

Mike Stroud 038 The Virtue of the Word of God (transcribed by Pat Crisp)

Good News, we have some people who are listening to the podcast that are transcribing them into writing, so here pretty quick along with each podcast you'll be able to get a written transcription of the whole lesson if that is something you feel would be important to have. So each one of them are doing that, just a couple of other things, to mention tonight, when I ask for comments on that and nobody comments, I'll wait and nobody comments we move on and if you listen to the podcast it sounds like I ask for comment and then immediately move on it's because Margie edited out the space there, so every time I listen to one of these, sounds like I ask for a comment and then I'm so rude without giving anyone a chance, and what's happening there is that there is no comment and Margie edited out that space. Another thing to mention tonight is that nobody should believe anything I say on these podcasts, you should not believe anything I say. What we are doing here is gathering information. All of us are truth seekers and then once we gather this information, take it to your Heavenly Father in the name of his Son and let the Holy Ghost confirm or deny what you hear! It's up to each one of us who are seeking after truth to let the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost confirm that it is truth or it's error and we each have the franchise to do that. The only difference is that with what I've been teaching for a while and my employment moves me to church doctrine. Other than that, I am nobody special, so I just don't want anybody to take face value in anything that I say. I have some people calling me and say; "Who are you anyway"? And so I tell them, "Basically nobody and just live over in Eager, AZ and give them a little bit of background and move on from there. Just so people can get a feel for that kind of thing.

Tonight I'd like to go to Alma and start in Alma chapter 31 and as I have been pondering, seeking the Lord in Spirit on what we could talk about, there are two or three things that came to mind and I would like to chat with you a little bit, it's in Alma 31:5 and what's happening here is that Alma is giving up the judgement seat to a Nephite judge so he doesn't have to belong or be involved with the political, the day in and day out proceedings of the Nephite government and wants to take upon himself the full time ministry of preaching the gospel to the Nephite people, and so he now is going out and in verse 5 we have a little key here, something that will kind of set the stage for what I'd like to do tonight. I hope the Lord will bless us with his spirit so it comes out OK. Let's go to verse 5 and Alma said as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which is just, yea, it, (meaning the preaching of the word of God,) had a more powerful effect upon the mind of the people than the sword or anything else which had happened unto them. Therefore (this part) Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God. Alma is going on a mission and his main thrust on this mission is to preach the revealed word of God to the people knowing that it had a more powerful effect on them than anything else. The word virtue, another synonym for virtue that is used in the scriptures is power, so lets try the virtue of the power of God, with that I would like to read to you, that ties into that, a little statement by Brother Boyd K. Packer, that we have referred to several times on these podcasts.

Elder Packer said this, "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior, The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel"

I'll put this up on our handout link so that you can have this quote. The part we never quote on this is this part, "Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the Gospel." I've had some people who have contacted me in the last few weeks that are struggling with some of their children and some of their children are living in the home and some have moved out of the home and basically they listen to the podcast on devils and unclean spirits and the information in those two podcasts painted an all too familiar picture of what they are seeing in their families. These moms and dads are frustrated and they're frightened and worried for their children and observed a downward spiral in their kids and have tried everything they know how to little, if any, avail. If

there has been success, it has been short lived and the behavior problems simply come back. Its been my observation that what we do in the church circles is basically talk about behavior. We talk about the behaviors of the members of the church, whether they are not paying enough tithing or not paying any tithing, they're not attending their meetings, they're not accepting calls, they don't have a Temple Recommend, not saying their prayers, not reading their scriptures, they're not doing their home teaching. So a good portion of our time in church councils revolves around talking about the behavior of the Latter-Day Saints and trying to come up with a plan on how to turn that around. I remember sitting in the mission presidents office with President Evan Schmoot, president of the Sabu Mission and he had just gotten there at about the same time we did, I think maybe 30 days ahead of us. But I had a chance to sit down with President Schmoot several times and I remember one time we were sitting in his office and he was just super concerned and he said this, "Elder Stroud, "How do we stop the hemorrhage that's going on in the Church"? In the Philippines, what he is referring to is we have an 88% less active rate of members of the Church. We've got 12 % in the Philippines that are attending some church. We find that as almost quickly as they come in they go right out the back door. And so we talked back and forth about this and since that talk I have found out that as Alma did that the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which is just and Brother Packer says that Truth often understood changes attitudes and behaviors. So, what we need to do is, for those parents who have children that are in a state of rebellion or whatever the problem is, their behavior is less than desirable, they need to be able to talk, be taught, true doctrine and understand it! The problem is that they are in a state that they don't want to talk about the church or doctrine or anything spiritual, they basically turned their moms and dads off and you just can't approach them. And so, how do we get to a point where people who are hard hearted, how do we get to a point where we can teach them true doctrine and testify of that and that's where it comes in we have to do something different than we have been doing before! The frustration comes when you see no progress in that we continue to the things that we have done before and don't see any success at it. We think that if we just keep doing these things long enough its going to resolve the situation. I heard somebody say "that's a definition of insanity", doing the same thing over and over and over again expecting different results. So what we need to do now is to identify the behavior. So if a parent thinks that a child is being equipped with an unclean spirit, which is what these parents were talking to me about, but the child won't listen to any kind of information, then you as a parent have to do something different so that the Lord will favor you and soften your child's heart. There has to be some kind of a change in the thinking and the feeling of that child in order for you to be able to approach them. So here is what I'd like to recommend. In the scriptures it talks about different orders of prayer. Now it doesn't use that word order, in any one place, but I can identify three orders of prayer in the scriptures. This is the conversation I had with these moms and dads and I felt that, I have done this myself so I am giving some personal experience on what has helped in my own personal situation with children who have walked away from activity and don't want to have anything to do with the gospel. The first order of prayer is what I call primary prayer. And that's the prayer we are taught by the missionaries and we talked about this before, you bow your head, you fold your arms, you close your eyes and the reason I call it primary prayer is because that is the first prayer that an investigator or a primary child or a child in the home is taught by the parents, take that posture, close your eyes, fold your arms, and bow your head, kneel or sit wherever, and the prayer goes like this; address Heavenly Father, thank him for what you have, ask him for what you need, and close your prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. That's the prayer that we teach every investigator that comes into the church and it's a good prayer. It's primary and foundational. Like everything else in the Gospel there are higher steps and in this case it's different orders of prayer. Just like there are different orders of priesthood, there are different orders of prayer. Our problem is that we stay in the primary mode of prayer throughout our membership in the church and then we wonder why we get bored, why the gospel does not hold the same fascination, the same excitement that it did when we first came into contact with it, why this and why that, we start finding fault.

The problem is that you need to graduate from that foundational level of prayer into something the scriptures call the next order of prayer and is called "mighty prayer". So, for these parents that are struggling with this, I would recommend that you take a look at this order of prayer. Let me give you an example. It is all over the place once you start to recognize it. Lets go to the Book of Enos in the Book of Mormon. In the Book of Enos, Jacob said, we have a really good example of mighty prayer. It starts in verse 2, 3, but I want to go to 4 and you can look at all of the characteristics of this. In verse 4 we start to receive some identifiers that we're talking about a higher order of prayer. The primary prayer in the scriptures is identified using the words "prayed unto the Lord". When you are talking about "prayed unto the Lord", you're talking about something foundational. Now look at verse 4 in Enos, "My soul hungered and I kneeled down before my maker and I cried unto Him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul". The key word here that identifies mighty prayer are the words "I cried unto Him". Now every time, I can see in the Temple where we use the words "cry unto the Lord". Instead of pray unto the Lord, cry unto the Lord. We're talking about something higher. Something that has greater results. You're now using knowledge that you have gained from the scriptures or personal revelation or other source to apply something different in your life you haven't done before, expecting bigger, better, greater, more profound results. Every time we move up unto something in a higher order or a step up or gospel progress, we should expect and receive better results. In this case, we want our prayers to be heard and answered. We also find out that "mighty prayer" if you go over to 3 Nephi 19, let me give you another indicator of mighty prayer. So one of the things you are looking for when you see "cry unto the Lord", be looking for this higher order of prayer. In 3 Nephi 19 we find some other things that have to do with mighty prayer. In 3 Nephi 19:24 the Savior comes back at the beginning of the second day. His disciples have already got a huge congregation of thousands of people broken into twelve different groups/congregations, and the disciples are teaching them what Jesus taught yesterday and they are all involved in prayer when the Savior comes and look at verse 24, "and it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father he came to his disciples but behold they did still continue without ceasing, to pray unto him. Now that's not the main key. Here's why they prayed without ceasing, look "they did not multiply many words, a key, and here's your big key "for it (whatever they are saying in their prayer) was given unto them. Thats your key! they were given what they should pray and they were filled with desire. When you get into mighty prayer, you start praying in a revelatory way where the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost give you the words to say in the prayer. It becomes almost poetic, it becomes scriptural, you'll find yourself saying things that are above and beyond what you normally would say in your prayers and you find out that as you are speaking one sentence in the back of your mind the Holy Ghost has already placed the next sentence just waiting for your lips to finish speaking so it can come and take the next sentences' place. I'll also mention that in primary prayer when you bow your head, fold your arms, close your eyes, in body language, that is a closed position, you're closing everything out. When you pray in mighty prayer you want to open yourself up. You want to get into an open, receiving posture. Let me show you what that is a little bit, lets go to Section 88 in the Doctrine and Covenants, and you can read about why prayer posture is important. Prayer posture is an important thing. It never dawned on me until I was on my mission in New Jersey how important that was so I experimented around with some things that I had never done before. Lets go to Section 88:120 and look at what the Lord says here: "that your incomings made in the name of the Lord, that your outgoings made in the name of the Lord, that all your salutations made in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the most High". Over the page, in the School of the Prophets you can read about starting in verse 127 going through the end of Section 88, look at verse 32 when they entered into the School of Prophets and when they prayed, "When any shall come in after him, let the teacher arise with uplifted hands to Heaven, directly salute his brother or brethren with these words". When they prayed in the school of the prophets they knelt in a circle and they raised their hands toward Heaven. This is before you have Elijah and Moses and all these people, that prayer in the Newell K. Whitney Store, in the upper floor of the Whitney store where the school of the prophets was held,

whatever they did there in that group was enough to bring Jesus Christ Himself into the room. They saw Him, and the Holy Father came into the room, they saw Him. You could read that account by a man named Zebede Coltron. Look up Zebede Coltron, bios School of the Prophets, and you can read the account that lays there. These men were involved in a higher level of prayer, mighty prayer. One of the things to look at is that when you go out and you raise your hands up with uplifted hands, if you were to be standing behind the person who was praying that way and looking at them you would see that they form a V. That person with his hands upraised forms a V, that is a compass. What that posture is doing is forming a compass posture, I'm not talking about a compass that goes North, East, South, West, I'm talking about the architects compass. It also forms a mark we have in the Garment. The purpose of that compass is to circumscribe a circle, to draw a perfect circle, which is the geometric symbol for eternity. When a person prays with uplifted hands they form that mark, that symbolic mark of the architects compass. You notice that the compasses on the earth that are used are with the open point down. Its the compass we use in mathematics and in architecture to draw circles and to trace lines on maps. Its with the inversion down. The Godly compass we're talking about as represented in the Temple, is pointed up, and it circumscribes or it forms a circle Heavenward, also points that all truth can be found within that circle. So what I am presenting to you here today is the posture symbolically open the power sources for us. If you look up postures under prayer in the Bible dictionary you'll see that at no time in ancient time did we ever hear of any records with people praying with their arms folded, their eyes closed, and their heads bowed. It just didn't happen. I have a hunch that the reason we have that in in the Church today was when the first primaries, whenever they came into place, was to teach little kids how to pray so they can focus, fold your arms, bow your head, close your eyes, and be able to focus on wonders. None the less, if you are wanting something more, if you're wanting God to touch the heart of your child, then we need to do something differently. I remember when we were in New Jersey, our Christian friends in the Christian world have a touch for this, if you've ever been in an evangelical meeting, you'll see that when they pray they'll have at least one hand stretched Heavenward, sometimes they'll stretch both. That is an open reception posture, you're seeking something from Heaven and you're opening yourself up to receive it. You may find also that the posture will make a difference in the words that you speak. I remember the time when I first did this, I was in New Jersey, and I decided that I would get out one morning before the sun came out or as the sun was coming up. I'd read this, I'd studied this and I knew that they did it in the school of the prophets, I could see it in lots of different Christian churches, and I knew that it was something Joseph did in sacred circles, so I thought I'm gonna try this. So I went out one morning as the sun was coming up, I was in a park and I looked around like Joseph did in the Sacred Grove, this was a park that had a walk path about a mile and Margie and I would exercise by walking this path, and it was a beautiful hard wood forest park that was just gorgeous. So I just looked around so that nobody could see me. I didn't want to be interrupted, I didn't want to be side tracked. So, as I came around the corner there was a shaft of sunlight that was coming down through this grove of trees that was just beautiful and I said that's my place. I had visions of the Sacred Grove with Joseph praying, you know that picture we see with that shaft of light coming down. If you've ever noticed that most of the first vision pictures also picture Joseph with his hands stretched towards Heaven. I don't know if he knew anything at that time, but I think its interesting that they portray that, you never see a picture of Joseph during that vision when that coming down, with his arms folded and his head bowed, and his eyes closed, he may have started out that way I don't know but none the less, so I went and stood in that light. The reason I stood in the light is because I understand that the sun, s-u-n, is symbolic of the Son, S-o-n. I wanted to be facing and bask in the source of all light. So I went and stood in that light after I looked around making sure that no one was going to bother me, closed my eyes, looked up to where the sun was bathing my face and I just stretched my hands up heavenward and I talked to my Heavenly Father. It was such a sweet experience. It was just so different. It was so focused I could feel that heat I could sense all of that light and it was truly a prayer that was given to me. The only reason I didn't keep it up for quite a while, I got

nervous that someone was going to be walking down on that path and see this guy standing in the path doing that. So brothers and sisters, try something different. Start to seek for the Holy Spirit to guide you. Some of the ancient ways they prayed also was prostrate was not an uncommon way for a person to prostrate themselves right on the ground. Symbolic of the desire to be meek, humble, and lowly of heart, to be in a state of grace, having a broken heart and a contrite spirit. So posture is something you may want to try. Here's another thing, mighty prayer is almost always accompanied with fasting. If you look over the sons of Mosiah and Alma they involved themselves, they fasted and prayed oft. I understand that praying oft is daily and if you really want to do it the way scripture said, if you want to start something different now than what you have done before, remember if you always do what you have always done you always going to get what you always had. So if your looking for something different to touch your children so that you can have an opportunity to teach them some true doctrine that will change their behavior you've got to do something different. You've got to do something different and let the spirit be your guide. So fasting, when it says they fasted oft, in my mind fasting oft isn't once a month. I think once a month is primary and preparatory and foundational. So, if praying oft, according to the scriptures, is three times a day (that is Alma 34) and President Benson said we need to associate ourselves in the coming days, talking about the difficult days that are coming, we need to associate ourselves with men, who like Daniel, prayed three times a day, and Alma 34 says that. Pray three times a day. So, maybe that is something if we are looking for a way to do things differently, then maybe we need to do that, maybe we need to try that. Fasting once a month is not oft. I just can't see anyway that fits the bill of scripture of oft. So, Margie and I talked about that while we were in the Philippines and we've been fasters, we fasted every fast Sunday, we do that, but in the Philippines we started to tap into something more and we just decided that wasn't enough. So, we decided that we were going to fast every week. So this is a personal thing, some people can't do it physically, I understand that, but for us we could do it and we decided to do that. We fasted every week for 8 months. I want to testify to you of the increase of dreams, and visions, and on going revelatory flow through the Holy Ghost, that we have never felt ever before. And we knew that was a true principle and the interesting thing of the first time we did it was hard, but I read Brother John Pontius's book and Brother Pontius had some things to say about fasting, and one of the things he said was begin your fast 24 hours before you actually fast. In other words, start to prepare for it, make it a spiritual experience. So, 24 hours before you actually begin the fast, you've given thought and go into the fast with a purpose. Next thing Brother Pontius taught was the ultimate form of fasting is not to fast until the Holy Spirit tells you to fast. So, rather than setting a set date, Brother John who did that, says that's preparatory, if your going to fast once a week or often at a set time is OK. Now the step above that is to not fast until your receive the revelation from God that he wants you to fast and do it now. Well, we got away from that and we went to New Jersey and we got away from that and we came back from our mission and we found ourselves that year since we've been home and that has been in the last two or three months, we found ourselves that we kind of stagnated. We came into the office one day and she said to me; "I feel stuck"! I said me too! What are we going to do about it? And so we talked back and forth as husband and wife and we decided that we were going to do two things; we were for sure going to attend the Temple every week and not let anything get in the way of weekly Temple attendance and we were going to go back to fasting every week. Continuing the 8 months we did that, within the second week after we started, we looked forward, we longed for, it was an excitement to be able to fast that coming week. It was something we just anticipated and looked forward to. And we've been doing this again now for about 2 and ½ months, fasting every week and I'll tell you that it is a great source of power, and it's always a part, always accompanied with higher level of prayer called mighty prayer. I give that to you to think about, what your wanting to do is get your loved ones to where you can talk to them. And they're already probably turned off because you've talked to them before about "why aren't you going to church? How come you don't say the prayer? What's the matter with you? You know better than this! I know all these things because I've done all this. When I stopped talking to my kids about

why they weren't going to church, they started opening up to me and let me start talking to them about other things. They already knew what they should be doing, they didn't need to have me come in and rehearse the whole thing to them one more time, it just drove them further away. So on purpose, this is me now, on purpose stopped all talk about church activity and I just prayed to the Lord, let me take my kids where they are at and love them and see them the way you see them. Let me have that charity so I can interact with them in a way that will bless their lives. I remember one night my son drives us in tanker truck, a Peterbuilt, and after we had started, I stopped talking to him about the church and we had a relationship again. He wasn't doing what he should and he knew what my values were and I didn't stop doing what I was doing but we were able to meet on common ground and one night we went out in his Peterbuilt truck, I spent all night with him at work helping him clean out sewer lines and pumping out traps. And by very natural thing, I'd been praying for him, that this would open up and the conversation opened up to how he had been feeling so discouraged and so depressed. To even thought at sometimes going down the road in his tanker truck why don't I just crank the wheel to one side drive this rig over the edge and just end it all. I had no idea he was having those kind of despondent thoughts and I said; "Scott, can I share something with you that I have learned that I didn't know until just a little while ago?" He said; "sure dad, what is it"? And I said; "There is in the world light and darkness, good and evil, and that the evil is organized intelligence and I went into a little bit about devils and unclean spirits and I said; "You are being victimized and afflicted by persons behind the veil who seek your misery and you don't even know it. You are not the originator of this depression and discouragement. This is coming from evil influences and you're picking up on their emotions." And guess what we started to do, I started to teach him true doctrine. Do you know what he said? He looked at me as he was driving down the road, kept looking over, and look over and he said; "You mean Dad, I'm not crazy"? That was his comment, "you mean that I'm not crazy?" and I said "No son, you are not crazy!" And that led from one thing to another to where I was able to put my hands on his head, in time, and give him a blessing and start the process for him to be healed from these afflictions and attachments that were going on. Brothers and Sisters, here's the point, you've got to be able to get to a point where our kids will let us talk to them about this. That they'll even open up and when they open up I have found that the best way to do this, Can I share something with you that I've learned that I've never known before? That's the way I did it! There was nothing in the church, there was nothing about priesthood, there was nothing about prophets or apostles, nothing about Temples, nothing, it was just "I've learned something that's really been a blessing to me in my life can I share it with you? And he said ; "Yes". And I've done that with others the same way. So I recommend that, Share that with you, but if you'll go into mighty prayer, ask the Lord for a favor. Now go with me over to section 50 in the Doctrine and Covenants and let me show you another thing. This is the power of worth, all this is coming out of the scriptures. Section 50 in the Doctrine and Covenant is another key that we learn in the scriptures, once you go to section 50 lets go to verse 10. Section 50 verse 10. " Now come saith the Lord by the spirit unto the Elders of his church and, here we go, let us reason together. Let us, you see this is the Lord and Mike. This is the Lord and Rosemarie or Jay. Let us, the two of us, reason together that you may understand. We are going to reason together, you and I, but the result of this reasoning is that you understand something. Its not that the Lord understands, but that you understand what the result of this interaction. So, in your prayers, in mighty prayer, brothers and sisters, what you want to do is reason with the Lord. I have found out through personal experience that God our Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, love to reason with us. Now, the question is what is praying, look at verse 11; Let us reason even as a man reasoneth with a man one with another, face to face, and then he starts to explain. When a man reasoneth, he is understood of man because he reasoneth as a man even so will I, the Lord, reason with you that you may understand. Now, go back to this principle of brother Packer, "True doctrine, understood, (catch that?), changes behavior. So what you can do is you're going to reason with the Lord so he can help you understand something. You're going to reason with your children so that they can understand something. So, reasoning with each other is

one of the keys to understanding and understanding leads to proved healed behavior. Now I remember when I was thinking, what is this thing to reason with the Lord, what does that mean? Here's one of those mysteries that is hidden in plain sight. Here's one of those things until the spirit shows it to you, you'll never see it. I love the way God hides things in plain sight. So what does it mean to reason with one another. Here's what it means, you give the Lord your reason for approaching him and asking what you're asking. Reasoning with the Lord means your giving the reasons for what you are doing. Why are you doing what you are doing. I'm approaching you in this prayer and the purpose for this the reason for this is, I have children who won't listen to me and I don't know what to do with it. I know that their hearts need to be softened but I can't do that, but I know you can. So the reason I am coming to you is so that you touch their hearts so that I can come in and teach them the doctrine of Christ. So reasoning with the Lord simply means you state the reason for the purpose you're approaching him. Isn't that so simple? Let me give you an example of reasoning with the Lord. Lets go over to Ether, in the Book of Mormon, go to chapter 3, I'm, going to show you one of the magic stories in the Book of Mormon and the scripture and the power of scriptures. You see, everything we're talking about, How can we do this? How do we get to a point where we can talk to our children and they'll listen to us? Just haul out the scriptures, now here's an example; the brother of Jared has built the barges and you know the story, they're dark and there is no light. So the brother of Jared comes up with this idea to go smelt out of the rock 16 small stones, verse 1, that are light and clear even as transparent glass. He comes upon the mount, and I'm sure there was an alter there. Doesn't say so, but I am sure there was an alter there because these people worshipped at alters. And I can see him take these 16 stones and place them up on the alter and he says: "Behold these things", look up in verse 3, "Behold these things which I have molten out of a rock". We'll come back to this in a minute, but I want you to ask yourself this question, Where in Heavens name do Mahonrimoriamcumer, the brother of Jared come up with the idea for these 16 stones? That isn't what I would have done. Now go with me and let me show you how we reason, because prior to the Lord touching these stones with his finger, the key that opens the veil so the finger can come out is reasoning with the Lord. So, go to verse 2, Here is the brother of Jared reasoning with the Lord. "Oh Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by water". Another thing God says is that you can't have windows and I won't let you have fire. So, automatically at 2,000 years before the birth of Christ, 22 hundred B.C., the Lord just removed any alternatives for light in a darkened barge. You can't have fire and you can't have a window. What else is there? In that day, what else is there? Well the brother of Jared says "well I've got these 16 stones, which by the way, are not lit". He said: "Oh Lord", we may want to pattern our approach to the Lord to reason with him some what after the brother of Jared does because the results of his reasoning, brothers and sisters, were magnificent. Wouldn't you agree? So now he says; "Behold Oh, Lord, do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee for we know that thou art Holy and dwellest in the Heavens and that we are unworthy before thee because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, oh Lord, thou has given us a commandment, that we must call upon thee and from thee we may receive according to our desires". This is what you call reasoning with the Lord. Look at the next verse (3) ; "Behold , oh Lord thou has smitten us because of our iniquity and have driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness, nevertheless thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity and turn away thine anger from this thy people and suffer not that they shall go forth across the raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of a rock". Now that's an example of reasoning with the Lord. You take that example of this magnificent prophet and the unparalleled results and ask yourself the question; What kind of a pattern can I use in my circumstances, similar to this that would bring about different results than I've been having in the past? Here we are in the scriptures, now let me show you one last thing before we run out of time. Remember our message tonight is try the virtue of the word of God. I look forward , so much, every morning to my scripture study. The first thing I do when I get out of bed and come down into my office and talk to Margie and she's usually beat me up a little

bit, not physically, but beat me up out of bed. So, she'll be in her office already studying and I'll go in and say; "What did you learn this morning"? And we'll talk about what did you learn and what have you been taught, etc. and I'll go down into my office, shut the door, kneel down and I just talk to my Heavenly Father and tell him how grateful I am to be able to study his Holy word. I tell him I understand how difficult, what a challenge it's been to preserve these records so that I can have them in 2016. I don't know if I've shared this story with you, but I will. During one of these mornings, when I was just thanking the Lord and asking him as I begin my scripture study to open up my mind, to enlighten my mind, to quicken my intellect and to broaden my understanding. I think about the initiatory blessings that are pronounced upon the head, the ears, and the eyes. Think back on that, remember the wording on the head, the ears and the eyes, and apply that as you approach the Lord, try those words. In other words, as you are learning things as a part of your reasoning, you're learning new doctrine, the Lord's teaching you, involve that information, involve that verbiage, involve those words in your prayers and watch what a difference it makes. Because now you're growing in cries. Well, as I was kneeling down and thanking him about this, I have a little vision come into my mind and I saw a man running through a forested area and couldn't tell if he had anything in his hands and it just lasted for a split second, and in that split second I had this little mini vision I knew that this man was trying to protect Holy Records and he was being hunted because he was a caretaker of sacred writ. I knew that. It was in like a hardwood forest, it wasn't in a jungle situation and he was running. I can't remember what clothes he had on, but I remember the thought, he's being hunted and then followed up on the thought was, he was killed. And the thought was this, it's changed forever when I approached the Lord I would express my gratitude for the scriptures. There have been people give up their lives so that you and I could have these records. And that made a difference in how I approached the Lord. So, in closing, let me show you another magnificent about the scriptures. Let's go back, and where did the brother of Jared ever get this idea of 16 stones? When you ponder that, you'll find out did the brother of Jared come before or after the flood, so you have to ask, did he come before or after the flood? He came after the flood. So the brother of Jared is the descendent of, probably, Shem since he has a favored status of the Lord, but he's a descendent of the family of Noah. Now let's go to the Bible for just a minute. I want you to go to Genesis and show you how the scriptures, how everything has been preserved in such a remarkable way, that's just so fun to look at this. Let's go to Genesis chapter 6 and let's go to verse 14. Now this is the instructions on building the Ark. Keep in mind that the brother of Jared follows Noah. Do you think that Noah had any scriptures on board the Ark? What do you think? Do you think Noah had scriptures? Well the pattern is, if you want to answer that question, you have to ask yourself the pattern. Did all of the Holy Patriarchs coming down through time, did Adam keep a record of his dealings? Were there scriptures in Adams day? And did his posterity have those? And the answers yes! And the scriptures are referred to as the Book of Remembrance and they carried on down. So every time the Patriarch come down they have the scriptures of the prophets that preceded them, plus the revelations God gives them to add to that. So by the time we get down to Noah's Ark he should have a pretty good library of the scriptural record of the Patriarchs from Adam all the way down to the seven Patriarchal heads to Noah. So he's got scriptures on board the Ark. That's a pattern! Look at verse 14, the Lord says, Genesis 6:14, "Make thee an Ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the Ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. Verse 15 "and this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of; The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits." 16, "A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit thou shalt finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lowered second, and third stories shalt thou make it." Now, every picture that you've seen of an ark had a window in it and had a door. At least the door, I've seen some with windows and comes from Genesis 6. Look at your footnote on Genesis 16 verse 8 or 16a. Instead of window, that's a mistranslation and the translation in Hebrew is tshohar, some Rabbis believed it was a precious stone that shone in the ark. Notice that your cross reference there is Ether chapter 2:23-24. Where it talks about how dark it is in that barge. So now watch

what happens. The question comes up, "Where did the brother of Jared get the idea for 16 stones"? Well, he has the scriptural record of Noah and he knew that that ark had inside the ark a stone that glowed in the dark. And I bet you that if we had the record of that stone in Noah's ark you would find that God's finger came through the veil and touched that stone. Because, go back to Ether chapter 3 verse 4, look at this. It all starts to come together, this is the fun of the scriptures, this is where it gets so exciting. "And I know O Lord that thou hath all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man." How does he know that? Well he has scriptures that go all the way back to Adam that shows God dealing with his children. "Therefore", watch this, "touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger," Now where in heavens name did he get that idea from? And the idea comes, we have the record, I know that Noah's record, his scriptures would talk about that stone being touched by the finger of God to give light in that darkened ark. Now there wasn't a window in that ark at all. "That they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we cross the great sea". Here's some other fun things you want to get into this the scriptures really become magnificent. They have two stones per barge. 8 barges, 2 stones. Where did they place them? Well the brother of Jared, the Book of Ether, tells us they put stones in either end. Why not both of them in the middle? And he also says that these barges were peaked. That they were peaked and that the stones went in either end. Well, if you were to get a description of the Urim and Thummim you would see that there are two stones fastened in the bow. So the barges are representative of ancient tools that God has used all through time called Urim and Thummim. Two stones, Urim means lights and Thummim means perfection. He says that they were triangular shaped stones, one with the apex up and one with the apex down, fastened in a silver bow which looked like ancient spectacles so a person fastening the breastplate could have these spectacles in front of his eyes to look through them and have his hands free to do whatever needed to be done. Now you take these two triangular stones and lay one across the other and you have the Star of David or the Seal of Solomon, and that gets into a whole different thing. The point is, the Urim and Thummim and the barges are fashioned in a similar way. Peaked at both ends with a stone in both ends to give light in the barges. Any rate it is just marvelous things. So what's the lesson to be learned from this? How can we benefit from this story from Mahonrimoriancumer? Here's the lesson; don't expect angels to come and give you information, don't expect God to come and give you information, don't expect the Holy Ghost to reveal to you information that is already available in the written word of God. Let me say that again, if you're looking for angels, the spirits of just men, the spirit of revelation through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost about doctrines. You want to get it from God's mouth, if it's already recorded in the scriptures, you're going to be slow to get that revelation if it's already available to you in his canonized written scriptural word. So what does this behove us then, brothers and sisters, it behoves us to become scripturally literate and to know what he has already given us. If you have an angel come to you and he brings you information concerning life and salvation you can bet he is going to give you something you that don't have available, already available, in the written word of God. So we need to, what's the greatest source of revelation for us, right now that we have? It's the written word of God. In particular, It's that unadulterated non prostituted record called The Book of Mormon. No wonder Joseph said; "A man or woman can get closer to God by reading this book and by abiding by it's principles than by any other book". That's a good gospel principle, God will not reveal to you personally that he has already previously revealed and is available to you if you will simply awake and arise and pay the price to act as what's right in front of you. Satan knows that brothers and sisters, that's why his thrust is to keep you out of that word. So Alma's right, the word of God had a more powerful effect upon the minds of the people over anything else that they tried. Therefore Alma thought it expedient, you know what that word means? Absolutely, critically necessary. Expedient to try the virtue of the word of God. And true doctrine understood changes behavior. Comments or thoughts? Does that make sense? Student: Yes! Mike: I love the scriptures. I look forward with great anticipation to my hour to two hours every morning of scripture reading, meditation, prayer, praise, and seeking the Lord in mighty prayer. I have a two hour devotional that

I try to spend everyday with my Father in Heaven. I can do that cause I'm retired, couldn't always do it, but I am now. And I just have to tell you that I love that time with my Savior and my Father. They are so gracious to me. There is not a day goes by when I open the scriptures but what he doesn't reveal something to me that I have not seen or understood before. But I ask for it! Enlighten my mind, quicken my intellect, and enlarge and broaden my understanding. So that I can see and understand thy Holy mysteries. And he answers that prayer! And it's so gracious and it's so kind. Well, that's it. That's it for tonight. Do you have any comments or anything you want to add to that? Student: So, we'll get to the third prayer next week? Mike: The third prayer, you'll have to discover that it is a higher order of prayer and thats only taught in the Temple. You need to become proficient in might prayer and then the Lord will guide you to something higher and more profound.