

Developing A Habit of Daily Personal Scripture Study

Helping students develop a habit of daily personal scripture study will require consistent follow-up and encouragement from seminary teachers. Below are 16 mini-Lessons to that end.

It is recommended that teachers do one mini-lesson per week at which time students should review and rewrite their scripture study goal.

LESSON 1: Daily Does It

Readiness: Choose two students who are thirsty to come up to the front of the class to see who can drink a glass of punch the fastest. Place two clear glasses on the table, equally filled with punch (or other *non-carbonated* drink). Explain that the contest is to see who can drink all the drink the fastest. However, there are a few rules. Explain the following rules:

- You cannot touch the glass at all (can't be lifted off the table or tipped, etc.)
- Each student will be given a straw to use instead, they can touch the straw, but not the glass.

Then place a normal straw in one glass, and a large piece of clean PVC pipe (about 1 ½" to 2" in diameter) into the other.

Tell students to begin.

The student with the PVC will be able to suck up a lot of liquid right away but will not be able to finish the drink because the amount of liquid that can be lifted up the pipe depends on the difference in pressure between the inside of the pipe and the outside, which is limited by the amount of air that can be displaced. Since the diameter of the pipe is relatively large, the volume of air that can be displaced is limited, and thus after drinking the first part of the liquid, only a small amount of the remaining liquid can be lifted up the pipe making it impossible to finish the job.

So the student with the normal straw will be behind at first, but will eventually catch-up, pass-up and win the contest.

Discuss: Ask students what this silly race has to do with the following quote:

“It is certain that one who studies the scriptures every day accomplishes far more than one who devotes considerable time one day and then lets days go by before continuing.” (President Howard W. Hunter, Reading the Scriptures, CR October 1979).

Help students make the connection that scripture study can't be done all at once, but should be something we do every day.

Invitation: Invite students to set a goal for daily personal scripture study. For example: they could choose to read a certain number of chapters or verses, or a certain number of minutes each day. Another option would be to follow the *Come, Follow Me* reading schedule, or any other goal that a student chooses. **Invite them to write their own goal down and commit to it.** (Students are not required to disclose their goal to their teacher, but should be encouraged to set one).

Testify: Give your own personal witness of the blessings of daily personal scripture study.

Lesson 2: Some thoughts about setting scripture study goals

Readiness: Inform students that today you will share some prophetic council about how to make the most of your scripture study. Ask:

- When do you typically study your scriptures?

Reading: Students read the following:

“Many find that the best time to study is in the morning after a night’s rest has cleared the mind of the many cares that interrupt thought. Others prefer to study in the quiet hours after the work and worries of the day are over and brushed aside, thus ending the day with a peace and tranquility that comes by communion with the scriptures.” (President Howard W. Hunter, *Reading the Scriptures*, CR October 1979).

Discuss: Briefly discuss the quote and when students think is the best time of day for them to study their scriptures.

Read: A student reads the following aloud:

“Perhaps what is more important than the hour of the day is that a regular time be set aside for study. It would be ideal if an hour could be spent each day; but if that much cannot be had, a half hour on a regular basis would result in substantial accomplishment. A quarter of an hour is little time, but it is surprising how much enlightenment and knowledge can be acquired in a subject so meaningful. The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study.” (President Howard W. Hunter, *Reading the Scriptures*, CR October 1979).

Discuss: Students discuss the above quote and what they learn about personal scripture study.

Ask students the following:

- How much should you read each day for personal scripture study?

Read: Have the class read the following:

“We should not be haphazard in our reading but rather develop a systematic plan for study. There are some who read to a schedule of a number of pages or a set number of chapters each day or week. This may be perfectly justifiable and may be enjoyable if one is reading for pleasure, but it does not constitute meaningful study. It is better to have a set amount of time to give scriptural study each day than to have a set amount of chapters to read. Sometimes we find that the study of a single verse will occupy the whole time.” (President Howard W. Hunter, *Reading the Scriptures*, CR October 1979).

Discuss: Briefly discuss each of the following points for developing a successful daily personal scripture study habit. (you may want to print and distribute these points to your students).

1. Make a plan
2. Pick a time (and place)
3. Organize for success

- a. Same spot
 - b. Clean space
 - c. Print out plan
 - d. Prepare for tomorrow (book mark, etc.)
4. Avoid Distractions
 - a. No phone – don't even keep it near by.
 5. Enlist accountability
 6. Apply what you are learning.
 7. Start a routine
 - Most important thing you can do to be consistent

Invitation: Invite students to set a goal for daily personal scripture study. For example: they could choose to read a certain number of chapters or verses, or a certain number of minutes each day. Another option would be to follow the *Come, Follow Me* reading schedule, or any other goal that a student chooses. Invite them to write their own goal down and commit to it. (Students are not required to disclose their goal to their teacher, but should be encouraged to set one).

Testify: Give your own personal witness of the blessings of daily personal scripture study.

LESSON 3: Four Ideas for Personal Scripture Study

Readiness: Ask students “How would you like 4 ideas for improving your scripture study?”

Show the following video: [4 Scripture Study Tips](https://youtu.be/pugzo2AkpB8) (1:10) <https://youtu.be/pugzo2AkpB8>

Suggestions:

- 1) Begin each day feasting on the words of Christ.
- 2) Pray for help
- 3) Study with the intent to share

4) Mark and take notes on what you learn.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Share your personal testimony of the power of having a daily scripture study routine.

LESSON 4: Doctrine of Daily Scripture Study

Readiness: Allow students time to respond to the following question:

- What is the doctrine of daily scripture study?

Reading: Give each student a copy (below) of the following excerpt from David A. Bednar's talk titled [*Understanding the Importance of Scripture Study*](#), Ricks College Devotional, January 6, 1998.

Invite students to look for a doctrine of scripture study as they read the excerpt aloud.

I want to draw your attention to the second covenantal obligation to "always remember him." I do not know of a better way to always remember him than to daily study the scriptures. That covenant is not an abstract notion. It can be honored in meaningful, personal prayer every morning and night and in diligent study of the scriptures.

When I served as a stake president and interviewed literally hundreds of members of the Church, I frequently would ask, "Do you remember and keep the covenants you have made?" I do not recall many people answering no. When I would inquire further and ask about their scripture study, some would say, "I do not have time." Then I would ask about their personal prayers, and the answer often was, "I am not as consistent as I should be." On some occasions I would then inquire, "Do you, in fact, keep the covenant to always remember Him?"

The covenants we make in the waters of baptism are a commitment to always remember him, in part through meaningful prayer and diligent study of the scriptures.

Video option: available online. Quote starts at the **16:14** mark. <https://youtu.be/Fz7C4tx1KLs>

Discussion: Invite students to discuss what they learned about the doctrine of scripture study, i.e. why is it doctrinally important to study our scriptures daily?

Be sure to help students see that President Bednar was trying to teach the members of his stake that daily personal scripture study was a part of keeping their covenant to "always remember [Jesus Christ]."

Pondering/Writing: Give students time to ponder the following:

- Do you keep the covenant you made to “always remember Him” by reading your scriptures daily?

Invite them to review their daily personal scripture study goal and make adjustments as needed and rewrite their commitment to their goal.

Testify: Share your feelings about how the importance of daily scripture study to help you “always remember Him.”

LESSON 5: Getting More Out of Your Scripture Study

Readiness: Ask students if they would like to know how to get more out of their personal scripture study.

Video: Invite students to look for scripture study tips that could help them.

Video: [Scripture Study—Prayer & Context](https://youtu.be/INWXZwZYvPE) <https://youtu.be/INWXZwZYvPE>

Discuss: Have a brief discussion about what they learned in the video.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of daily personal scripture study.

LESSON 6: Daily Bread

Readiness: Ask students to look for reasons why we need to study our scriptures every day as they watch the following video [Daily Bread](https://youtu.be/2eMJ6ZDCAp4) (2:51) <https://youtu.be/2eMJ6ZDCAp4>.

Discuss: Give students time to share their impressions from the video.

You may want to ask students to respond to the question Elder Christofferson asked in the video:

“How can [a daily routine of prayerful, pondering, scripture study] really produce a significant difference in a person’s life?”

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Share your personal testimony of the power of having a daily scripture study routine.

LESSON 7: When, How, do you study your scriptures.

Readiness: Ask students to review their daily personal scripture study goal, and ponder how well they are doing.

Watch the following video [Daily Scripture Reading](https://youtu.be/QUCzABS1cao) (1:10) <https://youtu.be/QUCzABS1cao>

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of daily personal scripture study.

LESSON 8: Scripture Study Ideas From Elder Bednar

Readiness: Explain to the class that today we get to hear an Apostle share an idea for improving our personal scripture study.

Invite them to listen for ideas that might help them.

Watch the following video: [Elder Bednar – Scripture Study](https://youtu.be/pEC__4IMMko) (2:10). https://youtu.be/pEC__4IMMko

Discuss: Have a brief discussion about what they learned in the video.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of daily personal scripture study.

Lesson 9: Scripture Study Idea—Notecards

Materials needed: Scripture, notecard, pencil

Readiness: Invite a student to read the following from President Nelson:

“In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.” (CR, April, 2018)

Take time to discuss the quote as a class and ask:

- How can scripture study help you hear the voice of the Lord?

Tell students that today you will share one approach to scripture study designed to help you hear the voice of the Lord and draw closer to Him.

Explain the following steps:

Read a chapter:

- Pick one scripture verse to write on a notecard.
- On back of the notecard, write your impressions about the scripture.
- Carry the notecard with you and review throughout the day.
- At end of the day, use the notecard in your prayer.
- Put the notecard in your notecard box – refer to later if you wish.

Read: Invite a student to read the following quote:

“Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.” Elder Richard G. Scott, *The Power of Scripture*, CR Oct. 2011.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of trying to hear the voice of the Lord in your daily personal scripture study.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine. Students may want to consider adding the notecard method to a part of their scripture study goal (permanently or temporarily).

Lesson 10: Forging new friendships

Readiness: Invite students to describe some characteristics of a friend.

Tell them that Elder Richard G. Scott told us about a friend who could help us in time of need, give us inspiration and comfort and even be a source of motivation when we need to make changes. Then watch the [The Power of Memorizing Scriptures \(:59\)](#), or have a student read the following quote:

“The scriptures can become stalwart friends that are not limited by geography or calendar. They are always available when needed. Learning, pondering, searching, and memorizing scriptures is like filling a filing cabinet with friends, values, and truths that can be called upon anytime, anywhere in the world. Great power can come from memorizing scriptures. To memorize a scripture is to forge a new friendship. It is like discovering a new individual who can help in time of need, give inspiration and comfort, and be a source of motivation for needed change.” Elder Richard G. Scott, The Power of Scripture, CR October 2011.

Discuss the following:

- How can a memorized scripture be like a trusted friend?
- Why do you think Elder Scott said it was important to memorize the scripture?
- When have you had a memorized scripture come to your mind in a time of need?
- How might you incorporate scripture memorization into your personal scripture study goal? (note scripture study goals are personal, but students may benefit from hearing ideas from their peers).

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, and consider if and how they might want to incorporate scripture memorization into their efforts. Give them a few minutes to adjust their goal as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of having memorized scriptures in your mind.

Lesson 11: The S.O.A.P. Method

Readiness: Invite students to pull out their journal and review their written personal scripture study goal. Ask them to rank themselves on a scale of 1-10 on how successful they have been in accomplishing their goal in the last week.

Share: Tell students that today you will share another approach to scripture study that they could use if desired. It is called the “SOAP Method.”

“S.O.A.P.” is an acronym for **S**criptures, **O**bservations, **A**pplications, and **P**rayer. In this method you read until you find a scripture verse you choose to write down.

1. Scripture – once you identify the scripture verse, you write the letter “S” in your journal and then write the scripture verse word-for-word by the letter “S.”
2. Observation – Next, make observations about the verse. These could include words or phrases you don’t understand or that catch your attention, context, patterns, or repetitions. As you make observations write them next to the letter “O” for observations.
3. Application - Write how you could apply the word of God that you just studied? Next to the letter “A” write down what you could do to apply the scripture in the next 24-hours.
4. Pray – Finally, respond to God by praying about what you studied and committed to apply. You could write down a few notes about what specifically you will pray and use it as a guide to help you as you pray.

Remember, to help you stay clean, it is good to apply S.O.A.P. every day!

Invite: Students to review their daily personal scripture study goal, and consider if and how they might want to incorporate the SOAP Method into their efforts. Give them a few minutes to adjust their goal as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Testify: Testify of the blessings of searching, applying and praying over the things learned from scriptures.

Note: this idea comes from the following video. You could share the video with your class, or just teach it yourself.

<https://youtu.be/Rhqr921lyMg>

Lesson 12: Fill yourself with light

Readiness: Tell students that today they’ll hear from a missionary about the importance of daily scripture study.

Watch: Show the following video [How important is scripture study for missionaries?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUy7oSXXu_Y) (1:27)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUy7oSXXu_Y

Discuss: What did you hear from this missionary about the importance of scripture study?

Testify: Testify of the blessings of adding light to your life through your daily personal scripture study.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Lesson 13: Pondering and Prayer in Scripture Study

Watch the following video (:18). <https://youtu.be/oG8WBufEOBY>

Discuss what President Oaks was trying to teach and why it is important.

- What is the purpose of daily scripture study?
- Why is pondering so important?

Testify: Testify of the blessings of adding light to your life through your daily personal scripture study.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Lesson 14: God is always trying to talk to you

Read and **discuss** the following as a class:

Sister Tracy Y. Browning taught:

“God is always trying to talk to you—even when you are unable to perceive it. Most often He is trying to tell you that He loves you and that you are His priority. He has provided and will continue to provide many countless ways to demonstrate our value and priority.

...Another clear sign of how much God values us is that He gives us the preserving, protecting power of His word. As Nephi promised:

Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, . . . would never perish; neither could the temptations . . . of the adversary overpower them . . . , to lead them away to destruction (1 Nephi 15:24).

In Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews, God’s word is said to be “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).” The word quick means “alive, living, lively” (“A Two Edged Sword,”

Ensign, February 2017). God delivers His living words to us through scriptural testaments but also by the mouths of living prophets and apostles. The Church of Jesus Christ has leaders chosen by Him and given the power and authority to declare His will to His people.

...God’s word can cut through any of our natural inclination toward worldly “culture, habits, biases, preconceptions, and doubts” (DH Oaks, Ensign, March 2020). His word can speak directly “to the innermost part” of our hearts, regardless of our level of righteousness (“A Two Edged Sword”). “God’s word can separate truth from error” and help us recognize and eliminate from our thinking any false teachings that could cloud our reasoning and understanding “by setting them up against God’s plain and precious truths” (“A Two Edged Sword”).

What, then, can we do to preserve our faith in God’s words, as received through the scriptures and His chosen prophets and apostles?

- Will we more intentionally “hearken” to their teachings, allowing them to have greater influence in our thoughts, actions, and decisions?
- Will we “hold fast” to God’s word when temptations, trials, or challenges come, so that we aren’t overpowered?
- Will we consider the following promise given to us by God’s prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, and trust that God will honor it in our lives?

My dear brothers and sisters, I promise that as you prayerfully study the Book of Mormon every day, you will make better decisions—every day. I promise that as you ponder what you study, the windows of heaven will open, and you will receive answers to your own questions and direction for your own life. I promise that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day” (Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like Without It?” Ensign, November 2017; emphasis in original. See also Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” Ensign, May 2017).

The complete text and video of this talk can be found here:
Preserving Our Relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

[TRACY Y. BROWNING](#)

February 14, 2023

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/tracy-y-browning/preserving-our-relationship-with-heavenly-father-and-jesus-christ/>

Lesson 15: Don’t cling, Hold Fast!

Read: Invite the class to read the following excerpt looking for lessons from Lehi's vision about daily personal scripture study.

“The importance of reading, studying, and searching the scriptures is highlighted in several elements of Lehi's vision of the tree of life.

Father Lehi saw several groups of people pressing forward along the strait and narrow path, seeking to obtain the tree and its fruit. The members of each group had entered onto the path through the gate of repentance and baptism by water and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:17–20). The tree of life is the central feature in the dream and is identified in 1 Nephi 11 as a representation of Jesus Christ. The fruit on the tree is a symbol for the blessings of the Savior's Atonement. Interestingly, the major theme of the Book of Mormon, inviting all to come unto Christ, is central in Lehi's vision. Of particular interest is the rod of iron that led to the tree (see 1 Nephi 8:19). The rod of iron is the word of God.

In 1 Nephi 8, verses 21 through 23, we learn about a group of people who pressed forward and commenced in the path that led to the tree of life. However, as the people encountered the mist of darkness, which represents the temptations of the devil (see 1 Nephi 12:17), they lost their way, they wandered off, and they were lost.

It is important to note that no mention is made about the rod of iron in these verses. Those who ignore or treat lightly the word of God do not have access to that divine compass which points the way to the Savior. Consider that this group obtained the path and pressed forward, exhibiting a measure of faith in Christ and spiritual conviction, but they were diverted by the temptations of the devil and were lost.

In verses 24 through 28 of chapter 8 we read about a second group of people who obtained the strait and narrow path that led to the tree of life. This group pressed forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. However, as this second group of people was mocked by the occupants of the great and spacious building, they were ashamed and fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. Please notice that this group is described as clinging to the rod of iron.

It is significant that the second group pressed forward with faith and commitment. They also had the added blessing of the rod of iron, and they were clinging to it! However, as they were confronted with persecution and adversity, they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. Even with faith, commitment, and the word of God, this group was lost—perhaps because they only periodically read or studied or searched the scriptures. Clinging to the rod of iron suggests to me only occasional “bursts” of study or irregular dipping rather than consistent, ongoing immersion in the word of God.

In verse 30 we read about a third group of people who pressed forward continually holding fast to the rod of iron until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree. The key phrase in this verse is “continually holding fast” to the rod of iron.

The third group also pressed forward with faith and conviction; however, there is no indication that they wandered off, fell into forbidden paths, or were lost. Perhaps this third group of people

consistently read and studied and searched the words of Christ. Perhaps it was the constant flow of living water that saved the third group from perishing. This is the group you and I should strive to join.

...Are you and I daily reading, studying, and searching the scriptures in a way that enables us to hold fast to the rod of iron—or are you and I merely clinging? Are you and I pressing forward toward the fountain of living waters—relying upon the word of God? These are important questions for each of us to ponder prayerfully.” (David A. Bednar, *Reservoir of Living Water*, February 4, 2007, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/david-a-bednar/reservoir-living-water/>)

Discuss: discuss the following:

- What did you learn from Elder Bednar?
- What is the difference between “clinging” and “holding fast”?

Testify: Testify of the importance of “holding fast” to the word of God through daily personal scripture study.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal, make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.

Lesson 16: Memorize verses

Share the following insight from President Ezra Taft Benson as you lead students in a discussion of the value of scripture memorization:

“It is our privilege to store our memories with good and great thoughts and bring them out on the stage of our minds at will. When the Lord faced His three great temptations in the wilderness, He immediately rebutted the devil with appropriate scripture which He had stored in His memory” (“Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1984, 11).

Memorized scripture brings spiritual power. Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“There is a power that can change lives in the specific words recorded in the standard works. That power is weakened when we paraphrase or alter the actual wording. I therefore suggest that you encourage students to cite scripture content with precision. All you do to encourage students to memorize selected scriptures accurately will bring to bear in their lives the power of their content” (“Four Fundamentals for Those Who Teach and Inspire Youth,” in *Old Testament Symposium Speeches*, 1987, 5).

Elder Scott also said:

“I suggest that you memorize scriptures that touch your heart and fill your soul with understanding. When scriptures are used as the Lord has caused them to be recorded, they have intrinsic power that is not communicated when paraphrased. Sometimes when there is a significant need in my life, I review mentally scriptures that have given me strength. There is great solace, direction, and power that flow from the scriptures, especially the words of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 112; or Ensign, Nov. 1999, 87–88).

President Spencer W. Kimball challenged the priesthood holders of the Church to memorize the Articles of Faith. He also told how he memorized them as a young boy:

“I am wondering how many of you know the Articles of Faith? How many of you big men, as well as the little men? Do you know them? Have you repeated them? You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith. And they are basic, aren’t they? I’d think it would be a wonderful thing if all the boys, as they learn them, would learn them word-perfect. That means that you don’t miss and you don’t forget.

“Shall I tell you how I did it? ... I used to milk cows. I typed with two fingers, and I would type out these Articles of Faith on little cards and put them down in the corral right by me when I sat on the one-legged stool and milked the cows. And I repeated them over, I guess 20 million times. I don’t know. But at any rate, I have claimed that I could say the Articles of Faith now after these many, many years and could say them word-perfect. And I think it has been most valuable to me. Will you do that, my fine young men?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 119; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, 79).

Discuss: How memorized scriptures can be valuable.

Testify: Testify of the importance of memorizing scriptures.

Invite: Students to reflect on their daily personal scripture study goal and consider if they would like to add memorization to their plans. Give students time to make adjustments as needed and write down their commitment to make it a daily routine.