Finding Your Own Testimony
Using the Scientific Method

A testimony is a spiritual witness given by the Holy Ghost. The foundation of a testimony [of the restored gospel] is knowledge that:

- Heavenly Father lives and loves us
- Jesus Christ lives, that He is the Son of God, and that he carried out the infinite Atonement
- Joseph Smith is the prophet of God who was called to restore the gospel
- We are led by a living prophet
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior’s true church on earth

(“Testimony”, True to the Faith, 2004)

#1: ASK A QUESTION

“Questions are a critical part of our eternal growth, and searching for answers in the Lord’s way can bring us closer to our Heavenly Father...Sincere questions are those asked with the “real intent” (Moroni 10:4) to better understand and more fully obey the will of the Lord. A sincere questioner continues to be obedient while searching for answers.”

(“When Doubts & Questions Arise, Adam Kotter, March 2015 Ensign)

“The world often attempts to pit science and religion against each other, when in reality they share many commonalities in purpose and approach. First, both science and religion share a common purpose, which is the pursuit of truth. For example, when the young Joseph Smith walked into the Sacred Grove, he was seeking truth. Likewise, when the young Charles Darwin sailed to South America, he was seeking truth...Scientific and religious approaches to discovering truth both begin by asking questions. The young Joseph Smith asked, “Which of all the religions is true?” The young Charles Darwin asked, “What shapes the history of life?” Finally, neither science nor religion argues we should blindly accept proposed truths. Instead, we are invited to test those things we believe to be true.”

(“Truth and Other Treasures”, Forest Gahn, BYU-Idaho Devotional)
http://www.byui.edu/devotionals/forest-gahn
#2 CONSTRUCT A HYPOTHESIS

“...Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”

Alma 32:21

“To find and test truth using scientific methodology, we first seek and document patterns in the world around us. These may include patterns in stars, rocks, and the bodies of living things. Once we document patterns in such sources, we then propose testable explanations for the processes that generated the observed patterns. Oftentimes there are many equally plausible explanations, or hypotheses, for what generates a pattern in nature. However, in science, our purpose isn’t to prove our favorite explanations true but rather to prove our explanations false. We reject falsified hypotheses in favor of explanations that withstand scrutiny. In this way, scientific methodology allows us to get closer and closer to truth, although it never allows us to be entirely certain we’ve discovered absolute truth. Nevertheless, as Latter-day Saints, we are just as duty bound to study the works of God as we are His words. We cannot consider ourselves to be wholly honest, truth-seeking individuals if we fail to carefully examine the creations of our Heavenly Father. Indeed, we have been commanded to do so.” (“Truth and Other Treasures”, Forest Gahn, BYU-Idaho Devotional) [http://www.byui.edu/devotionals/forest-gahn](http://www.byui.edu/devotionals/forest-gahn)

#3 TEST YOUR HYPOTHESIS

Today’s Trial is Tomorrow’s Testimony

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:7

“.Chose to ‘act’ rather than to be ‘acted upon’ by the doubts of others.

To know the truth, we need to live the gospel and ‘experiment’ on the word. We are cautioned to not resist the Spirit of the Lord. Repentance, coupled with a determination to keep the commandments, is an important part of each individual’s search for truth.”

(“The Truth of All Things”, David F. Evans, October 2017 General Conference)

“Mortality is a period of testing, a time to prove ourselves worthy to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. In order for us to be tested, we must face challenges and difficulties. These can break us, and the surface of our souls may crack and crumble—that is, if our foundations of faith, our testimonies of truth are not deeply embedded within us.”

(“How Firm A Foundation”, Thomas S. Monson, October 2006 General Conference)


“But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.”

Alma 32:27

https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/alma/32.27

“But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life. And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst. Then … ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.” (“A Living Testimony, Henry B. Eyring, April 2011 General Conference) https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/04/a-living-testimony?lang=eng

“No one receives a complete testimony all at once. Your testimony will grow stronger through your experiences. It will expand as you show your willingness to serve in the Church, wherever you are called. It will increase as you make decisions to keep the commandments. As you lift and strengthen others, you will see that your testimony continues to develop. As you pray and fast, study the scriptures, attend Church meetings, and hear others share their testimonies, you will be blessed with moments of inspiration that will bolster your testimony. Such moments will come throughout your life as you strive to live the gospel.”

#4: ANALYZE DATA & DRAW CONCLUSIONS

“...By the power of the Holy Ghost, you may know the truth of all things.” He will speak to our heart and to our mind.

Moroni 10:5, Doctrine & Covenants 8:2

“Testimony comes through the quiet influence of the Holy Ghost. The results of a testimony can be miraculous and life changing, but the gift of testimony usually comes as a quiet assurance, without spectacular displays of God’s power. Even Alma, who had been visited by an angel and had seen God sitting on His throne, needed to fast and pray so he could receive a testimony through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

(“How Firm A Foundation”, Thomas S. Monson, October 2006 General Conference)

“Sometimes we think that to have a testimony of the Church, we need some great, powerful experience, or a single event which would erase any doubts that we have received an answer or a confirmation. President Boyd K. Packer taught: “The voice of the Spirit is described in the scripture as being neither ‘loud’ nor ‘harsh.’ It is ‘not a voice of thunder, neither … [a] voice of a great tumultuous noise.’ But rather, ‘a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper,’ and it can ‘pierce even to the very soul’ and ‘cause [the heart] to burn.’ Remember, Elijah found the voice of the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but was a ‘still small voice.’”

(“Testimony As a Process, Carlos A. Godoy, October 2008 General Conference)

#5: PUBLISH YOUR RESULTS

Your testimony is strengthened as you SHARE

“Sharing the good news of the gospel is easier and the effects more far-reaching than ever before. . . . Perhaps the Lord’s encouragement to ‘open [your] mouths’ might today include ‘use your hands’ to blog and text message the gospel to all the world!’ . . . With the blessings of modern technology, we can express gratitude and joy about God’s great plan for His children in a way that can be heard . . . around the world. Sometimes a single phrase of testimony can set events in motion that affect someone’s life for eternity.” (“Waiting on the Road to Damascus”, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, May 2011 Ensign)
We are to “stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places...” Mosiah 18:9
https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/18.9

“Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life.”
(“To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely”, Richard G. Scott, June 2002)

“With so many appropriate and inspired uses of technology, let us use it to teach, inspire, and lift ourselves and to encourage others to become their finest....”
(“Spiritual Eclipse”, Gary Stevenson, October 2017 General Conference)

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf explains that the blessings of gaining a stronger testimony are “perspective, motivation, and a solid foundation on which to build a life of purpose and personal growth.” He also said: “We all know that it is easier to talk about a testimony than to acquire one. The process to receive one is based on the law of the harvest: ‘For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’ (Galatians 6:7). No good thing comes without effort and sacrifice. If we have to work hard to obtain a testimony, it will make us and our testimony even stronger. And if we share our testimony, it will grow.” (“The Power of a Personal Testimony,” Dieter F. Uchtdorf, October 2006 General Conference)
https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2006/10/the-power-of-a-personal-testimony?lang=eng&country=at

SUMMARY:
Please consider that the scientific process is an idealized method; one that is adjustable and subject to alterations and adaptations. Similarly, finding your own testimony is a process that occurs for each of us in different ways. There is no one perfect checklist that tells us how to develop our testimonies. Some of us spend much time in the beginning stage, asking many questions and always seeking answers. Some seem to spend a lifetime being continually tested and experiencing numerous trials of testimony. For some, hope and faith in gospel principles come easy, while others excel in communicating and sharing their testimonies. **No matter how long it takes, or how imperfectly it is developed, each testimony is valuable and of worth.**