

# Reading the Book of Mormon Daily Gives Us Access to Heavenly Power

By Cherice Montgomery, Pilgrim's Landing 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, January 21, 2024 (10 minutes)

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## Personal Introduction:

- My name is **Cherice Montgomery**.
- I am **not married** and **don't have children**.
- I currently serve as the **music leader in Primary**.
- I have lived in the **townhomes** since **2010**, but...
- I was raised in **KS**, where I taught **HS Spanish** for a long time.
- I moved to **MI** to do a **Ph.D. at MSU**.
- I moved to **UT** for my current job at **BYU**.
  - I coordinate the **Spanish Teaching Major**.
  - I **prepare** dual immersion teachers in multiple languages (Chinese, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish).
  - I teach **graduate courses** in assessment, literacy, research, and technology courses in two different programs.
  - My research looks at the nature and design of **compelling learning experiences**, and I am currently focusing on immersive language learning environments such as dual language immersion, playable case studies and simulations, and project-based language learning.

## Introduction to the Topic:

- I have been asked to speak about **whatever I feel inspired to share** from my study of Come, Follow Me this week.
- Like Nephi, I have been **pondering** what I might share with you **that would be "of most worth"** (1 Nephi 6:6).
- I have had a lot of different **thoughts that aren't necessarily all connected**, but a good friend reminded me that the Spirit is the only teacher and assured me that the Lord would help each of you get what you needed out of my talk.
- So, I hope you'll **listen with your heart to feel what the Spirit is trying to teach you** and we'll see how this goes!

## Preview of Talk:

- 1) My Primary teachers taught me to study the scriptures/Book of Mormon.
- 2) The prophets have promised **powerful blessings for reading the Book of Mormon daily**.
- 3) The Book of Mormon showcases the **power of family history**.
- 4) The Book of Mormon demonstrates **power of keeping our covenants**.
- 5) The Book of Mormon gives us access to the **heavenly power we need to transform our lives**.

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## 1) MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE SCRIPTURES/BOOK OF MORMON

- Many of the **habits** that bless my life **began in Primary**.
- My teachers taught me about **Heavenly Father's promises** for keeping commandments.
- One teacher **challenged** my class to read all 4 standard works (*list them*)
- My teacher told us when they finish a chapter, they **write the date at the end** of it.
- I did that and so I know **I have read all of the scriptures** through at least once.
- I have since read the standard works **more than once**.
- I **developed the habit of reading them daily**.
- So, I **know the scriptures**.

### a) But even though I am an academic and studying is what I do for a living, studying the scriptures is hard for me because doing so is:

- **Repetitive** → I already read them once! [Recontextualization and pondering: A good friend reminded me that as the circumstances of our lives change, we see the scriptures through different "lenses," and that changes their meaning]

2 Nephi 4:16: "Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard."

- **Boring** → I have an **interest-driven brain**, and I often find them boring because they happened so long ago and I don't love reading about all the wars and political intrigue [Personal relevance: The more you look for what they have to do with your own life, the more interesting they get.]

1 Nephi 19:23: "And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning."

- **Time-consuming** → We live in an **entertainment-driven** society filled with **cheap, fast dopamine**, but reading the scriptures is an investment that is "slow" and takes time to mature/bear fruit (and I'm SO busy)! [Gamification: I have learned to **pair scripture reading with things I do enjoy**, like eating or staying in bed; )

1 Nephi 6:5: "Wherefore, the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world."

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---

- **Unfocused** → I am a **task-oriented** person, but there is **no single clear task** to focus on when reading *Come, Follow Me*—just lots of different ideas [**Project-based learning**: I try to identify one specific thing I **need to know** or a **topic I want to understand better**. I seldom get the answers to those questions while I'm reading, but the **answers come over time** when I am focused on other things. I believe they are revealed to me because I've **sensitized my spirit to revelation through my daily scripture reading**.)
- **Hard to understand** → *(Like family history, the scriptures can be hard to understand because they were written in a different time and place and the authors were writing to people living in that time and place.)*
  - **Contextualization**: We need more information about the history, culture, and customs of the time period, location, and people. [I let myself pursue my curiosity while I'm reading and look things up when I have questions.]
  - **Seek and ye shall find**: [I read the footnotes, look things up topically, consult *Mormon Doctrine* and sometimes conference talks, etc. It takes effort, but I have learned a lot and the scriptures are no longer so confusing.]
  - **Line upon line**: Heavenly Father teaches us one step at a time. [Put unfamiliar language in your own words. It gets easier over time.]

Isaiah 28:10: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; **line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.**"

This is an **eternal principle** that even **applies to the Savior**.

Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

- This also means that even if we search, ponder, and pray, **understanding probably won't come all at once**, but little bits add up over time. [Tell the Diigo story of 30-second annotations adding up to hundreds of entries and the impact that annotation has on learning, and long-term memory consolidation and storage]

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“For behold, thus saith the Lord God: **I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have” (2 Nephi 28:30).**

**b) We can expect to understand because Jesus promised we would.**

Matthew 7:7-8 OR 3 Nephi 14:7-8: “7 [Ask](#), and it shall be given unto you; [seek](#), and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

8 **For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”**

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### 2) PROPHETIC PROMISES ASSOCIATED WITH READING THE BOOK OF MORMON

#### a) The prophets have repeatedly asked us to read the Book of Mormon.

Elder David A. Bednar said: “The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth because it centers upon the Truth (see [John 14:6](#); [1 Nephi 13:40](#)), even Jesus Christ, and restores the plain and precious things that have been taken away from the true gospel (see [1 Nephi 13:26, 28–29, 32, 34–35, 40](#)). **The unique combination of these two factors—a focus on the Savior and the plainness of the teachings—powerfully invites the confirming witness of the third member of the Godhead, even the Holy Ghost. Consequently, the Book of Mormon speaks to the spirit and to the heart of the reader like no other volume of scripture.**” Elder David A. Bednar

#### b) Both ancient and modern prophets have made spectacular promises if we read the Book of Mormon. Listen to these:

2 Nephi 32:3: “...Wherefore, I said unto you, **feast upon the words of Christ**; for behold, **the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.**”

#### c) When I read the Book of Mormon first thing in the day, the whole day goes better: I feel more peace, less stressed, and am better able to recognize answers to my prayers.

##### The Prophet Joseph Smith: Get closer to God

“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and **a man would get nearer to God** by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], [64](#)).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2020). [Prophetic promises](#). *Come, Follow Me*.

#### d) Pres. Nelson said that, “The Book of Mormon is our latter-day survival guide.” I have become increasingly aware of the parallels between the stories in the Book of Mormon and the current events of our day. [Give an example?]

##### President Nelson: Faith

“Further, **few things build faith more than does regular immersion in the Book of Mormon**. No other book testifies of Jesus Christ with such power and clarity. Its prophets, as inspired by the Lord, saw our day and selected the doctrine and truths that would help us most. **The Book of Mormon is our latter-day survival guide**” (President Nelson, [Embrace the future with faith](#). October 2020 General Conference).

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- e) **Most of our modern prophets have testified of the blessings Heavenly Father has promised to those who study the Book of Mormon.**

### President Ezra Taft Benson: Power

“It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. **There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book.** You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to **avoid deception**. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ ([D&C 84:85](#)), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, **you will find life in greater and greater abundance**” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], [141](#)).

### President Gordon B. Hinckley: Feel the Holy Ghost more

“Brothers and sisters, without reservation I promise you that if you will prayerfully read the Book of Mormon, regardless of how many times you previously have read it, **there will come into your hearts an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord.** There will come **a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to his commandments**, and there will come **a stronger testimony** of the living reality of the Son of God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* [2016], [233](#)).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. (2020). [Prophetic promises](#). *Come, Follow Me*.

### President Marion G. Romney: Less fighting and more Christ-like love and happiness

“I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. **The spirit of contention will depart.** Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. **Righteousness will increase.** Faith, hope, and charity—**the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness.**”

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---

### President Russell M. Nelson: Revelation

“My dear brothers and sisters, I promise that as you **prayerfully study the Book of Mormon every day, you will make better decisions—every day**. I promise that **as you ponder what you study**, the windows of heaven will open, and **you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life**. I promise that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be **immunized against the evils of the day**, even the gripping plague of pornography and other mind-numbing addictions” (“[The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?](#)” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 62–63).

### Thomas S. Monson, President of the Church (final general conference address): Get heavenly help to overcome doubt and fear

“My dear associates in the work of the Lord, I implore each of us to **prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day**. As we do so, we will be **in a position to hear the voice of the Spirit**, to resist temptation, to **overcome doubt and fear**, and to receive heaven’s help in our lives. I so testify with all my heart in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.” (“[The Power of the Book of Mormon](#).” Sunday morning session. Apr. 2017 general conference. *Ensign*, May 2017.)

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### 3) THE BOOK OF MORMON & THE POWER OF FAMILY HISTORY

- 1) BUT, what do you do when you read day after day and the promises still haven't been fulfilled? Nephi's example teaches us (and our own family history can confirm these truths for us).

1 Nephi 9:5: "5 Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not."

- a) One of my big ahas in reading this week was that Nephi was given the personal commandment from the Lord to essentially do family history (e.g., **keep a record/journal**).
- b) Essentially, Nephi **felt he should write down his family history, EVEN THOUGH HIS FATHER HAD ALREADY DONE IT!**
  - It would be easy to say it was too hard (he had to find the ore, melt it, make the plates, and engrave each letter)
  - It would be easy to say it was unnecessary (since his father had already done it)
- c) He **chose to keep the commandment**, which was **for a wise purpose, which he knew not**. (1 N 9:5-6)

- 2) Why did Nephi keep the commandment even though didn't understand the reason behind it?

- a) He **wanted to do what the Lord wanted him to do** and **believed the Lord would help him**.

1 Nephi 3:7: "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I **know that the Lord giveth no commandments** unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.

**This applies to ALL of the commandments. This scripture is promising us that the Lord will prepare a way for us to keep the commandments that he's asked us to keep!**



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- b) Another thing that struck me this week was 1 Nephi 9:5-6: Nephi **trusted that the Lord knew how things would end** from before he had even been born **(and had prepared for that)**. He also trusted that everything the Lord did was for his ultimate good.

1 Nephi 9:6: "6 But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words. And thus it is. Amen.."

- 3) We can see in hindsight that **Nephi's decision to obey the Lord's commandment to work on his family history is still blessing all of us today! Because of Nephi, we have stories of:**

- Righteous people who suffered for keeping the commandments (Lehi's family)
- Family squabbles (Lehi and Sariah, Nephi and his brothers, Nephi's family and Laban)
- Children of righteous parents, some of whom used their agency to draw closer to the Lord, and others who struggled to believe the promises of the Lord and the teachings of their parents (Laman, Lemuel, Nephi, Sam, and the daughters of Ishmael)
- How family members handled trials with faith and courage (e.g., Nephi's broken bow, Nephi's brothers beating him, etc.)
- The effort required to gain a testimony (i.e., the Lord sending Nephi and his brothers on multiple journeys back to Jerusalem)
- The results, in hindsight, of the fruit of righteous living (including what it made possible for Joseph Smith and for us today).

I have seen this in my own life too. When I was a child, we were told to create a 4-generation pedigree chart and to write down our family history. In doing my own, I've learned:

- a) My family lines are all those of converts, immigrants, and pioneers.
- b) One **great-grandmother took the time to compile the histories of all the ancestors she knew**. They are the only surviving stories I have so far.
- c) Another of my **grandmothers had kept journals**, scrapbooks, and photo albums her whole life. As she got older, she had to move to an assisted living facility and was very **depressed** about it. One day, she decided that no one could possibly care about her life, and so she **threw most of them away**. That experience taught me **my life matters and my stories are worth preserving even though I may not be able see that now**.

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- I have learned that **family history helps me:**
  - **Feel the Spirit and draw closer to my ancestors** (I know who they are and what they sacrificed for their families, for the gospel, and so I could enjoy my current blessings)
  - **Feel more grateful** for the modern-day blessings that I so often take for granted:
    - **Clothing:** One of my ancestors cried because he had no shoes and even after working hard didn't have enough money to buy them.
    - **Food:** Many of my ancestors were poor and some literally almost starved to death. Some sent their children away because they couldn't provide for them or worked day and night to run the farm and feed and clothe 9 children because their husbands were away on missions and couldn't provide food for their family.
    - **Heat, running water, shelter:** My ancestors worked so hard to build homes, mills, and wells to provide these things in Utah.
    - **Education:** Many of my ancestors were illiterate and/or couldn't go to school because their families couldn't afford it and/or had to work on the farm to provide for the family.
    - **Medical care:** My ancestors had to treat their own sicknesses using tools and skills passed down through the generations (dental forceps, herbal remedies, midwifery, etc.).
    - **Testimony of the gospel:** Many of my ancestors were converts. Some gave up comfort and material goods, were disowned by their families, or traveled thousands of miles to join the church and watched their children and others die on the way.
    - **My current life in Utah:** My ancestors literally helped build many of the cities here in Utah, including mills, schools, stores, and wells. I enjoy abundance because of their sacrifices.
  - **Recognize my own gifts and talents** (baking, dancing, service, singing, teaching, etc.)
  - **Understand my family's past** (including diseases, dysfunctions, traumas), which helps me better understand my own struggles.

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### 4) WHERE DID NEPHI GET THE POWER TO KEEP BELIEVING AND KEEP GOING DESPITE HIS TRIALS?

- It would have been **easy** for Nephi to allow himself to become discouraged
- **Even though Nephi wasn't getting the outcomes he wanted, he believed the promises the Lord had made because he knew the Lord well enough to trust him**
- Instead, Nephi **kept doing what was right/keeping his covenants**
- **Unlike his brothers, Nephi turned toward the Lord when he faced hard times**

3 Nephi 9:13: "O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?"

- **The Lord gave him the strength**, testimony, insight, and revelation he needed to keep going.

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

- Nephi remained faithful, even though he hadn't yet received everything that had been promised of him. **[The same is true of Abraham & Sarah, Jacob, etc.]**

Hebrews 11:13: "These all died in faith, **not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them**, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

- **We can see the results of that in hindsight.**

President Nelson has said: **Overcoming the world is not an event that happens in a day or two. It happens over a lifetime as we repeatedly embrace the doctrine of Christ. We cultivate faith in Jesus Christ by **repenting daily and keeping covenants that endow us with power**. We stay on the covenant path and are **blessed with spiritual strength, personal revelation, increasing faith, and the ministering of angels**. Living the doctrine of Christ can produce the most powerful virtuous cycle, creating spiritual momentum in our lives.<sup>10</sup> (President Russell M. Nelson, Overcome the world and find rest. October 2022 General Conference).**

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### 5) THE BOOK OF MORMON HAS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM OUR LIVES IF WE LET IT

My life hasn't turned out like I planned. As I've read my family history, I've realized that theirs didn't either. However, in hindsight, I can see just how blessed I am by their legacy of faithfulness.

The Primary song called *Keep the Commandments* sums up my talk perfectly: *Keep the commandments, keep the commandments, in this there is safety, in this there is peace. He will send blessings, He will send blessings, words of the prophets, keep the commandments, in this there is safety and peace.*

- If we want to know these things are true, we have to live them.
- When we have the faith to keep Heavenly Father's commandments and to act on the invitations of the prophets, the Lord promises to bless us. God never lies, so we can be certain we will receive what he has promised.
- However, we don't get to control the timing of the blessings.
- When we remain faithful, especially in the midst of trials or when the promised blessings do not seem to be coming, we are sealing those blessings upon our own heads.

I bear you my testimony that **I know from personal experience that His promises are sure.**

As is true of anything valuable, **it takes effort** to receive them.

However, **He is anxious to bless us and gives us multiple paths to receiving the blessings** He wants to give us! [See the excerpt on the next page from the excellent talk by Kevin J. Worthen, (Jan. 10, 2023). [The Power of Prophetic Promises](#), *BYU Speeches*.]

As I have **made more of an effort to study the Book of Mormon every day**, I am starting to see **some of the miracles He has promised taking place** in my own life.

This inspiring song is a beautiful summary of 1 Nephi, Chapter 8: [The Tree of Life by Shawna Edwards](#)

I leave that with you in the name of **Jesus Christ, who makes it all possible**, Amen.

## What blessings does Heavenly Father promise if I obey the commandments?

*Pilgrim's Landing 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, September 2018 (10-12 minutes)*

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**Kevin J. Worthen (Past President of BYU):** “At first glance, some might find the fact that more than one prerequisite act is associated with one particular blessing to be discouraging—viewing these acts as a cumulative list of things, each of which must be met before the promised blessing comes to pass. But I believe just the opposite is true. Compliance with *any one* of these particular prerequisites is enough to bring forth the promised blessing. God is so anxious to bless us that He provides numerous ways to qualify for a particular blessing—though the blessing can certainly be enhanced through adherence to each of the particular prerequisites. Moreover, there is likely a link between the different prerequisite acts that lead to a particular blessing. For example, prayerful study of the Book of Mormon will likely increase one’s desire and ability to obey God’s law and to spend more time in temple and family history work—each of which is a prerequisite to the promised increase in the ability to receive and recognize revelation. God is remarkably efficient and remarkably generous.

One promised blessing contained in three different prophetic promises from President Nelson is miracles. The first time President Nelson promised miracles was in the very first general conference he presided over as president of the Church in April 2018. Let me quote once again:

*I promise that as you continue to be obedient, expressing gratitude for every blessing the Lord gives you, and as you patiently honor the Lord’s timetable . . . , every blessing the Lord has for you—even miracles—will follow.*<sup>47</sup>

The second time he promised miracles was in the next general conference in October 2018:

*I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring **the miracles He knows you need.***<sup>48</sup>

Notice the direct tie to temple attendance, including making an appointment that is kept with exactness. Note also the more specific promise—not just that miracles will follow but that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows we need. The latter is much more important than the former.

The third time he promised miracles was two years later in the Sunday morning session of the April 2020 general conference. In that session, President Nelson stated:

*As you more intentionally hear, hearken, and heed what the Savior has said and what He is saying now through His prophets . . . , I promise miracles in your marriage, family relationships, and daily work.*<sup>49</sup>

Kevin J. Worthen, 2023, The Power of Prophetic Promises. *BYU Speeches*.  
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/the-power-of-prophetic-promises/>