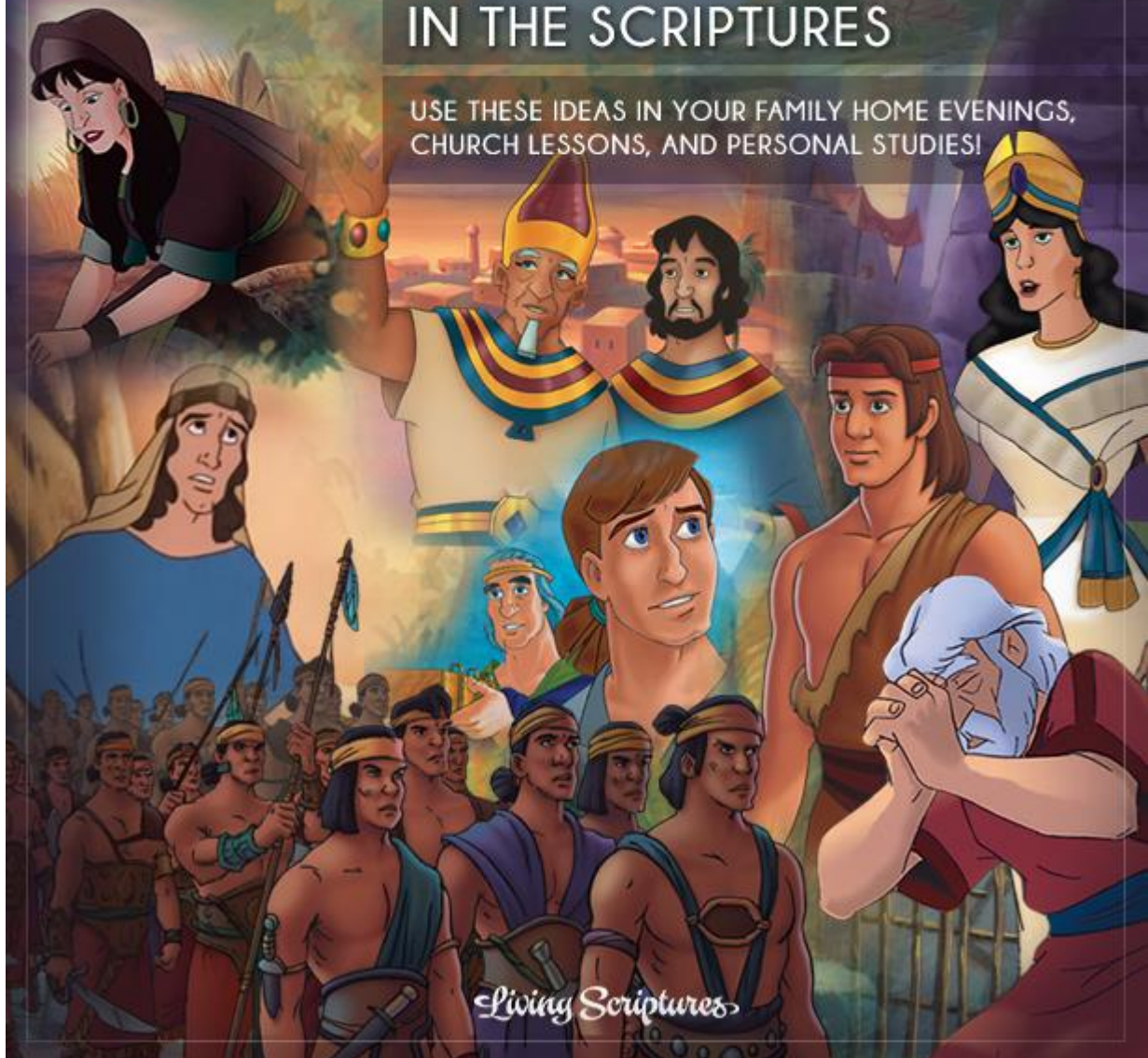


# CHOOSE YOUR HERO

## LEARNING FROM HEROES IN THE SCRIPTURES

USE THESE IDEAS IN YOUR FAMILY HOME EVENINGS,  
CHURCH LESSONS, AND PERSONAL STUDIES!



*Living Scriptures*

# Introduction

*“I would that ye should do as I have done, in remembering the captivity of our fathers; for they were in bondage, and none could deliver them except it was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions.”*

*Alma 36:2*

The scriptures are full of heroes. A few of them fought in battles or saved nations; some performed miracles; still others prophesied and taught inspiring truths. These men and women had remarkable faith, outstanding courage, and unwavering integrity. They are certainly worthy of our admiration.

But if we simply look up to these people, we are missing out. We were meant to “liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23), and that certainly includes the stories of our favorite scripture heroes. These stories are a major reason that prophets kept records and Heavenly Father preserved and protected them.

So why do our scripture heroes sometimes feel so distant? Some of us have read stories about them our whole lives but think they may be *just* stories. Maybe we tell ourselves that Daniel and Esther and Nephi lived too long ago and their lives were too different to compare to our own. Or—and this could be most common—we believe these heroes were too amazing for normal people like us to relate to.

Satan smiles to hear such untrue thoughts. No—these scripture heroes were real people. They had wishes and worries and even weaknesses much like ours. Even these inspiring people had to learn and grow to become like Jesus Christ, just as we do.

But we don’t have to learn and grow alone; God has given us these heroes to help. We don’t know exactly how they would handle the situations we face, but we know how they handled similar ones. With God’s help, they succeeded. Their stories were meant to give us courage.

That’s why we have chosen some of these stories to retell. Each section of this book is dedicated to a scripture hero and tries to relate his or her trials to ours. We’ll include a chart with each hero to help you study the scriptural accounts as well. Our goal is to help you feel closer to these people than ever and gain strength and wisdom from their stories.

So choose a hero. You can use the next page to find someone who handled a trial similar to one you have right now. Or you can use the table of contents on page 3 to find the heroes listed by name. Once you’ve picked someone to study, read his or her story with your own life in mind. Follow the example you see. Then choose another hero, and another, and another. As you follow this pattern, God will help *you* become a hero for friends around you and future generations.

Who will your first hero be?

# *Find Your Hero*

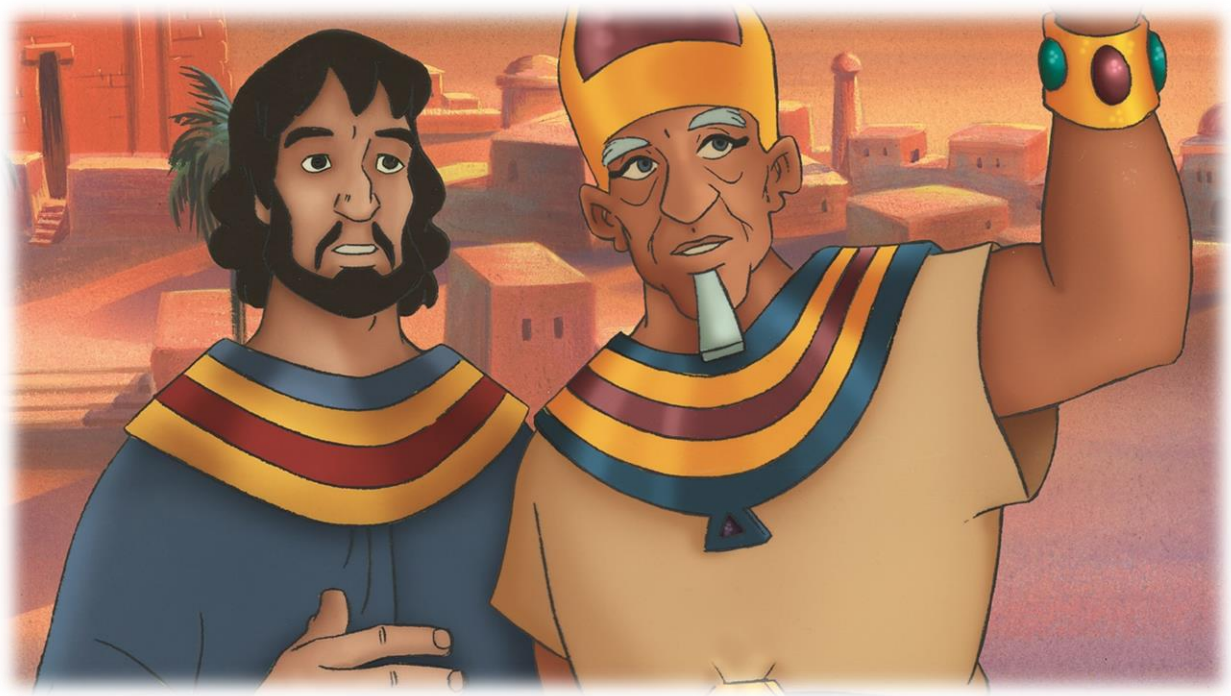
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# Joseph of Egypt



*“So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”*  
*Genesis 50:8*

Are you burdened with circumstances you feel you don’t deserve? Do you wonder if doing good is actually bringing you any rewards? If any of that sounds familiar, then you and Joseph from the Old Testament could relate well to each other.

Perhaps no hero from the scriptures could claim a life more like a rollercoaster than Israel’s son, Joseph. The major events and circumstances of his first thirty years went something like this:

- Favored and righteous child
- Sold into slavery
- Made leader of Potiphar’s household
- Resisted sexual advances
- Thrown in prison

When this is all you see of Joseph’s life, it’s natural to wonder if God even cared about what Joseph was going through. If anything, it seems that Joseph’s life only went *worse* when he tried to do the right things. Some people might even say it looks like God was playing with Joseph.

Many of us have probably felt the same way about our own trials. Maybe being honest at work or school only got you in trouble; or being a good example to your friends lost you those friends; or your health took a nosedive even though you live the Lord’s law of health. Discouragement comes easily in times like that.

Why is that? Probably because humankind tends to think in patterns of cause and effect, black and white, and here and now. Each time something happens in our lives, we naturally associate it with whatever came just before it. In other words, when Joseph resisted the temptation to lie with Potiphar's wife and was immediately thrown in prison, most people would have thought, "Prison, a bad event, was caused by righteousness." We may start to believe that righteousness doesn't help us.

To see how wrong that is, let's look at the *end* of Joseph's struggles and do it with in the Lord's pattern of thinking. God is all-knowing and tends to think in terms of destinations and pathways. Even from before Joseph was born, God knew He needed Joseph to eventually end up in a position of power in Egypt. How could He make sure that happened? Take a look at Joseph's life story told backwards:

Savior to his family in Egypt  
 Made leader in Egypt  
 Interpreted Pharaoh's dream  
 Interpreted dreams in prison  
 Thrown in prison  
 Tempted by Potiphar's wife  
 Made Leader in Potiphar's household  
 Sold into slavery  
 Favored and righteous child

With Joseph's tale mapped out this way, it's easy to see all the pieces—even the hard ones—not as detours from Joseph's happiness, but as steps to God's final destination for him. Joseph never would have ended up in Egypt if his brothers hadn't sold him, and Pharaoh never would have heard of him if he hadn't interpreted dreams in prison.

Joseph didn't know all this would happen as he went along. But he had faith that God would bless him for keeping His commandments. That's why he was able to take advantage of every opportunity given to him, resist temptation, and stay hopeful. Knowing that God was involved in his life also helped him forgive those who had wronged him. Clearly, keeping an eternal perspective brings peace.

We can keep the same faith in our own lives. When hardships come, it will help to realize that God has placed us on the path to the blessings He wants for us. That path may wind through thorns, but God will help us find the good in every situation as He did for Joseph. And someday, we will look back on our lives as Joseph did: with tears of gratitude in our eyes.

What Joseph of Egypt Did	What We Can Do
Refused to lie with Potiphar's wife (39:8-9, 12)	Flee from temptation and sin
Knew God could help him interpret dreams (40:8)	Believe that we can do anything through God
Asked the butler to tell Pharaoh of him (40:14)	Look for chances to beat trials and ask for help
Faithfully fulfilled his duties (39:22, 41:48)	Keep the commandments and fulfil our duties
Knew God had used his trials to save lives (45:5)	Search for divine purpose in our trials
Forgave and helped his brothers (45:10-11)	Forgive those who have wronged us



# Moses



*“The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him.”*

*Exodus 15:2*

Do you feel unqualified to fulfill the responsibilities that have been given to you? Do you hate or worry about the fact that people look to you as a leader? Then you and Moses, the great prophet of the Old Testament, would have plenty to talk about together.

Our parents, church leaders, and even God often give us assignments. Sometimes the jobs are small enough or our talents great enough for us to feel comfortable. But other times, we may be guilty of saying things like: “Why are you putting me in charge of this? I don’t know what I’m doing. I won’t be able to do a good job.”

Would you believe that Moses said some pretty similar things? When he was first called as a prophet, Moses basically said, “Who am I to lead these people? I can’t even speak well. They won’t believe me.” Then when Pharaoh doubled the Hebrews’ workload, Moses told God, “You haven’t helped my people—they’re worse off than before! Why did you even send me?”

Even though Moses is known for leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea and through the wilderness, he had to grow into his role. Watching him change from reluctant shepherd to confident head of the children of Israel may be able to help us in our personal roads to leadership.

Perhaps the biggest key of Moses’ success was that he obeyed, but didn’t do anything alone. From the very beginning, Moses asked—begged, really—for some help. God was unhappy with Moses’ attempts to make excuses, but He still gave Aaron to Moses as a spokesman.

Another instance of help occurred after the children of Israel had entered the wilderness. Joshua and his men were fighting a battle, and they only prevailed when Moses’ arms were in the air. Before long, Aaron and Hur each came to stand by Moses and held up one of his arms until the battle had ended.

Soon after that, Moses had to begin judging the children of Israel. His father-in-law, Jethro, gave him some inspired counsel about how to organize that process. He told Moses that the burden was too heavy for him to carry alone, and suggested that he appoint a system of lower judges to report to him.

Sometimes we think of our assignments with an all-or-nothing mindset. We either assume that we have to do things by ourselves or assume that we can't do them at all. Moses' life is proof that God never meant for either extreme to happen. Moses always obeyed, so God always gave him help.

God will offer *us* what we need, too. Whether it's in the form of a partner, extra strength, or even just some comfort and good advice, help will come. However, it will most likely come a little at a time. We will need to move forward in obedience, even if we aren't sure how we'll make it to the end of the path or task. It will usually be when we can't do any more alone that God will step in.

Of course, Moses' ultimate help was the Lord Himself. It was He who gave Moses the power necessary to do everything. The same will be true in our lives. As we obey the same God who led the children of Israel through the Red Sea, He will lead us through our personal missions in life.

What Moses Did	What We Can Do
Asked God for instructions (3:13)	Ask God for instructions and listen for answers
Followed the Lord's instructions (7:6)	Obey God even when things get hard
Used Aaron as his God-given spokesman (4:30)	Take advantage of the help God gives us
Listened to and prayed for the Hebrews (5:20-22)	Listen to and pray for the people we serve
Followed Jethro's counsel (18:19-24)	Counsel with good people and take their advice
Told the children of Israel not to fear (20:20)	Have faith and encourage others to do the same



# Ruth



*“And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God[.]”*

*Ruth 1:16*

Are you facing a new situation and wondering how to succeed? Do you often have to choose between helping others and taking care of yourself? If so, then you and the Old Testament woman named Ruth are a lot alike.

Many of us are probably familiar with the beginning of Ruth’s story. Her father-in-law had already died, and then her husband and brother-in-law died as well. This left Ruth, her sister-in-law named Orpah, and their mother-in-law named Naomi all widows. Naomi told Ruth and Orpah to return to their families so that they could be taken care of. But Ruth insisted on staying with Naomi.

Perhaps our first reaction is to think, “How sweet of her to stay with Naomi!” But Ruth’s decision was more than sweet; it was also incredibly brave.

Why? For one thing, Ruth was a Moabite. Naomi had come to Moab because of a famine, but she planned to return to her homeland of Judea. Naomi was also a Hebrew, while Ruth had been raised with different beliefs. And finally, Naomi had no way to support herself or Ruth. So when Ruth chose to go with Naomi, she chose to leave behind her homeland, family, and religion; to comfort a mourning woman when she herself had reason to mourn; *and* to become the breadwinner of the family.

Maybe you are in a similar situation—you’ve just left home to go to college or serve a full-time mission, left familiar ground to start a new job, or left your former beliefs to join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Or maybe your surroundings are familiar, but someone close to you is struggling. Perhaps you spend a lot of your time and energy trying to help and comfort that loved one even though your own life is already hectic. You may wonder how much more you can give.

If either of those descriptions sounds familiar, then you can take encouragement and counsel from Ruth’s story. Three of the four chapters in Ruth are dedicated to describing the blessings Ruth received for her courageous choice.

So what *were* those blessings? Ruth started out gleaning—picking up leftover grain after the main harvest—to feed herself and Naomi. But the owner of the field, Boaz, made sure she got extra grain and a meal at the end of the day. He even told her to come back again and promised her safety.

Why would Boaz do all this? Ruth asked the same question, and this was Boaz’s answer, in today’s terms: “I’ve heard about everything you’ve done for your mother-in-law after your husband died—how you left your family and homeland to come to a place and people you didn’t know. The God you have come to trust will reward your work.”

And Ruth certainly was rewarded. At Naomi’s suggestion, she approached Boaz again, and he ended up marrying her. Then Ruth gave birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David and ancestor of Jesus Christ Himself. Ruth’s marriage and son even brought comfort to the mourning Naomi.

Ruth left us an admirable and balanced example to follow. Ruth walked boldly to Bethlehem; we can jump optimistically into new situations. Ruth fed Naomi, but was sure to eat her fill; we can reach out to our struggling friends, but take care of ourselves so we can continue to give. Ruth saw a chance to improve her situation and took it; we can ask the Lord and others for help.

If we strive to be like Ruth, we will someday hear God tell us something like Boaz told Ruth: “I have seen everything you’ve done for your loved ones. And I, the God you have come to trust, will reward your work.”

What Ruth Did	What We Can Do
Stayed with her mother-in-law, Naomi (1:14)	Remain loyal to the people who need us
Chose to adopt Naomi’s religion (1:16)	Value truth above our traditions and opinions
Volunteered to glean in the fields (2:2)	Look for opportunities to serve and work hard
Thanked Boaz for his kindness (2:10, 13)	Be grateful and watch for God’s blessings
Obedied Naomi (3:5)	Obey our leaders and respect everyone
Ate her fill and asked Boaz for help (2:18, 3:9)	Take care of ourselves and get help if we need to

# Hannah



*“For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord[.]”  
1 Samuel 1:27-28*

Do you feel that something is missing in your life? Have you been waiting so long for a dream to come true that you can hardly bear it anymore? Then you and the Old Testament woman named Hannah have a lot in common. She became the mother of Samuel the prophet. But before that, she spent years—maybe even decades—mourning the fact that she was not a mother.

Eventually, though, Hannah did more than mourn. She took her wish with her to the temple and prayed to God, promising that if He granted her a son, she would dedicate his life to the Lord. The prophet, Eli, felt Hannah’s sincerity and told her that God would grant her petition. And He did.

Why was Hannah’s desire granted? Maybe you’re also wondering, “Why hasn’t *my* desire been granted?” Sometimes God delays or withholds certain blessings because He knows something we don’t know, but He is eager to help us. If we haven’t received a blessing, it is most likely because we have not done our part. If we look closely at Hannah’s story, we can see the Lord’s pattern for gaining our wishes.

First of all, Hannah prayed to have a son. That may seem obvious, but sometimes we forget that step. God generally won’t give us something we haven’t asked Him for. Even though He knows how we feel before we tell Him, He still wants us to pray and have conversations with Him. He wants us to invite him into our lives.

Hannah’s wish to be a mother was also a virtuous one. It’s important that our desire be righteous as well. If God wouldn’t approve of our desire, why would He bless us with it? Even if our desire is in line with the commandments, we should still ask God if it is part of His plan for us.

When Hannah asked for her desire, she knew and accepted that motherhood would require hard work. We, too, must be willing to do more than hold out our arms to receive a blessing. Heavenly Father loves to work *with* us, not *for* us.

God is also interested in what we plan to do with our desire if we receive it. Will we hold it selfishly, or use it to bless others? Heavenly Father is more likely to bless us with something if He knows we will use it in His kingdom. Hannah knew this truth. That's why she promised that her son would dedicate his life to God. Because she kept that promise, God gave her Samuel and, later, more children who brought her joy.

So the next time you want something and need God's help to get it, here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- Have I asked God to help me gain this desire?
- Is my desire pleasing to God?
- What can I do to make my desire a reality?
- If I get my desire, how will I use it to further God's work?

Heavenly Father wants us to be happy, and He wants to bless us. If we follow the example of Hannah, we can gain many righteous desires from Him and achieve new levels of happiness.

What Hannah Did	What We Can Do
Endured barrenness and hurtful words (1:6-7)	Wait patiently for our desires to be fulfilled
Prayed and wept to God at the temple (1:10)	Share our feelings and desires with God
Vowed, if she had a son, to give him to God (1:11)	Tell God how we will use blessings He gives us
Was comforted and worshipped (1:18-19)	Have faith in promises from God and prophets
Brought Samuel to the temple as promised (1:24)	Keep our promises to and covenants with God
Told Eli her story (1:26-28)	Bear testimony of God's goodness and blessings



# Elijah



*“And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him[.]”*  
*1 Kings 18:21*

Are you worried that you may never make it through your current challenges? Do you wish you knew more about God and how to get His help? Then you have some things in common with the Old Testament prophet, Elijah, and can take several lessons from his life.

We don't really know anything about Elijah's life before he became a prophet. The first we hear of him is when he prophesied that the Lord was about to cause a drought and famine. Perhaps he wondered how he would survive or what he was supposed to do. No doubt each of us feels the same way every now and again.

God quickly taught Elijah that he had no need to fear. He told Elijah to travel to Zarephath, where a widow was ready to provide food for him. But when Elijah found this widow, she told him that she was about to use the last of her food before she and her son starved. Elijah could've been angry at God or assumed that God had meant a different widow. Instead, he simply promised that if the widow fed him, God would make sure she didn't run out of food. And that's exactly what happened.

Elijah's faith that God would provide is what *allowed* God to provide. We'll need to remember the same thing when our lives start to get difficult or scary. If we follow God's commandments no matter what, we can ask for and count on receiving blessings from Him, even if they're not exactly the ones we would have expected.

Soon afterwards, Elijah was sick of watching the Israelites flip between worshipping the true God and false ones. He challenged the “prophets” of Baal to tell their god to send fire down to burn an offering. When no fire came, Elijah told the Israelites to pay attention. Then he soaked his own altar and offering



in water and called down fire from heaven through *his* God. The Israelites were suitably humbled and worshipped the Lord.

Elijah knew a truth and proved it, both to the Israelites and to all of us: God is more powerful than anything or anyone else. He's more powerful than illness, more powerful than unemployment, more powerful than depression, and on and on forever. He is the only help we need in order to conquer in any showdown.

But what's usually hard for us isn't reaching out to God; it's recognizing when He reaches back. Elijah learned a thing or two about that as well. One day when Elijah was hiding for his safety, an angel came and told Elijah that God wanted to talk to him. There soon followed an earthquake and a fire, but God was in neither of those. It was only after hearing a still, small voice that Elijah felt God's presence and began to talk with him.

Most of us realize that God doesn't often speak to us in big or loud ways. Sometimes that bothers us, and we may insist on a stronger answer than God wants to give us. At other times, we forget to make sure our lives are quiet enough to hear God in the way He *does* talk to us. We need to take time to study the scriptures, pray, worship at the church and in the temple, and be still. Only then will we begin to feel Him.

We don't have to challenge anyone to a duel or survive an earthquake to learn what we'll need to know about God during our own hard times. Instead, we can learn from Elijah. If we obey God, trust Him, and listen for Him, He will use His matchless power to provide for and comfort us. He will be enough.

What Elijah Did	What We Can Do
Went to Zarephath as God told him to (17:5)	Obey God even when it doesn't make sense
Promised the widow God would provide (17:14)	Have faith that God will provide for us
Asked God to bring back the widow's son (17:21)	Ask God for the blessings we desire
Showed the people God's power (18:21-38)	Believe that God is more powerful than anything
Listened for God's voice (19:11-13)	Take time to be still and listen to God's voice
Prophesied even when it was risky (21:18-24)	Bear testimony even when we are afraid to

# Esther



*“For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people?”*  
*Esther 8:6*

Are you surrounded by people who misunderstand you or disagree with your beliefs? Do you wonder how to keep the peace without surrendering? Queen Esther from the Old Testament had the same problems. You can be like her by following her courageous example!

In the beginning of the Book of Esther, things seemed to be going very well. Esther was adored by everyone who knew her for her beauty and graciousness—the king himself even chose her over all other women to be his queen! She hadn’t told the king that she was a Jew because many people in the kingdom didn’t like Jews. It seemed safest to keep her heritage a secret.

But then the king’s assistant convinced him to decree that all the Jews should be killed. Esther’s guardian, Mordecai, wanted her to beg the king for the Jews’ lives. But Esther worried. She wasn’t allowed to go to the king unless he called for her, and he was known for his bad temper.

Does that sound familiar? Perhaps you and some of your friends hold higher values than most of the world does. It would probably be easiest for you to never talk about your beliefs or even go along with everybody else’s. That way people wouldn’t have reasons to be mad at you.

But Mordecai gave Esther some counsel that very much applies to us:

*“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*  
*(4:14)*

In other words: “If you surrender, then God will help your faithful friends some other way. But you will have missed your chance to do the right thing. And who knows? Maybe this dilemma is the reason God has placed you here.”

So what should we do? We should be like Esther. She stood up for her people as respectfully as she could, but she still did it with boldness.

Hopefully, we will all be able to stand firm in our beliefs and still keep our friends. But Esther said, “[I]f I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16); she knew that doing the right thing was more important than anything else. She knew that she had a purpose.

The next time you wonder if standing up for what you know is right will be worth the effort, apply what Esther learned. Remember that God chose you to be in these circumstances and with these people for a reason. Choose the Lord’s protection and approval over mankind’s. Then rejoice in the blessings that come will come to you as they came to Esther.

What Esther Did	What We Can Do
Politely accepted what was given to her (2:15)	Be grateful for blessings and give people respect
Obeyed her adoptive father, Mordecai (2:20)	Obey our parents and leaders
Asked the Jews to fast and pray for her (4:16)	Ask for our friends’ help and prayers
Valued her people’s lives above her own (4:16)	Value righteousness over personal comfort
Spoke boldly to the king and his assistant (7:3-4)	Share our beliefs and values without fear
Begged a second time for the Jews’ lives (8:3-6)	Never give up until we’ve accomplished our goals

# Daniel



*“Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.”  
Daniel 6:13*

Are you respected for your talents but disliked for your standards? Do you have to risk offending or angering your superiors on a daily basis? Then you have a lot in common with the Old Testament prophet, Daniel!

You probably heard the tale of Daniel in the lion’s den as a child. Maybe you thought, “Wow! I can’t believe Daniel could be brave enough to pray even though he knew he could die over it!” It’s true that Daniel had great bravery. But his story started long before the lions. When we study it, we realize that Daniel’s courage wasn’t unbelievable at all.

Incident number one. When he was young, Daniel and his friends were exchange students in the Babylonian king’s court. They learned they were expected to eat and drink things against the Hebrew law. The boys told their Babylonian caretakers that they wouldn’t follow the king’s rules. They said, “We’ll *prove* to you that our standards are best. Let us live them for ten days and see what happens.”

Daniel and his friends could’ve gotten kicked out of the king’s court or worse. But their firmness paid off. After ten days, they were the healthiest boys in the group, and their diet was made the new standard in the king’s court.

Incident number two. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, insisted that his scholars recount and interpret his latest dream. None of them could. So the king ordered that all the scholars in the land, including Daniel, be killed. When Daniel heard about the decree, he went to the king and told him that, if given a little time, he would give and interpret the dream.

Daniel was blessed with a vision, and he interpreted dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and of the next king years later. Even when the interpretations may have angered the kings, Daniel gave them anyway.

Daniel could've been killed for doing this, but his courage paid off. Not only did he save the scholars' lives, but he was made the king's chief of governors and treated like royalty.

Finally, incident number three. A new king, Darius, was in charge, and he was tricked into making a law against praying to God. Of course, Daniel knew it was right to pray to God daily. Now, based on the pattern from Daniel's earlier life, what course of action made the most sense for him to take?

Of course there is only one answer. Daniel didn't stick to his standards just because he was brave—he did it because he knew it would work. God had proven time and time again that He would bless Daniel for obeying His commandments. Even King Darius saw this.

We all have to make choices every day about whether to follow the standards we know are right. Sometimes we're rewarded immediately for our obedience. Other days, we may feel that obeying gets us nowhere but the lion's den. But we can take courage in the life of Daniel. We can believe with all our hearts that, even if it takes longer than we'd like, our Heavenly Father will make us happy when we follow Him. As we do this, we will also strengthen the faith of those around us. Thus, Daniel's story will be repeated through the ages.

What Daniel Did	What We Can Do
Immediately decided not to defile himself (1:8)	Choose to live our standards from the very start
Proved his standards' worth by action (1:11-13)	Show that our standards are good by example
Gained his knowledge from God (1:17)	Study the scriptures and rely on Gospel truths
Asked his friends to pray for him (2:17-18)	Accept help and prayers from our loved ones
Reproved the king for his wickedness (5:22-23)	Tell the truth, even when it's inconvenient
Prayed even when it was dangerous to (6:13)	Trust that doing good will always bring blessings



# John the Baptist



*“For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”*

*Luke 7:28*

Have you spent your days living in someone else’s shadow? Do you ever wish you could be liked and admired by more people? If so, John the Baptist may have felt a bit like you, and his life has a lot to teach you.

Few people were ever more prophesied about than John. Isaiah, Malachi, Lehi, Nephi, and Gabriel all spoke about John before he was born. The Bible Dictionary tells us that he “was the outstanding bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood in all history and was entrusted with its most noble mission.” That mission was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ to be received. And yet during his lifetime, John was known by relatively few and liked by even fewer.

John’s life proves that just because your role isn’t widely recognized doesn’t mean it’s not important. When we receive church callings, projects at work, or assignments in our communities that are low-profile or unglamorous, we must resist the temptation to shirk those duties. They are needed. *We* are needed.

The New Testament may have gone quite differently if John had cared about being well liked. Because he knew popularity wasn’t his purpose, he was willing to preach boldly, even at the risk of his life. He even condemned the king! This landed John in prison and eventually led to his murder. But John the Baptist’s fearless integrity is what allowed him to fulfill his mission and gain followers like Andrew and John the Beloved.

We’ll all want a piece of John’s bravery in our tough moments. When we know that something is right, we need to do it. It’s possible that making unpopular choices could lose us some friends or even

make us some enemies, but what are hundreds of adoring fans worth to us if we can't respect ourselves? And who knows? We could wind up with some better friends than we started with.

Some people might say that John was upstaged by Jesus. John was called as a prophet, then Jesus came as the Messiah; John taught sermons, then Jesus came and performed miracles; John worked hard to gain a group of followers, then Jesus came and the group followed him instead. That sounds kind of defeating, doesn't it? But John knew that the important thing wasn't getting attention—the important thing was doing his duty.

Maybe that one sibling or classmate of yours is always everybody's favorite. Or there might be times when someone else gets a leadership position or exciting opportunity that you thought you deserved. But moping about how unfair life is will only make things worse. In the end, it won't matter how many people we impress in this world as long as we please God.

When Jesus heard from John the Baptist in prison, he began one of the most generous speeches he would ever give about any of his friends or servants. He spoke of John's greatness and spiritual strength. But perhaps the trait Jesus emphasized most about John the Baptist was his humility. As we fulfill our assignments to the best of our abilities, no matter how small or unrecognized they may seem, we may begin to grow John's kind of humility.

What John the Baptist Did	What We Can Do
Lived in deserts until God called him (Luke 1:80)	Wait for the proper time to fulfill our duties
Preached boldly despite the risk (Luke 3:7, 19)	Bear bold testimony even if it could be unpopular
Directed others' attention to Jesus (John 3:27-30)	Choose not to seek attention or admiration
Obeyed Jesus by baptizing him (Matt 3:13-15)	Keep the commandments and follow our leaders
Sent those who doubted to Jesus (Luke 7:20)	Help those who doubt gain their own testimonies
Endured prison and gave up his life (Mark 6:27)	Humbly endure the trials in our lives

# *Saul of Tarsus*



*“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”*  
2 Timothy 4:6-7

Are you intimidated by the huge amount of possibilities to choose from in your life? Do you wonder what to devote your time and attention to? If that sounds like you, then you can learn a lot from Saul of Tarsus from the New Testament.

From early on in his life, Saul was a well-known and accomplished man. He was a Pharisee and had been tutored by the wise and celebrated Gamaliel. Unfortunately, he spent a long time using his influence to persecute the Christians. A visit from the resurrected Christ changed all that. From then on, Saul gave everything he had to God and spreading His word to the world.

Most of us won't serve years on end as a full-time missionary or die for our beliefs like Saul did. But we can still learn from Saul's devotion and apply lessons from his life to our own.

The first thing Saul gave up was his past. Of course, that meant repenting of his sins, which were many and severe. But it also meant leaving his past behind him. What if he had let the terrible things he had done haunt him? It may have kept him from preaching the Gospel or otherwise blessing thousands of people. But no—Saul let Christ keep his old life and make better use of it.

We can't let the times we did bad keep us from doing good. When we repent, we must give up our sins, but also our guilt. Then we can move forward to touch others' lives.

Saul also used all of his talents. His background with the Pharisees meant that he knew religious laws extremely well and understood the importance of strictly obeying God's commandments. This was reflected in many of his teachings. Saul—or Paul, as many called him—was also a Roman citizen. Besides saving Paul's life at least once, this also meant that Saul was familiar with people from many different nations and customs. He catered his sermons and epistles to each group's culture and needs.

Even though we may have a hard time recognizing it, God has blessed all of us with talents. But they're given more as a loan than anything else; God expects us to give our talents back to Him by using them to help those around us.

Finally, Saul gave the Lord his time. After his conversion, he literally spent the rest of his life in the service of God. The ways he worked—preaching close by, traveling on missions, or writing letters—depended on his circumstances, but he always found ways to make his moments useful to the Lord.

Heavenly Father doesn't expect most of us to be full-time missionaries until our deaths. But we can still dedicate our time to the Lord. This doesn't just include the hours we spend at church, studying the scriptures, or in the temple. We can also give the Lord our time by praying that we can do His will. Then we can go about each day looking for chances to help the people we come across.

We all have infinite options of how to use our lives. Saul of Tarsus taught us through his example that the greatest joy and fulfillment come when we choose to give ourselves—our pasts, our talents, and our time—to the Lord. He can do more with them than we could alone. Just ask Saul.

What Saul Did	What We Can Do
Left his wicked past behind him (Acts 9:20-22)	Repent of our sins and forgive ourselves
Used his Roman citizenship (Acts 25:11)	Use our talents and abilities in God's work
Bore bold testimony (Acts 26:25-27)	Bear bold testimony
Dedicated his life to his ministry (Acts 26:20-22)	Dedicate our time to serving the Lord
Suffered a shipwreck and other trials (Acts 27:10)	Be patient and hopeful in our trials
Loved the people he taught (Phm 1:15-17)	Sincerely love the people we serve



# Sariah



*“Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also know of a surety that the Lord hath protected my sons[.]”*  
1 Nephi 5:8

Are you scared to face a difficult time or task ahead of you? Do people expect you to support things you’re not sure you believe in? If those things ring true to you, then Sariah, Nephi’s mother, was a lot like you.

The Book of Mormon begins with Lehi telling his family they need to leave Jerusalem because it is going to be destroyed. From what Sariah later says to him later, it’s clear that she had doubts from day one. She didn’t have a testimony that Lehi’s words had come from God.

Each of us probably has times when we feel like Sariah did. Maybe you were raised in a Latter-day Saint family but aren’t sure if you have a testimony of your own. Or perhaps you had a testimony, but time or troubles wore it away until it wasn’t enough anymore. You’re not sure you can live something you don’t know is true. You may decide to stall until you learn more.

But Sariah is an example of an important principle: You will probably *never* learn whether something is true if you don’t try it. Jesus taught the same thing in the New Testament when He said, “If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17, emphasis added). In other words, it’s by trying something that we learn whether it is right.

Thank heavens Sariah chose to leave Jerusalem with her family even though she had questions about it! If she’d stayed behind, Jacob and Joseph would never have been born, and the rest of Sariah’s family would never have benefitted from her example. Sariah’s choice shows what a strong and faithful woman she was. Even though Sariah wavered at one point, she did press onward and was rewarded with safety, the lives of her sons, and a testimony of her own.



But why was it that Sariah wavered? One reason her story is so helpful is because it shows us what we should do, but also what we *shouldn't* do in situations like hers. As we've seen, it was fine that Sariah didn't know that Lehi was right at first. But when things started to go badly, Sariah started to choose doubt over faith.

Faith would have helped Sariah look forward and believe in a better future; doubt got her looking for someone to blame for her problems. Faith would have opened Sariah's eyes to new and encouraging truths; doubt closed her eyes to truths she hadn't finished seeing. Doubt blinds us. It's a good thing that Sariah chose faith again quickly by letting Lehi comfort her with his testimony.

Our lives will be full of questions and difficult circumstances, but these never need to take away our inner peace. If we follow Sariah's example, we can make it through any troubling times.

What Sariah Did	What We Can Do
Left Jerusalem with Lehi and their family (2:5)	Obey even if we don't have all the answers yet
Was comforted by Lehi's' testimony (5:6)	Take comfort in the testimonies of others
Bore her own testimony (5:8)	Bear our testimonies when we gain them
Rejoiced and offered sacrifices (5:9)	Give thanks for our blessings
Partook of the fruit of the tree of life (8:16)	Use the Atonement of Jesus Christ
Continued on in her family's journey (16:14)	Remain committed to our testimonies

# Nephi



*“And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them[.]”*

*1 Nephi 17:3*

Do you have a daunting task or overwhelming week ahead of you? Are you wondering how you’ll ever be able to accomplish all that you need to? Then you’re a lot like Nephi! Maybe that’s hard to believe—after all, Nephi is known for his can-do attitude. But there was more to Nephi than naïve enthusiasm.

We’re probably all familiar with the story of Nephi boldly telling his father, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded” (1 Nephi 3:7). But sometimes we stop there, and we shouldn’t. If we don’t finish the verse, we miss *why* Nephi would make such a bold statement: “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” (emphasis added). Nephi was confident because he knew that God would help him.

Nephi used that same lesson a lot—while trying to get the brass plates with his brothers and when his family was on the brink of starvation, for instance. But perhaps the story we can relate to most happened when God commanded Nephi to build a ship in Bountiful.

Nephi had never built a ship, and the one God wanted him to build was nothing like any ship he’d even seen before. Maybe he wanted to ask questions like:

“How am I supposed to build a ship?”

“Isn’t there an easier way for us to get to the Promised Land?”

“Why do we need to go to the Promised Land, anyway? The place we’re at now is just fine.”

But Nephi didn't ask any of those questions. He didn't even ask for all of God's instructions for how to build the ship. Here's what he did:

"And I said, Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me?" (1 Nephi 17:9)

We will all be faced with a similar trial every now and again. It may be in brand-new situations we're not sure how to handle. Maybe our "to do" lists will feel more like "to do" novels. Maybe we will each ask questions like:

"How am I supposed to accomplish this?"

"Isn't there an easier way for me to get where You want me to be?"

"Why does my life need to change, anyway? The place I'm at now is just fine."

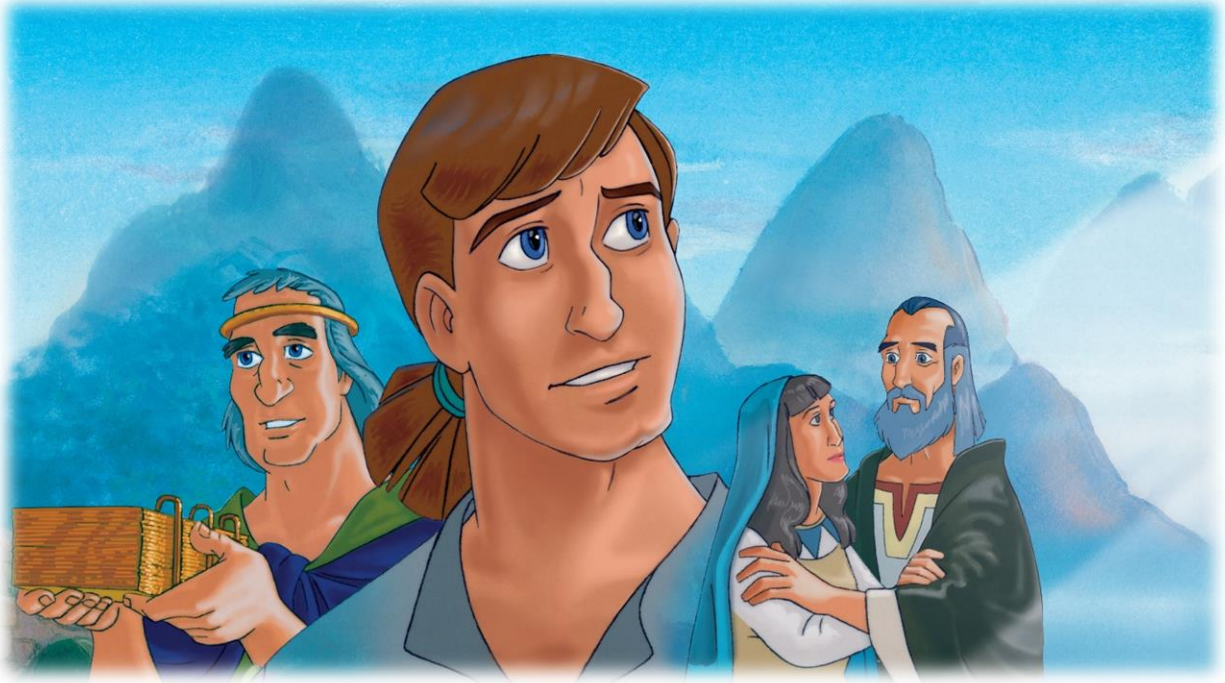
But instead of asking those questions, we can follow Nephi's example and say something like this:

"Okay, Lord—I will do this. Will You please tell me how to get started?"

Nephi taught us that the Lord can help us finish any task one step at a time. The next time you feel discouraged about the work ahead of you, take a leaf from Nephi's book and courage from his story.

<b>What Nephi Did</b>	<b>What We Can Do</b>
Asked God where to find ore to make tools (17:9)	Ask God how to get started on our tasks
Got his brothers to labor with him (18:1)	Accept help from others when we need it
Went to the mount oft to talk with God (18:3)	Go to the temple, study the scriptures, pray
Received instruction from time to time (18:1)	Be okay with receiving answers a little at a time
Worked in God's way, not man's (18:2)	Rely on God's counsel, not the world's
Praised God and did not murmur (18:16)	Remain humble and thankful in our trials

# Alma the Younger



*"I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste[.]"*  
Alma 36:24

Have you made mistakes, big or small, that you deeply regret? Do you wonder how you can ever find peace or make up for those mistakes? If so, then you and Alma the Younger share many things in common.

The tale of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah being confronted by an angel is engaging to say the least. Reading about the ground shaking and Alma falling to the earth may even be frightening. But the story of Alma wasn't primarily meant to scare us away from sin.

Why not? Partially because sin is a given. All of us are going to sin many, many times, and we all have weaknesses on top of sins. So Alma's life serves not as a warning against dirt, but as an endorsement for soap. In other words, the story of Alma proves why and how well repentance works.

The Book of Mormon makes it clear that Alma the Younger got into *very* deep trouble. Alma himself wrote that he had not kept God's commandments, rebelled against God, and led many people to their own spiritual deaths. In fact, "the very thought of coming into the presence of [our] God did rack [Alma's] soul with inexpressible horror" (Alma 36:14).

Many of us have felt a bit of that. And those of us who haven't yet probably will someday. Perhaps we've wondered if it's even possible to repent of the things we've done. In those moments, we can remember Alma. His sins were truly awful, but he made what might be the most dramatic spiritual comeback in recorded history.

What did that comeback consist of? Let's take inventory. Alma was soon assigned to be the high priest of the church and to be the record keeper. He served as the first chief judge of the Nephites. He became an amazing and successful full-time missionary. He raised three sons, all of whom became

missionaries as well. And, if Mormon’s guess is correct, Alma was even translated when his mission on earth had been completed. That is quite the success story!

But *why* was Alma so successful? What was it that not only began his repentance, but kept the purifying power of repentance alight in his heart for the rest of his life? He told us himself in the two-verse center of his poetic chapter of Alma 36:

“And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one *Jesus Christ, a Son of God*, to atone for the sins of the world.

“Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: *O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me*” (Alma 36:17-18, emphasis added).

That was it—the source of his relief, joy, light, motivation, and peace. It was Jesus Christ.

We may at times be tempted to ask ourselves, “How can I supposed to fix this? How can I change all by myself?” Alma’s story teaches us that we can’t, but also that doing these things alone was never the plan. The plan has always been Jesus’ Atonement. His suffering fulfilled justice, so He can offer us mercy. We can and must reach out to him for forgiveness, healing, and strength to move forward.

As we receive Christ’s help, we also share Alma’s duty to bear testimony of the Atonement. But that will come naturally, because our happiness will be too great *not* to share. Then we’ll know how Alma felt.

What Alma the Younger Did	What We Can Do
Repented of his sins (Mos. 27:24)	Repent of our sins and shortcomings
Went forth to teach the people (Mos. 27:32)	Bear and record our testimonies
Endured persecution (Mos. 27:32)	Handle disagreements and abuse with humility
Repaired the damage he’d done (Mos. 27:35)	Give restitution to those we have hurt
Accepted records and church duties (Mos. 28:20)	Remain active in the church and magnify callings
Rejoiced in his repentance (Alma 36:17-20)	Choose joy in repentance over sorrow for sin



# Ammon



*“And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work. Behold, thousands of them do rejoice, and have been brought into the fold of God.”*

*Alma 26:3-4*

Are you eager to share the Gospel but intimidated by the prospect? Do you wish you knew how to do what God wants you to do? If so, then you can learn a lot from Ammon, who was a lot like you. Some of us might read that and think, “Hold on—I’m not nearly as brave as Ammon. Missionary work came easily to him.” But if those are our thoughts, we need to think differently.

First of all, just because Ammon trekked through his missionary journey with boldness doesn’t mean it was a breeze to do. In Alma 26, he recounts some of the struggles he and his brethren had endured on their missions, and there were a lot! Things got so bad that Ammon said that “our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back” (Alma 26:27). All of us should be able to relate to that.

But Ammon’s bravery *was* impressive, and certainly one of the main reasons he was so successful. So where did Ammon’s bravery come from? What did it lead him to do? And, most importantly, how can we develop that kind of bravery in ourselves?

From the very beginning of his mission, Ammon had a strong and bold desire to share the Gospel with the Lamanites. Why? Because he had felt the difference between wickedness and righteousness. His deep and insatiable desire was to bring the joy he’d felt from repentance to those who didn’t know about it. That desire was the soil from which his bravery sprouted.

Keeping the right “why” behind our own missionary efforts will also help our courage grow. Crossing off an item from your to-do list won’t be enough motivation for you to give that acquaintance a Book of Mormon. But genuinely wanting that person to be happy? That makes giving that book sound doable, if not exciting!

Why and when do we want someone to be happy, anyway? The answer is simple: love. Ammon's desire to teach the Lamanites and his love for them were intertwined, and they both led to his bravery. King Lamoni's servants saw Ammon's love for them when he fought beside them, and King Lamoni's father saw Ammon's love for Lamoni when he defended Lamoni. Recognizing that love humbled the Lamanites and made them willing to listen to Ammon.

The people in our lives don't want someone to preach to them; they want someone to sincerely care about them. When we show people that we truly love them, they will grow to trust us. Then, even if they don't accept the truths we share about the Gospel, they will almost certainly want to remain our friends.

Ammon's bravery contributed to even more parts of his ministry: his bold and simple testimony, his longsuffering attitude towards his trials, his eagerness to follow God's instructions. Courage will do the same for us, if we choose to make it a part of ourselves. So how do we do that?

We follow Ammon's example. We repent and feel the joy of Christ's Atonement. We pray that we can love God's children and be instruments in His hands. We take comfort in God's promise of success. We serve others with sincerity until we grow to love them. And we use that love to fuel the bravery God is eager to give us. Then, eventually, we will be able to echo Ammon's boasting in his God.

What Ammon Did	What We Can Do
Prayed, searched the scriptures, fasted (17:2-3)	Pray, study the scriptures, and fast
Suffered much in both body and spirit (17:5)	Patiently endure our trials
Dwelted with and befriended Lamanites (17:23)	Befriend those who need the Gospel
Served bravely and diligently (17:31-39, 18:10)	Serve bravely and diligently
Bore bold and simple testimony (18:24-39)	Bear bold and simple testimony
Attributed his success to God (18:34-45, 26:12)	Give God the credit for our talents and success

## *The Stripling Warriors*



*"[T]hey said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth[.]"*  
*Alma 56:46*

Do you have a duty to perform that feels risky or impossible? Are you wondering if you can be of any help the people you care about the most? If so, then you are a lot like the stripling warriors in the Book of Mormon!

The end of the book of Alma details a long and brutal war between the Nephites and Lamanites. Some of the most exciting stories in this section of the Book of Mormon are about these 2,060 young men who conquered in every battle against all odds. But there are at least two more reasons these Ammonites were heroic, and we can apply both of them to ourselves.

First of all, the stripling warriors were heroes not just for their triumphs in war, but because they did what no one else in their community was able to do. None of the Ammonite women, children, or elderly could fight, and the young men's fathers had covenanted not to. The young sons saw a need, knew they could fill it, and stepped up.

God also places *us* in situations where we can be useful. We are blessed with talents and abilities that will be needed. We probably won't have to fight in any wars or risk our lives to save anyone, but we all have contributions to make.

Maybe you share a common interest with someone in your neighborhood who could use a friend. Maybe you have an idea for how to help a coworker on a difficult project. Or maybe you're sitting next to someone on the bus who has had a hard day and needs to hear your testimony. These may seem like small tasks. But if you won't do them, who will? In God's plan and to the people we help, these tasks could hold eternal significance.

Everyone remembers the bravery of the stripling warriors—that they did not fear death and entered battles unflinchingly. But sometimes we may forget the source of their bravery. It wasn't confidence in their own abilities. It wasn't trust in their leader, great as Helaman was. It was faith in God and His promises. They knew that what they were doing was right. And they believed what God had said about blessing those who kept the commandments.

Had God specifically promised these young men that they would all survive the war? The Book of Mormon doesn't say. Perhaps Heavenly Father simply honored the righteous desires of these young men and their families. Maybe our own righteous desires have more power than we know. Either way, God proved through the stripling warriors that He protects those who follow Him.

We may not feel very strong or courageous or impressive. But remember: it's not faith in ourselves that grows the stripling warriors' brand of bravery; it's focusing on faith in God. We can remember the ways He has blessed us in the past, watch for His hand in our lives, and trust that He will keep us safe as we keep His commandments.

So find your personal missions—the things only you can do. Get to work on accomplishing them. And never doubt that God is helping you along the way. Your loved ones will be as proud of you as Helaman was of his "little sons."

What the Warriors Did	What We Can Do
Gathered and gave themselves a name (53:16)	Rally to a cause with other good people
Covenanted to defend their country (53:16)	Make and keep covenants with God
Were exceedingly valiant for courage (53:22)	Move forward in our cause with bravery
Believed that God would protect them (56:46)	Have faith that God will bless us if we do our part
Cared more for freedom than themselves (56:47)	Put others' needs above our own
Remembered their mothers' teachings (56:48)	Hold to the truths we have learned in the past



## *The Brother of Jared*



*“O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.”*

*Ether 3:2*

Do you have questions about how to accomplish the things God has asked you to do? Are you worried about becoming the person He needs you to be? Then you share many characteristics with the Brother of Jared from the Book of Mormon.

When Jared and his family were living near the Tower of Babel, communicating with God was a spiritual strength of the Brother of Jared. He prayed on behalf of his family and friends many times, which led to God telling him to lead those loved ones through the wilderness and to the Promised Land.

But when the Jaredites made it to the ocean, they stayed there for four years. At that point, God had to chasten the Brother of Jared big time because he had forgotten to pray. The Brother of Jared had let his strength become his weakness. Sometimes we do the same thing—we feel so confident and comfortable that we neglect the very things that helped us get to that point. We fall away from who we should be.

Luckily—no, blessedly—God tends to give us experiences that will shape us into the person He wants us to become. He did it with the Brother of Jared. How? By giving him a very important and complicated task—so complicated that the Brother of Jared had to ask God a lot of tough questions through prayer.

This concept is a helpful one to remember when life gets hard. The next time have a trial, ask yourself: “Which quality is God trying to help me develop?” Give it some thought, and then ask God Himself. Maybe He wants to strengthen a weakness you’ve asked for help with, or perhaps there’s an even better gift He wants you to gain.



The Brother of Jared’s experiences with prayer also teach us a lot about questions. After working for a long time on the barges, the Brother of Jared asked the Lord three things: how to steer, how to breathe, and how to see. Each of these questions got very different answers.

God knew that the Jaredites couldn’t do anything to help steer the barges. He basically told the Brother of Jared, “Don’t worry about that—I’ll take care of it.” When circumstances arise in our lives that we have no control over, sometimes we just have to ask God for help and have faith that He will work things out.

The breathing issue was a little different. God gave the Brother of Jared step-by-step instructions for how to fix this problem, and the Brother of Jared followed them. Sometimes we will need specific direction only God can give before we complete a task. If we ask for that direction, listen to God’s answer, and obey Him, we will be successful.

But the question of light? That one was hardest of all for the Brother of Jared because God’s answer was another question: “What do *you* want me to do to fix this?” Sometimes we get responses like this or even no responses at all to our questions. That may feel discouraging, but it shouldn’t. It means that God trusts our abilities to solve our own problems.

The Brother of Jared left a shining (in more ways than one) example for how to handle these situations. He thought, he worked, and brought his idea to God in prayer, telling God what he had learned and that he knew God could help him. His faith was strong and his preparation complete. Because of this, God touched the Brother of Jared’s sixteen stones, taught him new truths, and even let the Brother of Jared see Him.

We may not see the Lord’s body in our mortal lifetimes. But if we communicate with Him, work to overcome our weaknesses, and believe in him as the Brother of Jared did, we will see the Lord’s *influence*. He will touch our lives as surely as He touched those sixteen stones.

What the Brother of Jared Did	What We Can Do
Repented of forgetting to pray (2:15)	Pray daily and repent of our sins
Went to work building the barges (2:16)	Work hard and keep the commandments
Brought questions to the Lord (2:19, 22)	Ask God questions when we have them
Reported to the Lord what he had learned (3:2)	Tell Heavenly Father what we are learning
Found and brought a solution to the Lord (3:1, 4)	Study our problems and help God solve them
Believed God could show him all things (3:26)	Have faith that God will answer our prayers

# Moroni



*“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men[.]”*  
Moroni 10:3

Does it seem that you’re alone and nobody cares about you? Do you wish someone would help you with your tasks? Then you may feel a small part of what Moroni from the Book of Mormon felt. He spent *years* of his life living alone, and the way he handled those years can serve as a hopeful lesson to us.

Moroni must have missed his father and people desperately after they were killed in the final battle at Cumorah. But he found ways to hold onto that love. One way was by rereading—and even recording on the gold plates—letters his father had written him that included teachings and encouragement.

While none of us is likely to live away from all of our families and friends for years on end, we will all spend time apart from loved ones. We can do what Moroni did by holding onto memories and happy words shared with the people we miss in the moment. Even those who believe they’re not loved by anyone on earth (wrong as they may be about that) can rely on the love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

As it turned out, Moroni ended up with much more time on his hands than he’d anticipated. He took advantage of this time by engraving his testimony on the gold plates. That testimony had to be what kept Moroni going; bearing it was the last meaningful thing he was able to do with his life. And despite the fact that Moroni was alone when he wrote them, his words have touched the lives of millions!

Our testimonies are just as precious as Moroni’s because they will bring joy to all who hear them and keep joy in our own hearts. If our testimonies take first place in our lives, we will never have to live without meaning. Recording the truths we’ve learned may also help—those truths can bring us hope and reach the hearts of future generations as well.

It's clear from reading Mormon 8, the first chapter after Mormon's death, that Moroni felt devastated, helpless, and hopeless. But he didn't let those feelings persist, and he didn't become bitter. Instead, he spent his chapters in the Book of Mormon testifying that God is a God of miracles, that mankind can dwell with God in happiness someday, and that God has always been merciful to His children.

In our darkest and loneliest times, it will not be enough to believe in God. We'll have to believe in a *loving* God. Trusting that He knows us, watches us, and helps us even in the moments we don't feel Him can get us through any trial. That knowledge helped Moroni.

Feeling abandoned, helpless, or even just ignored is always painful, and some of those moments will hit each of us. But if we follow Moroni's example by relying on our friends and families, keeping our testimonies, and believing in God's love, we will gain access to the gift God is rearing to give us. This gift, the Holy Ghost, can be a constant companion for us. As Moroni testified, we can learn all things from the Holy Ghost—including the fact that we are never truly alone.

What Moroni Did	What We Can Do
Finished his and Mormon's record (Morm. 8:1)	Obey our leaders and Heavenly Father
Remembered his father's love (Moro. 8:1-3)	Rely on the love of our families even when absent
Kept and bore his testimony (Moro. 1:2-3)	Keep our testimonies strong and bear them
Worked as long as he could (Moro. 1:4)	Keep working even when things get hard
Stayed optimistic despite his trials (Morm. 9:11)	Be patient and hopeful in our trials
Invited us to come unto Christ (Moro. 10:30)	Invite others to come unto Christ

# Conclusion

*“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of the bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”*

*3 Nephi 11:10-11*

Did you learn some more about your favorite scripture heroes? Do you have some ideas for how to apply their examples in your life? Before you close this book and start using those lessons, there is one last hero we need to talk about.

Studying the scriptures makes one thing undeniably clear: of everyone who has ever lived on earth, Jesus Christ is the ultimate hero. The Bible and Book of Mormon are both full of teachings about and accounts of Christ’s life and teachings. Take a moment to remember your favorite story about Jesus and why you look up to Him.

Did you think of when He patiently took the time to bless many children one by one? Or when He boldly cleansed the temple? What about the time He mercifully gave the chance of repentance to the woman taken in adultery? Or did you remember the hours in Gethsemane when He willingly suffered every pain any of us will ever feel?

The reasons we look to Jesus as our hero are uncountable and personal to each of us. Jesus Christ was and still is perfectly obedient to the commandments, perfectly close to Heavenly Father, and perfectly loving to us. His perfection makes him our best example.

Perfection is an intimidating standard, though. We may think of how far above us Christ is and give up hope before we’ve even started working toward His standard. But that discouragement is the last thing Heavenly Father wants us to feel, and it’s completely unnecessary. Our other scripture heroes can even prove that.

You probably noticed that certain ideas and phrases popped up in many of the heroes’ stories and charts. Things like “prayed,” “obeyed,” and most commonly of all, “bore testimony.” Why did so many heroes have these actions in common? Because they all understood that their power came from a source greater than themselves: Jesus Christ’s Atonement.

The Atonement can cleanse us from sin, but it can also give us strength and help. These may come through the Holy Ghost as a feeling of comfort during a trial; or some extra determination for a difficult task; or the knowledge of how to work through a confusing situation. The help can be in whatever ways we need it.

So how do we access Christ’s Atonement? The answer is simple: by doing things that invite the Holy Ghost to be with us—the things our other scripture heroes did years ago and Heavenly Father asks us to do now. God’s commandments are simply instructions for how to receive His help. Not only did God give us a perfect example in His son, Jesus Christ, but He gives us the power to follow that example. We just have to reach out and take it.

Then, someday, we’ll get to reach out and take our perfect hero’s hand.