

**“Stand in Awe...and Be Still”: Replenishing our Spiritual Reserves**  
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I consider it a great privilege to gather with sister seekers. Each of us has come here seeking to have our faith fortified and our hope renewed<sup>i</sup>. Many of us are seeking answers to troubling concerns, perhaps seeking some measure of healing from heart-wrenching struggles. We all come seeking to replenish our spiritual reserves---to find reassurance and courage to go home and face the inevitable storms of life.

In the book of Ether we read of storms with waves as massive as mountains that dashed upon the Jaredite barges on their voyage to their land of promise.

The Prophet Joseph Smith knew all too well about storms---from that spring morning in the year 1820 to Carthage in 1844---he knew little else but mountainous waves and terrible tempests. He himself said, that he had been “called to swim in deep waters.”<sup>ii</sup>

Within the walls of that wretched dungeon, ironically known as Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph wrote these words---words now canonized as sacred scripture in D&C 123:16: “A very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept workways with the wind and the waves.” To a sailor – the term “workways” means to be in “a working position or manner.”<sup>iii</sup>

I would like to suggest today – two small helms that will replenish our spiritual reserves. These two proven small helms can help to keep us “workways with the wind and waves” of our hectic lives--- keeping us steady and pressing forward in both times of swirling turmoil and times of calm waters.

The two small helms I speak of are:

1. Seek Still Water
2. Seek Living Water

First: SEEK STILL WATER to replenish spiritually.

Today our lives have become complicated and crammed full with activities, duties, and demands. For many of us, virtually every waking moment is scheduled with something. Our spirits yearn for stillness, for quiet—time for reflection and renewal, for a consistent infusion of the Spirit.

Before the Jaredites were able to embark on their sea voyage, the Brother of Jared made a pilgrimage to the mountaintop for the Lord to touch the 16 stones and illuminate them with light for the rough seas ahead.

These words of Maurine Jensen Proctor ring true: “So often we are troubled and hurried, wearied and overworked... The world is so much with us that we do not take the journey to the mountaintop and let the Lord touch all our dizzying efforts with His finger and fill it with light. Until He does, however, we are still traveling in the darkness.

“Busy and hurried, too often we take natural man solutions, rushing from one task to another, checking off the items on our to do lists in a mad frenzy without the transforming power that spiritual insight always brings. The alarm rings in the morning, and we are off and running, too often without climbing the mountain to have the stony pieces of our lives touched with light.”<sup>iv</sup>

I wholeheartedly agree with Carolyn Rasmus when she said, “It is so easy to let life swallow us up as if we had no control over ourselves, our response to situations, or the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We can always make choices.”<sup>v</sup>

Father Lehi boldly declared that we are free ‘to act for ourselves, and not to be acted upon.’<sup>vi</sup>

President Brigham Young taught that--- “the gift of life is time, and our power and agency to use it well.”<sup>vii</sup>

We must “take time to be holy”<sup>viii</sup> as the Christian hymn implores. We are not talking here of finding time for stillness. We must make time for holy habits. As Kathleen Hughes observed, “We have to create quiet for ourselves. It will not come looking for us.”<sup>ix</sup>

Haven't you found that we make time for that which we really want to do? It is our desire that motivates us to make the time to replenish our spiritual reserves, and to do the things that will increase our spiritual receptiveness.

In fact, our spiritual survival depends on us making the choice to be still and listen. President Boyd K. Packer told graduating students at BYU-Hawaii:

"These are sobering times....You will not survive spiritually, unless you know how to receive revelation....We live in a noisy world, revelation comes in the quiet times. It will come when the Lord can speak to our feelings. ...Go quietly, [he counseled], Go quietly into the world. Go quietly about your affairs, and learn that in the still small hours of the morning the Lord will speak to you. He will never fail to answer your prayers."<sup>x</sup>

Repeatedly, the Lord commands us to be still and listen.<sup>xi</sup> As Elijah discovered, the Lord was to be heard not in the crashing of mountains, or wind, or earthquake but in a still small voice.<sup>xii</sup>

Did you note that President Packer counseled us to learn a very significant gospel truth---that it is in the still small hours of the morning the Lord will most often speak to us?

When President Marion G. Romney was first called to be a General Authority in 1941, he felt a tremendous need for advice. He went to his friend, Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve. He asked him how to be successful in this overwhelming calling. Elder Lee answered, "Go to bed early and get up early. If you do, your body and mind will become rested, and then, in the quiet of those early morning hours, you will receive more flashes of inspiration and insight than at any other time of the day." President Romney observed, "From that day on, I put that counsel into practice, and I know it works. Whenever I have a serious problem, or some assignment of a creative nature with which I need to receive the influence of the Spirit, I always receive more assistance in the early morning hours than at any other time of the day."<sup>xiii</sup>

We are all aware that the Lord himself admonishes us in D&C 88:124 "to retire to our beds early, that we will not be weary; and to arise early that our bodies and our minds will be invigorated."

But what if you consider yourself to be a night person? We have the power and the ability to change, because like Nephi, we know that the Lord never requires anything of us without preparing a way for us to accomplish it. We can set a new habit in just 21 days.

Carolyn Rasmus writes of a phrase she discovered in Anne Morrow Lindbergh's book:

A Gift From the Sea. It invokes a wonderful visual image: Islands in time. “Consider carving out some time each day that you could call your island of time, a time when you can feast upon the word, and kneel in meaningful prayer; quiet time to listen, to ponder, to breathe deeply, and to feel His peace.”<sup>xiv</sup>

When we consciously create an island of time in our daily lives—we choose to allocate specific time to focus on the things that really matter—the things of God, to deliberately choose our priorities, and to refuse to allow less important things to take over the things of real importance. We may need to give up doing some good things in order to make time for the most essential things.

Camille Fronk Olson, in her book *Mary, Martha, and Me*, describes this conscious prioritizing: “When God comes first in our lives,...whatever comes second will always be right....Putting God first supplies direction to our quest for balance, for finding the One Needful Thing whose gifts cannot be taken from us.”<sup>xv</sup>

Clearly, the Lord has identified when is the best time of day for our island of time. Next, start pondering where in your home might be the best place. You may also want to consider displaying nearby a favorite gospel picture, a family photo of precious loved ones, words of a favorite hymn that elevate your thoughts, or a verse of scripture that is especially meaningful to you.

Above my desk at home hangs a copy of this extraordinary painting by artist, Minerva Teichert.

Every morning as I am greeted by this glorious image---I am reminded that as Martha-like as my responsibilities are, I must nurture the Mary within my soul.

There may be some here today who have special circumstances that preclude rising early, such as: health issues, babies, or toddlers. Let’s not let an imperfect situation be our excuse to do nothing. Remember that the Lord understands perfectly our circumstances and will help us find a way for this holy habit. My friend Becky, a busy mother of four small children found this solution to making time for solitude and scripture study. She had tried several different times during the day to study and nothing had worked. She took her desire and her dilemma to the Lord and asked for inspiration as to when she could best fit this essential into her day. The Spirit directed her to study right after her children were in bed for the night—before she did anything else or was too tired to stay awake. During this season of Becky’s life, her island of time is not early in the morning, it is in the early evening.

Now, the second small helm to guide our spiritual growth – SEEK LIVING WATER

Two thousand years ago the Savior used wells and water to teach about spiritual sustenance. One source of water the Master spoke of has profound meaning for us today. It is a well in Samaria. This well symbolizes the living waters Christ offers to all who will drink deeply from his holy word.

I love the account found in the fourth chapter of John of the Samaritan woman drawing water from Jacob's well. Jesus proclaims to her—

“Whosoever drinketh of this water (meaning the water from the well) shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Elder David Bednar taught that, “You and I need His living water daily and in ample supply to sustain our ongoing spiritual growth and development. The scriptures contain the words of Christ and are a pure reservoir of living water to which we have ready access and from which we can drink deeply and long. You and I must look to and come unto Christ, who is ‘the fountain of living waters’ by studying, searching, and feasting upon the words of Christ as contained in the holy scriptures. By doing so, we can receive both spiritual direction and protection during our mortal journey.”<sup>xvii</sup>

Note that Elder Bednar used the word study and not read. He further explained, “Studying and feasting suggest a focus and an intensity that reach far beyond casual reading or quick perusing.”<sup>xviii</sup>

Remarkably, to this day water is still drawn from Jacob's well. The water is a living, flowing reminder of Jesus' declaration: “I am the Living Waters.”<sup>xix</sup>

Sisters, each one of us is figuratively the Samaritan woman at the well. Do we come thirsty to drink deeply of the living water that the Savior offers us? I testify to you that there we will find water to quench our spiritual thirst and heal our parched hearts.

Recently a friend astutely observed that we need to recognize the symptoms of spiritual thirst. We often give them other labels: discouragement, resentment, loneliness, self-pity, etc. Each of these may be an indicator of spiritual dehydration.

Consider these promises given by Elder M. Russell Ballard: “I plead with you to make time for immersing yourselves in the scriptures. Couple scripture study with your prayers. Half an hour each morning privately studying, pondering, and communicating with your Heavenly Father can make an amazing difference in your lives. It will give increased success in your daily activities. It will bring increased alertness to your minds. It will give you comfort and rock-steady assurance when the storms of life descend upon you.”<sup>xx</sup>

Thirty minutes every morning to replenish spiritually might sound like a lot—but if you do the math, you’ll find that it is only 2% of your day. A very small helm, indeed.

We know that storms of adversity are part of this mortal experience, and my life is no exception. In years past I have had some challenges that have been very difficult, even soul-crushing at times. As I have pled with the Lord for relief, the Holy Ghost has whispered to my mind that I was to immerse myself in the Book of Mormon for there I would find the peace that I needed. Not that my problems would be quickly solved or that they would simply go away—but that I would find peace.

That was many, many years ago. That first day in desperation I retrieved my scriptures and my CES Book of Mormon Student Manual from off the shelf and dusted them off. Every day, thereafter I would spend as much time as possible studying verse by verse.

Very quickly, I progressed from it being an exercise in discipline to spend time studying—to a hunger and thirst for the Book of Mormon. As soon as I begin my study, that peace that my struggling soul needs—comes.

I have found the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon, to be a literal lifeline for me. I have discovered for myself that the pleasing word of God does indeed “heal the wounded soul.”<sup>xxi</sup>

Like so many of you, I have likened a verse from Alma to my life. The scriptures have had a great tendency to lead me to do that which is just (right); yea, they have had a more powerful effect upon my mind than...anything else which has happened to me; therefore I have tried the virtue (power) of the word of God.<sup>xxii</sup>

Truly, the word has become delicious to me<sup>xxiii</sup> as I continually find new insights, revelation pertaining to my responsibilities and callings, specific direction concerning my children, new perspectives, strength to endure, healing, spiritual renewal, and promised peace.

My experience with the Book of Mormon is not at all unique. A divorced mother of six children wrote this to the Ensign magazine: “As I found myself getting lost in the mass of priorities, I turned to my Heavenly Father for help. What I wanted was actual physical help---another pair of hands, a strong back, a cognitive mind. What he sent me was a message: Study the Book of Mormon every day. What that book has opened to me, I still find amazing.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

How can we find answers to our specific problems in the scriptures? We’ve heard prophets and church leaders counsel us that we can look to the scriptures

for the answer to any question we have in our lives. Nephi declared that the scriptures will tell us all things that we should do.<sup>xxv</sup>

But how does this process work?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks helped us understand the clear relationship between scripture study and personal revelation when he taught:

“Just as continuing revelation enlarges and illuminates the scriptures, so also a study of the scriptures enables men and women to receive revelations.” “...This happens because scripture study puts us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord.”

“The idea that scripture study can lead to inspiration and revelation opens the door to the truth that a scripture is not limited to what it meant when it was written but may include what that scripture means to a reader today. Even more, scripture reading may also lead to current revelation on whatever else the Lord wishes to communicate to the reader at that time. We do not overstate the point when we say that the scriptures can be a Urim and Thummim to assist each of us to receive personal revelation.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

Again from Elder Oaks: “We may find that a specific verse of scripture that was spoken for a different purpose in an entirely different age will, under the interpretive influence of the Holy Ghost, give us a very clear message adapted to our personal needs today. If we seek to liken the scriptures to our own circumstances, that it might be for our own profit and learning, a loving Father in Heaven can use them to bless us in highly individual ways.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

Let me cite a recent personal example. At times in the past, I have desired to see my then 18-year old son in a broader perspective. Parenting teenagers can be fascinating, especially when you are old and tired. There have been a few times over the past couple of years when I have told my husband that we should probably change our family motto from: “Return With Honor” to “Don’t Be Stupid.”

One Sunday morning I was studying section 5 in the Doctrine and Covenants. I came upon verse 24: “if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see.”

This understanding then entered my mind: Heavenly Father will show me a view of my child---a view of who my child really is. He will give me a small portion of His view. I must humble myself in mighty prayer and faith and with great desire and God will grant me a view.

Of course, this verse was originally received in March 1829 at the request of Martin Harris, who desired to be one of the witnesses of the gold plates. But 180

years later, that same verse, under the interpretive influence of the Holy Ghost, brought hope and reassurance to my mother heart.

I quickly wrote down what I had just felt, along with the date, and stuck it next to that scripture. I think of my scriptures as a sacred notebook. Elder Bednar taught: "Writing down what we learn, think, and feel as we study the scriptures is another form of pondering and a powerful invitation to the Holy Ghost for continuing personal revelation."<sup>xxviii</sup>

I have discovered that the scriptures absolutely are the greatest parenting manual ever written. While pondering and studying the scriptures, I have marveled many times at the insights and flashes of inspiration that have been revealed to me as to how I can best help my child. I believe that, despite our weaknesses, Heavenly Father will direct us in how to minister to the wounds of our children's souls.

With my 16-year old son's permission, I would like to share a portion of a talk he wrote to give in our sacrament meeting last year. It exemplifies this guidance that can come to us as parents. He said this:

"At the beginning of 9th grade I was going through a difficult time. I was not feeling the Holy Ghost with me nearly as much as I was used to in the past. My mom and dad had noticed a change in me. My relationship with my parents was not as good as it had always been before. My parents were praying a lot to know how to help me. One night, just before I was going to bed, my Mom was praying and pondering again what she could do to help me. She felt an impression from the Spirit to ask me to read the Book of Mormon with her.

"She called me into her office and asked me if I would read the Book of Mormon with her. To my surprise, I quickly replied, 'Yes, I would really like to.' I went and got my scriptures and we started that same night. As we began to read--- immediately, I felt calm and away from the world. Instead of feeling distracted by my worries, or some poor decision on my part---my thoughts were peaceful, a soothing and comforting feeling came over me, a feeling that I had not had in several months.

"My mom and I have read almost every night since. I have found that same calm feeling come over me each night when I start reading the Book of Mormon out loud. My Mom will point out verses that are important for me to notice and mark--and talk about what we can learn from that scripture. When we have finished reading, my Mom and I talk about anything that is on my mind. Then we kneel and have a prayer together. This is a really good way to end my day. I go to bed each night feeling calm and reassured. We are having a great experience together.



He continued: “President Ezra Taft Benson promised that there is a power in the Book of Mormon that will flow into our lives the moment we begin a serious study of it. I found out for myself that promise to be literally true. The Book of Mormon has become very special to me. I think I will always remember this year reading the entire Book of Mormon with my Mom.”

May I close with the words of Sister Wendy Watson Nelson:

“When our souls are still, we can hear things we otherwise would not. We can hear the voice of the Lord. And when we hear the voice of the Lord, everything in our life changes. We are able to deal with weightier matters, we can set priorities because our perspective is eternally clear.

“As you infuse your life with the words of the Lord, you will discover that the scriptures bring the Holy Ghost into your life in a more profound way than you have ever experienced.

“You manage your time better in order to have more time to spend with the scriptures. The scriptures will relentlessly nudge you---to grow into your true self and to give up living beneath yourself.

“[Stillness and] studying the scriptures will increase our desire and ability to come out of the world and come closer to the Savior than we have ever been before.”<sup>xxix</sup>

May we daily seek two small helms: STILL WATER and LIVING WATER—to keep us steady and sure in calm waters and when all about us rages. And may we seek “The Fountain of Living Waters,”<sup>xxx</sup> the Savior of us all, is my prayer in his holy name, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> [Holland reference]

<sup>ii</sup> See D&C 127:2

<sup>iii</sup> [cite reference]

<sup>iv</sup> Maurine Jensen Proctor, BYU Women’s Conference 2006, Rise to the Divinity Within You, 81

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- v Carolyn Rasmus, Simplify, 18
- vi See 2 Nephi 2:26
- vii Teachings of Brigham Young, 228-29
- viii [cite reference]
- ix Kathleen Hughes, BYU Women's Conference 2004, The Joy of Our Salvation, 97
- x Packer, BYU-Hawaii Commencement Address, Dec. 17, 2005
- xi [cite references]
- xii See 1 Kings 19:12
- xiii Quoted by Elder Joe J. Christensen, "The Message," New Era, January 1998
- xiv Carolyn Rasmus, Simplify, 10
- xv Camille Fronk Olson, Mary, Martha, and Me, p 106
- xvi See John 4: 14
- xvii Elder David A. Bednar, "A Reservoir of Living Water" CES Fireside , February 4, 2007
- xviii Elder David A. Bednar, "Because We Have Them Before Our Eyes," New Era, April 2006
- xix [cite reference]
- xx M. Russell Ballard, "Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might," CES Fireside, March 3, 2002
- xxi See Jacob 2:8
- xxii See Alma 31:5
- xxiii See Alma 32:28
- xxiv Shirleen Meek, "Filling Your Empty Bucket" – Ensign, April 1991, 42
- xxv See 2 Nephi 32:3
- xxvi Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Scripture Reading and Revelation," Ensign, January 1995, 8
- xxvii Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Studying the Scriptures," fireside given November 24, 2005
- xxviii Elder David A. Bednar, "Because We Have Them Before Our Eyes" New Era, April 2006
- xxix Wendy Watson Nelson, BYU Women's Conference 2001, Ye Shall Bear Record of Me, 261, 263
- xxx [cite reference]