

FOREWORD BY LIZ LEMON SWINDLE

10

ELDER KERNS

末日聖徒
イエス・キリスト

HERMANA ALVAREZ

LA IGLESIA DE
JESUCRISTO
DE LOS SANTOS
DE LOS ÚLTIMOS DÍAS

QUESTIONS

TO ANSWER

WHILE

PREPARING FOR A

MISSION

BENJAMIN HYRUM WHITE

© 2013 Benjamin Hyrum White All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form whatsoever, whether by graphic, visual, electronic, film, microfilm, tape recording, or any other means, without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief passages embodied in critical reviews and articles.

This is not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The opinions and views expressed herein belong solely to the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of Cedar Fort, Inc. Permission for the use of sources, graphics, and photos is also solely the responsibility of the author.

ISBN 13: 978-1-4621-1149-7

Published by CFI, an imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc., 2373 W. 700 S., Springville, UT 84663

Distributed by Cedar Fort, Inc., www.cedarfort.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data on File Cover design by Rebecca J. Greenwood
Cover design © 2013 by Lyle Mortimer Edited and typeset by Whitney A. Lindsley Printed in the
United States of America 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

QUESTION 1: Do I Have A Testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

QUESTION 2: Do I Have “An Eye Single To The Glory of God”?

QUESTION 3: Am I Ready To Work HARD For Over sixty Hours a Week?

QUESTION 4: Do I Understand How To Feel and Recognize The Spirit?

QUESTION 5: Am I Clean and Worthy To Represent The Lord?

QUESTION 6: Am I Prepared To Enter The Temple?

QUESTION 7: Am I Ready To Face The Opposition?

QUESTION 8: Do I Know What Success Really Means?

QUESTION 9: Do I Have A Plan For When I Come Home?

QUESTION 10: Am I Truly Ready To Serve the Lord?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

QUESTION 1

DO I HAVE A TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST?

“We expect you to have an understanding and a solid testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard

OPEN YOUR MOUTHS” (D&C 33:8–10), the Lord tells His missionaries. He needs you not only to “preach [His] gospel” (D&C 42:11) but also to testify that it is true. Missionaries more effectively preach the gospel when they have personal testimonies of its truthfulness. Imagine you are on your first day in the mission field. You are far away from home, standing on the doorstep of a stranger. You knock on the door with trepidation and sweaty hands. A man greets you with not so much as a smile on his face. Before you can say a word, he says, “Why have you come here?” Could you imagine the embarrassment if the best answer you could give is, “Because my mom knows the Church I belong to is true”?

As you prepare to serve a mission, the Lord’s instructions to Hyrum Smith apply perfectly: “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed” (D&C 11:21). You have to know before you go. That does not mean you have a perfect knowledge of every principle of the gospel. It means you need to look people in the eye and state what you believe. Truths such as “I know God lives,” “I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior and Redeemer,” and “I know that God speaks to a prophet today,” are testimonies that need to be firmly planted in the soil of your heart. “This isn’t a time for spiritual weaklings,” Elder M. Russell Ballard taught. “We cannot send you on a mission to be reactivated, reformed, or to receive a testimony.”¹ The time has come for you to have a testimony before you reach

the mission field.

One of the more profound truths you will need to bear witness of is that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. The First Presidency has said, “It is important that before entering a missionary training center prospective missionaries read the Book of Mormon and other standard works in order to understand the doctrines of the gospel.”² It becomes very difficult to bear testimony of a book you have not read.

I remember an experience I had as a missionary in Colorado. I had been out for one year and attended sacrament meeting in the ward I was serving and listened to a returned missionary named Adam Bowler speak to the congregation. He related a story about sharing the gospel on his mission. He served in the southern United States, where people love the Bible. They eat, drink, and sup from the pages of that holy book. As he and his companion were knocking doors on a hot, humid summer day, they were having no success. Nobody wanted to listen to their message. After a few hours, they decided to tract to the end of one last street. As they approached one of the houses, they happened upon a man mowing his lawn. The man saw the missionaries, stopped mowing, and extended what Elder Bowler called “southern hospitality.” He gave them a drink and asked about their hometowns. After some conversation, Elder Bowler was excited because they not only had someone to talk to but the man was quite friendly too. The conversation made a sharp turn though when the man said, “You know what boys, I appreciate what you are doing, but I would rather have a millstone hung about my neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea than tell anybody about that Book of Mormon.” Wow! The two missionaries responded with their testimonies but to no avail. There was only anti-Mormon literature that followed the man’s statement.

I have given a lot of thought to what I would say to a person who was so brazen about their hatred of the Book of Mormon. With the approval of the Spirit of the Lord, I would respond by saying, “‘Eternal consequences rest on [your] response to that book . . . either to [your] blessing or [your] condemnation,’ and I will stand before you one day, just as I am now, to bear testimony that it is true.” That is a bold statement, but it is what President Benson said about the Book of Mormon, and I believe it.³ I know that the Book of Mormon has brought me closer to Jesus Christ than any other book in

this world. I have read it and can testify with many others that it is the word of God. You need to be prepared to speak face-to-face with people who care nothing for what you believe and will try to break your testimony.

If you find your testimony to be lacking, look to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his quest for knowledge. A careful reading of his search for truth will yield at least five steps for gaining a testimony of the Savior: 1) Joseph had a sincere desire to know the truth.⁴ 2) Joseph was also reading his scriptures.⁵ He paid the price not only to know the word of God but also to ponder it. 3) He used the words “serious reflection” and “laboring” (Joseph Smith—History 1:8, 11) to describe the time and effort it took to think about salvation. There is no satisfactory substitute for good old-fashioned work when it comes to finding a testimony. 4) Joseph “attended . . . several meetings” (Joseph Smith—History 1:8), which showed he was willing to be obedient to God’s commandments even if he did not completely understand which church was the right one to join. Testimonies come from living the principles of the gospel.⁶ 5) Joseph decided to “ask of God” (Joseph Smith—History 1:13). Sincere desire, scripture study, pondering, going to Church, and prayer were all a prelude to the First Vision. Ultimately, the First Vision led Joseph to tell his mother, “I have learned for myself” (Joseph Smith—History 1:20). Future missionaries would do well to ask themselves, “Am I willing to do what it takes to find out for myself?” and “How badly do I really want to know?”

Start your testimony search with the Book of Mormon. The best part about reading that book is the promise of what happens when you find out it is true. It creates a domino effect. When you find out that the Book of Mormon is true and that it is the word of God, you get three bonus testimonies to go with that knowledge: “That Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is his revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the second coming of the Messiah” (Book of Mormon, Introduction).

President Benson pleaded with members of the Church to make the Book Mormon the center of their family and personal study. In addition, he gave more promises of what happens as we begin to study it: “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.”⁷ This promise is where I found my testimony of the Book of Mormon. I studied it for a half hour every day, months before I turned nineteen. After a consistent period of time, I could look back on the months when I was seriously engaged in studying it, and I found all of President Benson’s promises to be true.

Most bishops and stake presidents will not recommend missionaries who have not read the Book of Mormon before turning in their mission papers. My former stake president was one of them. The bishop’s son was prepared for his final interview with the stake president before all his paperwork would go to Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City. As he entered the interview the stake president’s first question was, “Where are you in your reading of the Book of Mormon?” This prospective missionary sheepishly replied that he was in the book of Moroni but would finish it that night. The stake president looked him in the eye and said, “Go home and finish the book, and we will have this interview next week.” This young man did as he was instructed and went on to serve an honorable mission. Be prepared to look your bishop and stake president in the eye and not only say you have read the Book of Mormon but also testify it is true.

A close companion to bearing witness of the Book of Mormon is the importance of testifying that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I hope another experience from my own life will help you to gain a witness of the Lord’s prophet chosen to restore the gospel in the latter days. When I entered the Missionary Training Center (MTC) in Provo, Utah, in the summer of 1997, I could testify the Book of Mormon was the word of God. I had seen and experienced the fruits of living the gospel, and I had a testimony of its truthfulness. But I do not know that I fully understood the role of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I learned about Church history during my sophomore year of seminary but had not fully grasped the magnitude of the Restoration.

It was while I was in the MTC that I learned an important truth about gaining a stronger testimony. My companion, Elder Wiggins, and I had the opportunity to teach the first missionary lesson to a set of new missionaries that had just entered the MTC. As we alternated teaching principles of the gospel, it was my turn to teach about Joseph Smith. I shared Joseph’s search for truth and set the stage for the First Vision. Because I had memorized the First

Vision, I set down my discussion booklet and looked the missionary sitting across from me in the eye and related in Joseph's own words the account of seeing God the Father and His Beloved Son. I finished by stating, "I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God." The moment I said it, a powerful thing happened. The Holy Ghost bore witness to me that what I had just said was true. It was thrilling! I later learned this truth of what happened from President Boyd K. Packer:

Oh, if I could teach you this one principle. A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it! Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that "leap of faith," as the philosophers call it. It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a footstep or two. "The spirit of man," is as the scripture says, indeed "is the candle of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27).

It is one thing to receive a witness from what you have read or what another has said; and that is a necessary beginning. It is quite another to have the Spirit confirm to you in your bosom that what you have testified is true. Can you not see that it will be supplied as you share it? As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!⁸

Don't be afraid to bear testimony of what you believe to be true. Take opportunities in fast and testimony meeting, seminary, Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women meetings, family home evening, and home and visiting teaching settings to share your witness of the truthfulness of the gospel. As you have the courage to open your mouth, the Lord will fill it!⁹

Another tool you need to use to enhance your understanding of the gospel is the manual *Preach My Gospel*. This manual is inspired of God. President Boyd K. Packer has said it "was designed beyond the veil and put together here."¹¹ I have been so impressed with a number of my seminary youth who not only have copies of *Preach My Gospel* but who also study it regularly with their friends. This manual will give you a feel for what you will be teaching in the mission field. All of the sections in that book will be instructive, but give chapter three a great deal of attention. Look up the scriptures and familiarize yourself with the truths of the Savior's gospel. Be prepared to testify boldly and powerfully without equivocation of what you study on those pages.

Finally, the Savior has given His testimony about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. He declared, "As your Lord and your God liveth it is true" (D&C 17:6). The Savior also testified that Joseph Smith was His prophet by saying, "This generation shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:10). These truths are what make The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints different

from any other church on the face of the earth. This testimony might take time to nurture, but you must gain it before preaching the gospel to the world.

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Missionaries,” *Ensign*, November 2002, 47.
2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Statement on Missionary Work,” December 11, 2002, 1, unpublished source. This letter was reissued from the First Presidency with very little change on February 6, 2008.
3. See Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, November 1986, 7.
4. See Joseph Smith—History 1:15.
5. See Joseph Smith—History 1:11.
6. See John 7:17.
7. Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” 7.
8. Boyd K. Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54–55.
9. See D&C 33:8–10.
10. Boyd K. Packer, “One in Thine Hand” (address delivered at a new mission presidents’ seminar, Provo Missionary Training Center, June 22, 2005), 4, as quoted by Quentin L. Cook, “Be a Missionary All Your Life,” *Ensign*, September 2008, 48.

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>