

# Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

## God is the Source of All Truth

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/doctrinal-mastery-core-document-2018/acquiring-spiritual-knowledge?lang=eng>

1. God knows all things and is the source of all truth (see [Mosiah 4:9](#)). Because our Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to progress toward becoming like Him, He has encouraged us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” ([D&C 88:118](#)). In our search for truth, we can trust Him completely, relying on His wisdom, His love, and His power to teach and bless us. God has promised to reveal truth to our minds and hearts through the Holy Ghost if we will diligently seek Him (see [D&C 8:2–3](#)).
2. To help us, Heavenly Father has taught us how to acquire spiritual knowledge. He has established the conditions we must follow in order to gain such

knowledge. God’s divinely ordained pattern requires that we have an honest desire to know the truth (see [Moroni 10:4–5](#)) and are willing to live according to that which He has revealed (see [John 7:17](#)). Our sincere desire will lead us to seek truth through prayer (see [James 1:5–6](#); [2 Nephi 32:8–9](#)) and to diligently study the word of God (see [2 Timothy 3:15–17](#); [2 Nephi 32:3](#)).

## Asking Questions and Seeking Answers

3. Sometimes we may discover new information or have questions regarding the doctrine, practices, or history of the Church that seem difficult to understand. Asking questions and seeking answers is a vital part of our effort to learn truth. Some of the questions that come to our minds may be inspired by the Holy Ghost. Inspired questions should be considered gifts from God that provide opportunities for us to increase our understanding and to strengthen our assurance that the Lord is willing to teach us. Whatever the source of our questions may be, we have been blessed with the ability to think and

reason and to have the Lord's influence expand our minds and deepen our understanding. The attitude and intent with which we ask questions and seek answers will greatly affect our ability to learn through the Holy Ghost.

4. The following three principles can guide us as we seek to learn and understand eternal truth and resolve questions or issues:

- Act in faith.
- Examine concepts and questions with an eternal perspective.
- Seek further understanding through divinely appointed sources.

## Principle 1: Act in Faith

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

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

teachings of His ordained prophets. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes*" ("[Lord, I Believe](#)," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94). The Lord Himself has invited us to "look unto [Him] in every thought; doubt not, fear not" ([D&C 6:36](#)).

7. During times when we may not immediately find answers to our questions, it is helpful to remember that although Heavenly Father has revealed all that is necessary for our salvation, He has not yet revealed all truth. As we continue to seek for answers, we must live by faith—trusting that we will eventually receive the answers we seek (see [Proverbs 3:5–6](#); [Ether 12:6](#)). As we are faithful to the truth and light we have already received, we will receive more. Answers to our questions and prayers often come "line upon line, precept upon precept" ([2 Nephi 28:30](#)).

## Principle 2: Examine Concepts and Questions with an Eternal Perspective

8. To examine doctrinal concepts, questions, and social issues with an eternal perspective, we consider them in the context of the plan of salvation and the teachings of the Savior. We seek the help of the Holy Ghost in order to see things as the Lord sees them (see [1 Corinthians 2:5, 9–11](#)). This allows us to reframe the question (to see the question differently) and view ideas based on the Lord's standard of truth rather than accepting the world's premises or assumptions. We can do this by asking questions such as "What do I already know about Heavenly Father, His plan, and how He deals with His children?" and "What gospel teachings relate to or clarify this concept or issue?"

9. Even questions that relate to historical events may need to be examined with an eternal perspective. As we stay anchored to our trust in our Heavenly Father

and His plan of salvation, we are able to see issues more clearly. It may also help to examine historical questions in the proper historical context by considering the culture and norms of the time period rather than imposing current perspectives and attitudes.

10. It is important to remember that historical details do not carry the saving power of ordinances, covenants, and doctrine. To be distracted by less significant details at the expense of missing the unfolding miracle of the Restoration is like spending time analyzing a gift box and ignoring the wonder of the gift itself.

## Principle 3: Seek Further Understanding through Divinely Appointed Sources

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

leaders. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—the Lord’s prophets upon the earth today—are a vital source of truth. The Lord has chosen and ordained these individuals to speak for Him.

12. We can also learn truth through other trustworthy sources. However, sincere seekers of truth should be wary of unreliable sources of information. We live in a time when many “call evil good, and good evil” ([Isaiah 5:20](#)). Satan is the father of lies and seeks to distort truth and persuade us to turn away from the Lord and His appointed servants. As we turn to the Lord’s divinely appointed sources for answers and direction, we can be blessed to discern between truth and error. Learning to recognize and avoid unreliable sources can protect us from misinformation and from those who seek to destroy faith.

## Helping Others Acquire Spiritual Knowledge

13. When others come to us asking questions or investigating Church doctrine, practices, or

history, how might we best assist them in their quest for truth? The following are some of the ways we can help them:

14. *Listen carefully and prayerfully:* Listen attentively before you respond, seeking to clarify and understand the actual questions they are asking. Thoughtfully seek to understand the true intent of their questions and their feelings and beliefs.

15. *Teach and testify of gospel truths:* Share applicable teachings from the scriptures and modern prophets and how they have made a difference in your life. Help those with whom you speak examine or reframe their questions in the context of the gospel and the plan of salvation.

16. *Invite them to act in faith:* Remember that the Lord requires us to seek spiritual knowledge for ourselves. We must therefore invite others to act in faith through prayer, obedience to the commandments, and diligent study of the word of God, using divinely appointed sources, particularly the Book of Mormon. If applicable, invite them to remember experiences they may have had when they felt the Holy Ghost and

to hold fast to eternal truths they have learned until additional knowledge comes.

17. *Follow through:* Offer to search for answers, and then follow through by sharing what you learn. You could also search for answers together. Express confidence in the Lord's promise to provide personal revelation.

*Related references:* [Jeremiah 1:4–5](#); [Amos 3:7](#); [Matthew 5:14–](#)

[16](#); [Matthew 16:15–19](#); [John 15:16](#); [John 17:3](#); [Ephesians 2:19–20](#); [Ephesians 4:11–14](#); [2 Nephi 2:27](#); [Mosiah 18:8–10](#); [3 Nephi 18:15, 20–21](#); [D&C 1:37–38](#); [D&C 18:15–16](#); [D&C 21:4–6](#); [D&C 88:118](#)

*Related doctrinal topics:* The Godhead; The Holy Ghost; The Atonement of Jesus Christ; Faith in Jesus Christ; Prophets and Revelation; Commandments