹⁰

Look at the life of any prophet, and you’ll find lots of spiritual wrestling. Imagine the pleadings of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt by jealous brothers; or Noah, as he and his family boarded an ark with only partial knowledge of what lay ahead. Can you picture Brigham Young’s supplications as he led a band of beleaguered converts on a trek through uncharted territory to a place he’d only seen in vision? The Lord can open the “eyes of our understandings.”¹¹ He can reveal “all mysteries” and the “wonders of eternity.”¹² But He isn’t likely to do any of those things unless we ask, seek, and ponder. He will not force us to progress.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught that “man cannot discover God or his ways by mere mental processes. . . . Why, oh, why do people think they can fathom the most complex spiritual depths without the necessary experimental and laboratory work accompanied by compliance with the laws that govern it? Absurd it is, but you will frequently find popular personalities, who seem never to have lived a single law of God, discoursing . . . [about] religion. How ridiculous for such persons to attempt to outline for the world a way of life! . . . One cannot know God nor understand his works or plans unless he follows the laws which govern.”¹³

One of the governing rules of spiritual inquiry is that the Lord expects us to “exercise [our] agency,” as Elder Richard G. Scott taught, to “authorize the Spirit to teach [us].”¹⁴ The scriptures repeatedly urge us to “ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”¹⁵ One of the best ways to engage in a spiritual

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wrestle is to ask enlightened questions. Sometimes we act as though we're afraid of probing questions about our beliefs, our doctrine, and our practices. But surely the first lesson of the Restoration is that the Father and the Son respond to sincere questions, asked in faith. Questions are good. Questions are good if they are enlightened questions, asked in a spirit of faith, and asked of credible spiritual sources. That is why it is crucial to "search diligently in the light of Christ that [we] may know good from evil."¹⁶

Joseph Smith spoke about seeking truth from the purest of sources: "I have an old edition of the New Testament in the Hebrew, Latin, German, and Greek languages. . . . I thank God I have got this old book, but I thank him more for the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . The Holy Ghost . . . comprehends more than all the world; and I will associate myself with Him."¹⁷ The Apostle Paul taught the same thing: "Ye may all prophesy. . . . Covet to prophesy."¹⁸ Every seeking member of the Church can and should be receiving revelation for his or her own life.

Questions are good because they lead to answers, to knowledge, and to revelation.¹⁹ Said President Henry B. Eyring: "We all know that human judgment and logical thinking will not be enough to get *answers to the questions* that matter most in life. We need revelation from God. . . . We need not just one flash of light and comfort, but we need the continuing blessing of communication with God."²⁰ In this regard, President Boyd K. Packer often said that "if all you know is what you see with your natural eyes and hear with your natural ears, then you will not know very much."²¹



Not asking questions of God is far more dangerous than asking them. The scriptures are filled with warnings like this one: “Wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more.”²² A pattern of not seeking help from heaven blocks revelation and leaves a person alone with downward spiraling thoughts or seeking out like-minded doubters in the blogosphere. And that always retards spiritual growth and stymies faith. Alma taught that many may know the mysteries of God but that those who harden their hearts receive less and less until they “know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.”²³ In other words, spiritual death begins with knowing nothing. Or, said another way, sin makes you stupid—and so does the rejection of truth. Truman Madsen wrote of scholar B. H. Roberts that “he could find nothing in the scriptures . . . to excuse anyone from brain sweat and from the *arduous lifetime burden* of seeking ‘revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge.’”²⁴

When we are willing to wrestle with questions—and especially when we are wrestling to understand truth—we can count on learning things. And often what we learn is how the Lord has been working in our lives all along. Two years ago, I was invited to deliver the keynote address at the BYU Women’s Conference on the subject of grace, and I was terrified. I knew I did not understand grace well enough to teach it in a way that the Spirit could endorse the message. So I went to work. I fasted and prayed, pored over the scriptures, went to the temple, and pleaded for spiritual enlightenment. I was essentially asking for the grace, or power, of

the Lord to help me understand the grace of the Lord. It was a grueling process, particularly as the conference neared and I had volumes of notes but no talk. But then, little by little, the Spirit not only clarified points of doctrine but brought to my mind experiences I'd had that were clearly manifestations of grace—though I had not realized it at the time. In the grace of the Lord, I saw more clearly than I ever had how frequently He had been lifting and healing me. When we are willing to wrestle spiritually, we're in a better position to help others—but we are always the ones who benefit most.

In addition to knowledge and revelation, a spiritual wrestle also leads to greater faith. There are those who insist that faith is nothing more than a spiritual crutch. But faith is what ignites all spiritual growth. Although the Lord will reveal many things to us, He has never told His covenant people everything about everything. We are admonished to “doubt not, but be believing.”²⁵ But “doubting not” does not mean understanding everything.

Consider the verse that sent Joseph to the grove—“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James then added this stipulation: “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.”²⁶ Doubting is not synonymous with the pursuit of truth nor is it synonymous with having questions. Doubt is the rejection of faith. As covenant sons and daughters—as people of faith—we are required to have faith, to live by faith, and to “overcome by faith.”²⁷ Learning by faith is every bit as crucial as learning by study, because there are some things we cannot learn from a book. There are some truths we can understand in full only when we exercise and experience faith.²⁸

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A woman kneeling in prayer. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Therefore, once the Spirit has borne witness to you of truth—any truth—and particularly that Jesus is the Christ, that His gospel has been restored, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that the Book of Mormon is scripture, then you know the gospel is true because the Spirit has borne witness of the foundational truths that comprise a testimony. Other questions that arise—whether they are doctrinal, procedural, or personal—are not about whether or not you have a testimony. They are about personal, spiritual growth. That is why questions asked in faith are never a threat to testimony.

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They are opportunities to strengthen testimony. It is also why doubting promptings of the Spirit creates an entirely new set of problems.

There is a tendency to assume that questions about doctrine or Church procedures or unfulfilled personal blessings are somehow connected to our testimonies. And it can sometimes feel that way. If you have been pleading for healing or marriage or a child without a fulfillment of those pleadings, it can be tempting to wonder if God is real, if He's listening, or if He cares. Those wonderings, left in isolation, can threaten testimony. But once you have received a spiritual witness of the truths that form the foundation of testimony, when questions arise—even the thorniest questions about our doctrine or history or positions on sensitive issues, or the aching pleadings of our lives—those questions are about personal growth. They are not red flags suggesting that the gospel isn't true after all. They are opportunities to receive revelation and increase faith. Questions, especially the tough ones, can propel us to engage in a spiritual wrestle that deepens our witness that Jesus is the Christ. Without wrestling and plain old hard work, even God can't make us grow—or at least, He won't.²⁹

So how do we gain an unyielding witness that Jesus is the Christ? Through an ongoing spiritual wrestle. My life has been filled with spiritual wrestling—not because of any great valor on my part but because I have yearned to understand why certain things were happening to me, and why others were not. I have fasted and prayed, spent countless hours in the temple, and pored over the scriptures to find peace. My efforts have not magically produced all of the blessings I

desire. But I have learned for myself that Jesus Christ is not only *the* Savior but *my* Savior.

Which leads to the second question: What happens to us when we understand what the Savior did for us? I recently met a young mother in the middle of a painful divorce who told me that, as difficult as it was, she was growing spiritually in a way she'd never experienced. "I had always known that if I repented, the Lord would forgive me," she said. "But I did not realize that the Atonement could heal me of my sadness and mistakes. This is the first time I've realized that He has power to heal my heart."

I was in my early thirties when I experienced a crushing heartache. An opportunity to marry evaporated overnight, and I was devastated, adrift in a sea of hurt and loneliness. I didn't handle myself very well during that painful season. I flailed about emotionally and wallowed in anger, including at the Lord, for "letting me down." In the midst of that ordeal, however, I received a priesthood blessing in which I was told that this trial was "a gift." "You've got to be kidding," I thought. "A gift?" I wrestled for understanding and for peace. Neither came quickly, but during the process, I began to understand for the first time that, as Elder Bruce C. Hafen taught, the Atonement was not just for sinners.³⁰ Because the Lord took upon Himself our sins, weaknesses, mistakes, and agonies, there is godly power available to help His followers deal with all kinds of pain.

That "gift" thirty years ago altered the trajectory of my life. For the first time, I understood what Malachi and Nephi meant when they prophesied that the Savior would rise "with healing in his wings."³¹ I truly appreciated Isaiah's prophecy that He would give those who mourn in Zion "beauty for

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ashes” and the “oil of joy for mourning.”³² I knew that the Savior came to “heal the brokenhearted,”³³ that He took upon Himself my pain and would “succor,” or run to, me.³⁴

Since that time, I have thought of the Atonement in large measure as a doctrine of healing. The Savior will heal us from sin, *if* we repent. He will heal us from weakness, sadness, and loneliness; from hurt, fear, and mistakes; from the emotional and spiritual bruises of attempting to live covenant lives in a spiritually hostile world; from the effects of unfairness, abuse, and the sins of others; from disappointment, a lack of courage, or wavering faith. As President Howard W. Hunter declared, “Whatever Jesus lays his hands upon lives. If Jesus lays his hands upon a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands upon the family, it lives.”³⁵

Knowing that we would need and long for healing, the Savior extended this soothing invitation: “Will ye not now return unto me, . . . and be converted, that I may heal you? . . . Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive.”³⁶ The most sure way to gain access to the Savior’s healing, strengthening power is to make covenants with Him and then keep them. When Alma’s people were being held captive, the Lord “came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.” He then promised to ease their burdens such that they could not feel them. “And this will I do,” the Lord explained, “that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”³⁷

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John Scott, Jesus Christ Visits the Americas. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

The most powerful way to gain a witness of the healing power of Jesus Christ is to experience His healing power. And often that comes as we engage in a spiritual wrestle.

While I was serving in the Relief Society general presidency, we had the opportunity to attend sessions of General Authority training held in conjunction with general conference. I never took that glorious privilege for granted. But there was one training session that affected me in a very personal way. The topic for that session was strengthening families, and it was conducted by a General Authority who invited a great deal of audience participation.

From the outset, whenever someone responded to a question and used the word *woman* to describe a female's role in the family, the conducting officer would tell that person to use the word *mother* instead. The same was true with reference to men, whom he wanted referred to as fathers. At first

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I didn't think much of it, but as the morning wore on and the point was repeatedly made that women were mothers and men were fathers, I began to shrink in my chair. I doubt anyone else even thought about it, but I was painfully aware of the fact that I was the only person in the room who was neither a mother nor a father.

By the time the meeting ended, I could not get out of that room fast enough. I hurried back to my office, closed the door, and wept. I had served as a ward and stake Relief Society president and as a member of the Relief Society general board. I had never felt that I didn't belong in the Church—until that morning. And, to make it worse, I felt excluded by prophets, seers, and revelators, which in that moment made me wonder how the Lord felt about me. Unfortunately, I began to stew about the meeting. At first, I was just hurt, but the hurt festered into anger. I could not understand how “the Brethren” could disenfranchise so many members. There was no one I could talk to about how I felt. I couldn't quite picture telling my bishop that I was upset with a General Authority. So I just stewed.

This went on for months, until I began working on the address I was to give at the upcoming general Relief Society meeting. I prayed, pondered, fasted, and went to the temple for weeks and—nothing. No inspiration. No ideas. Nothing. As the days raced by, I began to panic. Finally, I had one clear impression that was also a reprimand: I needed to resolve my feelings about that General Authority. I knew it was true, and in a spirit of humility I got on my knees and asked the Lord to forgive me for the resentment I'd been nurturing. And then I asked the Lord the question I should have asked months before: Did I miss something in that meeting?

Two days later I had another clear impression—that I should speak in the general Relief Society meeting about, of all things, motherhood. “Seriously?” I thought. But the impression was clear, so I went to work. I searched the scriptures and went to the temple again and again. In other words, I wrestled. I wrestled to understand the doctrine of motherhood, and I wrestled with my own feelings about that doctrine.

And guess what I learned? That General Authority had been right. That every woman, regardless of her life circumstances, has been divinely endowed with the gift and the gifts of motherhood. Eve was named the Mother of All Living before she ever bore a child on this earth.³⁸ Motherhood is the essence of who women are. It defines our identity, our divine stature, and the unique traits our Father gave us. This led to an address titled “Are We Not All Mothers?”³⁹ For the first time in my life, I not only understood the doctrine of motherhood but experienced healing about not bearing children in this life. I am not saying that the longing for a family went away, because it did not. But the deep pain I had tried to suppress for years was gone. In response to my repentance and wrestling, the Savior healed that pain while teaching me the truth about the eternal nature of women.

Moroni commended us to “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written.”⁴⁰ What is different for you and me when we understand what the Savior did for us? The answer is, everything.

Everything changed because of Jesus Christ. Everything is better because of Him. Everything about our Father’s plan

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became operable because of Him. Everything about life is manageable, especially the painful parts, because of Him. Everything is possible because of Him. Every heavenly power and privilege is available to us because of Him and His gospel. The Savior changed everything for all who are willing to make covenants with Him and then keep them.

Without the Savior and His gospel, we would have no hope—no access to any kind of heavenly power. No family that extends beyond the grave and therefore no hope of anything but the emotionally crippling state of eternal singleness. We would have no escape from sin, from our mistakes, or from the binding cords of the devil. And all of this means that we would have no peace. No joy. No happiness. No healing. No resurrection. No possibility of having our spirits and bodies reunited forever. No reunion of the faithful. No possibility of eternal life. No future.

Brigham Young said that prior to the Restoration of the gospel the whole of Christian doctrine could be “simmered down . . . into a snuff box. . . . But when I found Mormonism, I found it was higher than I could reach . . . deeper than I was capable of comprehending, and calculated to expand the mind, and lead mankind from truth to truth, from light to light, from grace to grace, and exalt him . . . to become associated with Gods and the angels.”⁴¹

I know that this is true. I have pleaded with the Lord so many times, for so many years, for help and understanding. He has walked with me and stayed with me when I felt no hope. He has sent His angels to be with me. He has healed my heart again and again and is responsible for every moment of joy.

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None of this would be possible absent what happened in Gethsemane, on Calvary, and in the tomb.

He is risen! He is risen!
Tell it out with joyful voice.
He has burst his three days' prison;
Let the whole wide earth rejoice.
Death is conquered; man is free.
Christ has won the victory.⁴²

Of that victory, I bear my witness. I can stand as a witness of Him because I have received a witness—again and again—that Jesus Christ is real and that His Atonement was perfect and infinite. I have experienced His healing power again and again.

I testify that the Savior is going to come again and that all who can stand as witnesses of Him have the profound privilege of helping prepare the earth for His return.

May we engage in the wrestle to gain an unflinching witness of Jesus Christ. May we gain a witness so that we can stand as witnesses of Him “at all times and in all things and in all places.”⁴³ May we defend the faith because we have experienced the power of having faith in the Savior of the world.

Notes

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 49. Joseph Smith's statement continued: “But in connection with these, we believe in the

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gift of the Holy Ghost, the power of faith, the enjoyment of the Spiritual gifts according to the will of God, the restoration of the house of Israel, and the final triumph of truth.”

2. D&C 138:14–16.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “This Glorious Easter Morn,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 67. President Hinckley also declared that “there would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter. The babe Jesus of Bethlehem would be but another baby without the redeeming Christ of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the triumphant fact of the Resurrection” (“The Wondrous and True Story of Christmas,” *Ensign*, December 2000, 5). President Howard W. Hunter added that “without the Resurrection, the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a litany of wise sayings and seemingly unexplainable miracles” (“An Apostle’s Witness of the Resurrection,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 15). Indeed, as Joseph Smith saw in vision, the Savior “came into the world . . . to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness” (D&C 76:41).
4. Speaking as a publisher, I do not believe that any man could have authored page after page of unaltered manuscript in less than ninety days to bring forth the Book of Mormon.
5. See D&C 8:2–3.
6. See 1 Nephi 13:37.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 49.
8. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), xv; emphasis added.
9. Enos 1:2.
10. Alma 8:10. Paul told the Ephesians that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

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11. D&C 76:19.
12. See D&C 76:7–8.
13. Spencer W. Kimball, “Absolute Truth” (BYU devotional address, 6 September 1977, found at www.speeches.byu.edu).
14. Richard G. Scott, *21 Principles: Divine Truths to Help You Live by the Spirit* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 95–96.
15. See Matthew 7:7; 3 Nephi 14:7; 3 Nephi 27:29.
16. Moroni 7:19.
17. Joseph Smith, history, 1838–1856, vol. E-1, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 1972–73. Joseph Smith also said, in a frequently quoted, important statement: “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor know ye the Lord for all shall know him, . . . from the least to the greatest” (Joseph Smith, history, 1838–1856, vol. C-1, Church History Library, 8; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 268).
18. 1 Corinthians 14:31, 39.
19. Questions are good because they lead to light and truth, and “light and truth forsake that evil one” (D&C 93:37).
20. Henry B. Eyring, “Continuing Revelation,” *Ensign*, November 2014, 70.
21. As quoted by David A. Bednar, “Quick to Observe,” in *Brigham Young University 2005–2006 Speeches* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2006), 24.
22. 2 Nephi 28:27. The Lord also said, as a further example of this point, “Wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish. Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also” (2 Nephi 9:31–32).
23. Alma 12:10–11. Alma also made it clear that those who do not harden their hearts will receive more and more until they know the mysteries of God “in full.”

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24. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 387; emphasis added.
25. Mormon 9:27.
26. James 1:5–6.
27. D&C 76:53.
28. See D&C 88:118. Faith does not stand still. It is either increasing or disappearing. As President Henry B. Eyring has said, “Faith has a short shelf life” (“Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Ensign*, November 2005, 39).
29. President Howard W. Hunter explained that “the development of spiritual capacity does not come with the conferral of authority. There must be desire, effort, and personal preparation. This requires, of course, . . . fasting, prayer, searching the scriptures, experience, meditation, and a hungering and thirsting after the righteous life.” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015), 82.
30. See Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life’s Experiences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008).
31. 2 Nephi 25:13.
32. Isaiah 61:3.
33. See Luke 4:18 and Jacob 2:8 about healing the “wounded soul.”
34. Alma 7:11–12.
35. Howard W. Hunter, “Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, November 1979, 65.
36. 3 Nephi 9:13–14.
37. Mosiah 24:13–14.
38. Moses 4:26.
39. See Sheri L. Dew, “Are We Not All Mothers?,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 96–98.
40. See Ether 12:41.

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41. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 78n72.
42. Cecil Frances Alexander, “He Is Risen!” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 199.
43. Mosiah 18:9.