

LESSON 17

The Power of the Word

Introduction

Book of Mormon prophets went to great efforts to produce and preserve scripture that would bless us in our day. In this lesson, students will be reminded that as they study and

abide by the words of prophets, they can receive power to overcome Satan, navigate their way through mortality, and eventually obtain eternal life.

Background Reading

- Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6–8.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “The Blessing of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 32–35.
- “The Power of the Word,” chapter 8 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 115–24.

Suggestions for Teaching

1 Nephi 3:19–20; 5:21–22; Omni 1:14–17; Mosiah 1:3–5; Alma 37:3–4, 8

The importance of scripture

Display the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask students how they would answer the question he poses:



“We owe [a great] debt to those who faithfully recorded and preserved the word through the ages, often with painstaking labor and sacrifice—Moses, Isaiah, Abraham, John, Paul, Nephi, Mormon, Joseph Smith, and many others. What did they know about the importance of scriptures that we also need to know?” (“The Blessing of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 32).

- What do you think these writers knew about the importance of scriptures that we also need to know?

Remind students that Nephi and his brothers were commanded by the Lord to return to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates. Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from 1 Nephi 3:19–20 and 5:21–22 while the class looks for reasons the brass plates were so important to Lehi and his family.

- According to these verses, why are the scriptures so important? (Students should identify the following truth: **Scriptures preserve God’s words and commandments as communicated through His prophets.**)

To help reinforce this truth, remind students that hundreds of years after Lehi’s family arrived in the promised land, their descendants encountered the people of Zarahemla (the Mulekites), who had traveled from Jerusalem shortly after Lehi’s family had.

Invite students to silently read Omni 1:14–17 and Mosiah 1:3–5 and note the contrast between those who had the scriptures (the Nephites) and those who did not (the Mulekites). (*Note: To learn about the “compare and contrast” scripture study skill, see *Gospel Teaching and Learning: A Handbook for Teachers and Leaders in Seminaries and Institutes of Religion* [2012], 22.*)

- What consequences did the Mulekites experience because they did not have the scriptures? (See also 1 Nephi 4:13.)
- What blessings came to the Nephites because they had scriptures?

Invite a student to read Alma 37:3–4, 8 aloud while the class looks for the blessings that the Nephites received from the brass plates.

- According to verse 8, what were some of the blessings that the Nephites received from the brass plates?
- What do you think Alma meant when he said that the scriptures “have enlarged the memory of this people”?

To help clarify the meaning of this phrase, ask a student to read the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson aloud while the class looks for additional insights into how the scriptures enlarge our memory:



“The scriptures enlarge our memory by helping us always to remember the Lord and our relationship to Him and the Father. They remind us of what we knew in our premortal life. And they expand our memory in another sense by teaching us about epochs, people, and events that we did not experience personally. . . .

“The scriptures also enlarge our memory by helping us not forget what we and earlier generations have learned. Those who either don’t have or ignore the recorded word of God eventually cease to believe in Him and forget the purpose of their existence” (“The Blessing of Scripture,” 33).

- What are some ways in which the scriptures enlarge our memory?
- What doctrines, principles, or stories in the scriptures have enlarged or expanded your memory of the Lord and your relationship with Him?

1 Nephi 8:21–24, 29–30; 15:23–24; 2 Nephi 3:12; 32:3; 33:4–5; Jacob 2:8; 7:10–11; Alma 5:10–13; 31:5; 37:2, 8–10; Helaman 3:29–30; 15:7–8

The word of God brings blessings

Invite a student to briefly summarize Lehi’s vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 8). Then ask the class what the iron rod represented and why it was such an important part of the vision. If needed, invite students to read 1 Nephi 8:21–24, 29–30.

Ask students to search 1 Nephi 15:23–24 and look for the blessings that come to those who hold fast to the word of God. You might encourage students to mark what they find.

- What do you think it means to “hold fast” to the word of God?

- According to these verses, what blessings can we receive by holding fast to the word of God? (Students should identify the following principle: **If we hold fast to the word of God, we will never spiritually perish and the adversary will not be able to overpower us.**)

Display the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and invite a student to read it aloud:



"Let me suggest that holding fast to the iron rod entails, in large measure, the prayerful, consistent, and earnest use of the holy scriptures as a sure source of revealed truth and as a reliable guide for the journey along the strait and narrow path to the tree of life—even to the Lord Jesus Christ" ("Lehi's Dream: Holding Fast to the Rod," *Ensign*, Oct. 2011, 36).

Explain that several Book of Mormon prophets taught of additional blessings that come to those who hold fast to the word of God. Write the following references on the board. Invite each student to study one or two, seeking to discover blessings that come from studying the word of God. Then ask students to write the blessings they identify on the board next to the corresponding reference:

2 Nephi 3:12

2 Nephi 32:3

2 Nephi 33:4–5

Jacob 2:8

Jacob 7:10–11

Alma 5:10–13

Alma 31:5

Alma 37:2, 8–10

Helaman 3:29–30

Helaman 15:7–8

- When have you experienced one of these blessings?

Invite students to describe what a young single adult can do in daily life to hold fast to the iron rod.

Ask students to consider whether their use of the scriptures could be described as holding fast to the iron rod.

Invite students to consider and write down specific things they can do to better hold fast to the iron rod and more fully receive these blessings.

Alma 37:38–46*The word of God leads to eternal life*

Remind students that the prophet Lehi received an instrument from the Lord called the Liahona. Invite a student to read Alma 37:38–42 aloud while the class looks for how the Liahona blessed Lehi’s family.

- How did the Liahona bless Lehi’s family?
- What was required of Lehi’s family to make the Liahona function properly? (The compass functioned only when they heeded its instructions and exercised faith and diligence. See also 1 Nephi 16:28.)

Explain that Alma taught that the use of the Liahona was a “type” and a “shadow”—meaning a symbol—of how we should use the word of God. Ask a student to read Alma 37:43–46 aloud while the class identifies parallels that Alma drew between the Liahona and the words of Christ.

- What principle regarding the words of Christ did Alma teach in these verses? (Students should identify the following principle: **If we give heed to the words of Christ, we will be led in a straight course to eternal life.** You might encourage students to mark occurrences of the word *if* in verses 45–46. Tell students that learning to identify cause-and-effect relationships is an important skill that can enhance their study of the scriptures.)
- What do you think it means to be led in a “straight course” to eternal life?
- What are some things we can do to go beyond simply reading the words of Christ and begin to “give heed” to them?

Conclude the lesson by displaying the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar, and invite students to read it and ponder Elder Bednar’s questions.



“A constant flow of living water is far superior to sporadic sipping.

“Are you and I daily reading, studying, and searching the scriptures in a way that enables us to hold fast to the rod of iron ... ? Are you and I pressing forward toward the fountain of living waters—relying upon the word of God? These are important questions for each of us to ponder prayerfully” (“A Reservoir of Living Water” [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2007], 7,

lds.org/broadcasts).

Ask if any students would like to share their testimonies of how studying the word of God has blessed them. Encourage students to continue to ponder the questions Elder Bednar asked, and invite them to follow through with the thoughts and impressions they received during the lesson to make their study of the word of God more effective and meaningful.

Student Readings

- 1 Nephi 3:19–20; 5:21–22; 8:21–24, 29–30; 15:23–24; 2 Nephi 3:12; 32:3; 33:4–5; Jacob 2:8; 7:10–11; Omni 1:14–17; Mosiah 1:3–5; Alma 5:10–13; 31:5; 37:2–4, 8–10, 38–46; Helaman 3:29–30; 15:7–8.

- Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6–8.