

Seek to Exercise Your Faith and Grow Stronger in Christ



We live in a time period called the last days, a time that Jesus said, would be full of turmoil with men's hearts failing them for seeing the things that are coming on the earth. *(Luke 21:26)* We need to have a strong faith, maybe more faith than any other generation preceding us. We are living in the midst of great cultural warfare. Economic, political, and spiritual instability looms before us. Are you spiritually prepared? Will your faith endure through the storms ahead?

We must build strong pillars of faith now. *(See last month's insert.)* But how do we do that? During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: *Ask of God; ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened (Matthew 7:12-13).* Jesus promised when we initiate the action, to Ask, Seek, and Knock, He would answer.

But this asking and seeking and knocking is a process. *Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you, that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken, are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? Behold, I say unto you, They are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I*

have fasted and prayed many days, that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit (Alma 3:75-80). Personal testimonies from God must be diligently sought with real intent, not by a haphazard approach.

For instance, Moroni says, if you want a testimony of the truth of The Book of Mormon, you must have sincerity and real intent. *And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things (Moroni 10:5).*

To build pillars of faith and increase our faith, making them extremely strong, we must seek the Lord through personal Prayer and Fasting. Study and Pondering are also important. *(Pondering is a process of deep thinking and prayer.)* We must also keep the commandments and live out the gospel in our lives. The sons of Mosiah sought the Lord in these ways and became mighty men of faith. *They had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; For they were men of a sound understanding, and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. But this is not all: they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting, therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority, even as with the power and authority of God (Alma 12:3-5).*

Pillars of faith must be built correctly and maintained properly to stand firm. One of the most important aspects of putting in pillars or a foundation of any kind is you must build on solid rock. We are all familiar with Jesus' teachings about the house built on the sand or the rock. *(Matthew 7:34-35)* We must be sure our faith is anchored to the rock.



Is your life built on the rock? Are you sure? I watched a home improvement show recently, where the home had cracks developing, and it was sinking, because the pillars were not sitting on the bedrock. Originally, they had been placed on the bedrock, but erosion had occurred and gradually over time they had come loose. The owner was not aware that this had happened until the cracks appeared.

Is your faith anchored on the rock? Sometimes the daily stress and temptations of life can cause our faith to erode and slip off the Rock and we don't realize it. **We must watch for Spiritual Erosion.** *But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish (Mosiah 2:49).*

Satan floods the earth with falsehoods to erode our faith. *Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept. For behold, there is no God today...And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God, he will justify in committing a little sin: yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this. And do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God (2 Nephi 12:6-11).*

Besides eroding our faith Satan has many tricks to trap us and bind us down, making us unable to build God's Kingdom. *Yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords for ever (2 Nephi 11:94).* We find a whole list of traps in 2 Nephi 12. *For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good. (Wow, don't we see this today) And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well; And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none: And thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains,*

from whence there is no deliverance (2 Nephi 12:24-28). See how he works to trap you and erode your faith = pacify, lulls you away into carnal security, tells you all is well in Zion, flatters you, convinces you there is no hell/judgment, cheats your soul, lies, leads you carefully away from the truth down to hell.

Then Nephi says: *For behold, he that is built upon the rock, receiveth it with gladness: and he that is built upon a sandy foundation, trembleth, lest he shall fall (2 Nephi 12:34).* We must build on the rock and stay grounded and not let spiritual erosion cause us to drift off the bedrock. Are you well-grounded or has your foundation shifted some in the stress of daily life?

Another thing that can affect foundational pillars is inadequate reinforcement. We need to adequately protect and reinforce our faith. One way to reinforce our faith is by what they call lateral support. That means the pillar has tie rods with anchors that go out sideways. I could not help but think of this as our connection with our church family, the Body of Christ. The Giant Redwoods hold firm because their root system is anchored together. They support each other.



And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty (Doctrine & Covenants 17:11b).

But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not; and when you are converted strengthen your brethren (Luke 22:32). We do need to strengthen each other. We need to meet together often but during this pandemic we have been separated to a great degree. Please let's not judge one another in the decisions made whether to go to church or stay

home, in the midst of this pandemic. This is an individual decision and many different health factors, and other factors play into the decision.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...Let us not therefore judge one another anymore; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way (Romans 14:10-11). Judging each other is just another way for Satan to divide us. God has provided live streaming and zoom services for us, which have been a blessing, allowing us to be together in Spirit. We need to stay in touch though. Don't judge your brother. Instead stay connected and reach out and give each other a virtual hug through e-mail, text, phone calls, cards/notes and on nice days get out and porch visit.

Our small group has had zoom meetings and they were very strengthening. Let's keep our bonds strong and may love continue to flow between us during this difficult time, that we may be anchored in love one to another and strengthen each other. This is not a time to judge and become divided, it is a time for loving, strengthening and reaching out to each other.

To grow your faith, you need to have continued experiences with God. Each new testimony you have adds more weight/growth to your pillar of faith making it stronger and less likely to be moved off the bedrock. One way to have new testimonies is to be active in your service to God. We must experiment on God's words by moving out in faith, sometimes into new areas, out of our comfort zones.

When I was called to go to Africa, it was way out of my comfort zone, but I moved out in faith and went. I have so many wonderful faith building testimonies from that experience. You have to move out in service, you have to try your faith. Alma says: *And now behold, after ye have tasted this light, is your knowledge perfect? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith, for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed, that ye might try the experiment, to know if the seed was good. And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say, let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if*

ye nourish it with much care, it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit (Alma 16: 163-165).

To increase your faith, look around you at the universe and see God's Handiwork. There are many ways to expand your faith quota but one that has blessed me comes from Alma. *The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion; Yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form, doth witness that there is a Supreme Creator (Alma 16:54-55).*

With modern science we should have more faith than any other generation for now we can see and understand how all things do denote there is a God. The Hubble telescope has revealed the heavens to us. We see God's handiwork even his own maker's stamp upon the heavens. I recently read a book on how Einstein's theory on light reveals the truth of God's existence. The very earth reveals God's planning and creativity. All through the earth we see designs and patterns of a supreme creator. There are many scientific discoveries that are faith building. **Look, Discover, Study and Pray!**



**Hubble
Cross =
God's
Maker
Stamp**



Patterns in nature = Supreme creator

Light = Pattern for God



Digging Deeper

Lectures on Faith by Joseph Smith, Jr.



Lecture #1: What Faith Is

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. Are you not dependent on faith? Would you exert yourself to obtain wisdom and intelligence, unless you did believe that you could obtain them? Would you have ever sown if you had not planned to reap? ...If men duly consider themselves, and turn their thoughts to the operations of their own minds, they would discover **it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them. ...Faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual...Faith is not only a principle of action, but of power.**

God Created All Things by the Principle of Faith. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).* By this we understand that the principle of power which existed in the bosom of God, by which the worlds were framed, was faith; and that it is by reason of this principle of power existing in the Deity, that all created things exist so that all things in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, exist by reason of faith as it existed in Him.

Faith as Grain of Mustard Seed=Effects of Faith is Power in Action. The Savior says: *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief; for, verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matthew 17:19-20).*

Moroni gave this account: *Behold, it was the faith of Alma and Amulek that caused the prison to tumble to the earth. Behold, it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi, that wrought the change upon the Lamanites, that they were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost*

(Ether 5:14-15). And it was by faith that Mt. Zerin was removed: Thou workest unto the children of men according to their faith; for the Brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove, and it was removed (Ether 5:30).

In addition to this we are told: *And what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again (Hebrews 11:32-35).*

Also, Joshua, in the sight of Israel, bade the sun and moon to stand still and it was done. (Joshua 10:12-13) We here understand, that all these things were done by faith...**Faith then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed...without it there is no power.**

Action Section

(Review “Pillars of Faith” in February, 2021 Bulletin Insert) Do you, as I do, long to see the power of Faith released? Do you long to obtain the promises of God? Do you want mountain moving faith? If so, we must go to work and “Grow Our Faith”. A stagnant faith with no action is not faith at all. I remind you of the Pillars of Faith from last month. Such things as = Prayer (remember Aaron Smith told us to double our prayer time) maybe we pray, but not enough. Fasting, how often do you fast, at least once a week? Study, do you daily read the scriptures, do you do in-depth study? Do you Love God, love your neighbor and serve God? Do you put God first in your life? Are you seeking your testimony or adding to your testimonies? I believe there is enough here to work on for another month and longer. We must diligently seek to grow our faith by doing those things God has instructed us to do. Let’s get busy Today!!!

