

Doctrinal Mastery: Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge, Part 3

Review of Doctrinal Mastery

Doctrinal mastery helps students (1) learn and apply divine principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge and (2) master the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the scripture passages in which that doctrine is taught. Asking questions and seeking answers can help students achieve doctrinal mastery as they acquire spiritual knowledge. These are some of the principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge: act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

This lesson is intended to be a midyear review of the concepts associated with doctrinal mastery and acquiring spiritual knowledge.

Possible Learning Activities

Learning to ask God

Consider writing on the board *Who? What? Why? When? Where? How?* and asking some or all of the following questions.

- How would life be different if you were unable to ask questions?
- What role does asking questions play in your life?
- What prevents us from asking questions?

The Lord wants us to ask questions in our search for truth. Read the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, looking for how we can be blessed when we ask spiritual questions.

My dear young friends, we are a question-asking people. We have always been, because we know that inquiry leads to truth. ... Inquiry is the birthplace of testimony. Some might feel embarrassed or unworthy because they have searching questions regarding the gospel. But they needn't feel that way. Asking questions isn't a sign of weakness. It's a precursor of growth. God commands us to seek answers to our questions [see James 1:5–6] and asks only that we seek "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ" [Moroni 10:4]. When we do so, the truth of all things can be manifested to us "by the power of the Holy Ghost" [Moroni 10:5]. Fear not. Ask questions. Be curious, but doubt not! Always hold fast to faith and to the light you have already received. (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Reflection in the Water" [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009], broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

- What stands out to you in President Uchtdorf's statement?
- What do you learn about God from His invitation for us to ask questions?

Read paragraph 3 in the "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge" section of the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document, looking for what you can learn about asking questions.

- What do you learn about asking questions and seeking answers?

Principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge

You may have noticed the following truth: **Asking questions and seeking answers is vital to our effort to learn truth.**

Think of a question that you would like the Lord's help with. It may be a question about a situation you are facing or about something you want to know. Or maybe your question is related to a doctrine or practice of the Church. Write your question in your study journal.

Have students review the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge. There are a variety of ways to do this, including the following:

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one of the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge: act in faith, examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources. If needed, give students a few minutes to review their assigned principle in paragraphs 4–12 in the “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge” section of the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document. Invite students to share with the class or write on the board a summary of their assigned principle.

An alternative activity is provided in the “Supplemental Learning Activities” section of this lesson.

Apply the principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge

Select or adapt one of these three approaches:

1. Invite students to think about the questions they wrote in their study journals as they answer the following three questions.

2. Invite a willing student to share the question they wrote in their study journal. Help the class practice using the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge by discussing the following three questions in relation to the student’s question.

3. If students struggled to think of questions or do not want to share the questions they wrote down, provide a relevant question to discuss as a class.

If discussing a question as a class, write the question on the board so that students can see it and refer to it throughout the discussion.

- How can you act with faith in Jesus Christ as you seek an answer to this question?
 - What are some ways you can examine this question with an eternal perspective to help you see it as the Lord does?
 - What are some divinely appointed sources the Lord has provided that can help you find an answer to this question?
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If students need help thinking of divinely appointed sources, direct them to some helpful sources—for example, doctrinal mastery passages, the Guide to the Scriptures, Gospel Topics, or the General Handbook.

Encourage students to continue to practice using the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge as they seek answers to their questions. Consider concluding class with a testimony or personal experience about inquiring of the Lord and receiving answers.

Commentary and Background Information

Asking questions

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the Lord’s invitation to ask:

No message appears in scripture more times, in more ways than, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” [Matthew 21:22; James 4:3; 1 John 3:22; 1 Nephi 15:11; Enos 1:15; Mosiah 4:21; Doctrine and Covenants 4:7; and Moses 6:52 are examples.] (Boyd K. Packer, “Reverence Invites Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 21)

Supplemental Learning Activities

Reviewing the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge

Give students a copy of the following handout. Invite students to match each statement from the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document with the corresponding principle of acquiring spiritual knowledge. Invite students to try to complete this

activity without using the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document. As needed, students can use the Doctrinal Mastery Core Document to check their answers.

As a variation, create word strips using the statements on the handout. Create headings for the three principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge, and place them on the board or on a wall in the classroom. Invite students to place the word strips under the appropriate heading.

These are the correct answers: (1) c; (2) a; (3) b; (4) b; (5) c; (6) a; (7) b; (8) a; (9) c.

Principles for Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

Match one of the three principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge with each of the following supporting statements. The principles can be used more than once.

a) Principle 1: Act in faith

b) Principle 2: Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective

c) Principle 3: Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources

___1. As part of the Lord's appointed process for obtaining spiritual knowledge, He has established sources through which He reveals truth and guidance to His children. These sources include the light of Christ, the Holy Ghost, the scriptures, parents, and Church leaders.

___2. We act in faith when we choose to trust God and turn to Him first through sincere prayer, a study of His teachings, and obedience to His commandments.

___3. To examine doctrinal concepts, questions, and social issues with an eternal perspective, we consider them in the context of the plan of salvation and the teachings of the Savior.

___4. We seek the help of the Holy Ghost in order to see things as the Lord sees them (see 1 Corinthians 2:5, 9–11). This allows us to reframe the question (to see the question differently) and view ideas based on the Lord's standard of truth rather than accepting the world's premises or assumptions.

___5. We can also learn truth through other trustworthy sources. However, sincere seekers of truth should be wary of unreliable sources of information.

___6. As we seek to develop our understanding and to resolve concerns, it is important that we rely on the testimony that we already have of Jesus Christ, the Restoration of His gospel, and the teachings of His ordained prophets.

___7. As we stay anchored to our trust in our Heavenly Father and His plan of salvation, we are able to see issues more clearly.

___8. As we continue to seek for answers, we must live by faith—trusting that we will eventually receive the answers we seek.

___9. As we turn to the Lord's divinely appointed sources for answers and direction, we can be blessed to discern between truth and error. Learning to recognize and avoid unreliable sources can protect us from misinformation and from those who seek to destroy faith.

Videos about acquiring spiritual knowledge

A few selected videos have been produced to help students understand the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge. Consider supplementing the lesson with one or more of these videos.

[“Act in Faith: The Stonemason”](#) (4:57), available on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. In this video, Elder Richard G. Hinckley of the Seventy helps us understand what we should do when we are faced with a question or concern that we do not know the answer to.

[“Examining Questions with an Eternal Perspective”](#) (2:56), available on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. In this video, a young woman named Lauren demonstrates the skill of reframing to help her examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.

[“Divinely Appointed Sources”](#) (9:16), available on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. In this video, various young people share experiences they had that illustrated the importance of using divinely appointed sources in their search for truth.