

# President Russell M. Nelson

## January 2017 YSA Devotional

As members of His restored Church, we know that Jesus Christ, our Master, is our ultimate Mentor. As a true millennial, you were born to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. In fact, the *only* way to be a true millennial is to be one of His true disciples!

How can you *increase* in your discipleship? I have an invitation for you that will help—it's an assignment, actually—if you choose to accept it. Commence tonight to consecrate a portion of your time each week to studying *everything* Jesus said and did as recorded in the Old Testament, for He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Study His laws as recorded in the New Testament, for He is its Christ. Study His doctrine as recorded in the Book of Mormon, for there is no book of scripture in which His mission and His ministry are more clearly revealed. And study His words as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, for He continues to teach His people in this dispensation.

This may seem like a large assignment, but I encourage you to accept it. If you proceed to learn *all* you can about Jesus Christ, I promise you that your love for Him, and for God's laws, will grow beyond what you currently imagine. I promise you also that your ability to turn away from sin will increase. Your desire to keep the commandments will soar. You will find yourself better able to walk away from the entertainment and entanglements of those who mock the followers of Jesus Christ. To assist you, refer to the Topical Guide for references under the topic "Jesus Christ."

Study everything Jesus Christ *is* by prayerfully and vigorously seeking to understand what each of His various titles and names means *personally* for you. For example, He really is *your* Advocate with the Father. He will take *your* side. He will stand up for *you*. He will speak on *your* behalf, *every time*, as *you* choose to be more like *Him*.

Get to know Him by studying all He continues to teach through His living prophets and apostles. Study "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." Study "The Living Christ" document. These were both received by revelation. Post them online and where you can see them daily.

Those revealed words are what every true Latter-day Saint believes. Pray for a witness that those truths represent divine law. Learn to articulate those truths in your own words. Practice! Then pray and look for opportunities to speak about what you believe. Your ability to lead and to have righteous influence will increase as you do so.

In a coming day, you will present yourself before the Savior. You will be overwhelmed to the point of tears to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for paying for your sins, for forgiving you of any unkindness toward others, for healing you from the injuries and injustices of this life.

You will thank Him for strengthening you to do the impossible, for turning your weaknesses into strengths, and for making it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever. His identity, His Atonement, and His attributes will become personal and real to you.

But you don't have to wait until then. Choose to be one of His true disciples now. Be one who truly loves Him, who truly wants to serve and lead as He did.

We are His people! We are under covenant to carry the message of the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. As we work *intentionally* to become righteous leaders, we may sing with one heart, “Let us all press on in the work of the Lord.”

### **Russell M. Nelson Blog**

<https://www.lds.org/blog/i-studied-more-than-2200-scriptures-about-the-savior-in-six-weeks-here-is-a-little-of-what-i-learned?lang=eng>

On December 1, 2016, I obtained a new set of scriptures and proceeded to begin the same assignment that I would later extend to young adults in January. When I finished the assignment six weeks later, I had looked up and marked more than 2,200 citations from the four books of scripture.

For me, to be able to accomplish this assignment was just thrilling!

Something I found to be most insightful was that the Savior was telling us about Himself through these various periods of time—Old Testament, New Testament, the Restoration period, and our day. In all books of scripture, the story is the same and the Storyteller is the same.

I have devoted much of my 92 years to learning about the Savior, but rare are the occasions when I have been able to learn as much as I did over this six-week study period. In fact, I learned so much about Him from this study that I am planning to share much of it in other upcoming addresses that I am currently preparing.

Upon beginning this assignment, I didn't expect that this study would help me to receive a new testimony of the divinity of the work of Joseph Smith—but it did! The revelations recorded by Joseph Smith and the insights found in the Bible are amazingly consistent. It was so enlightening for me to see this in my study.

Joseph Smith wouldn't have possibly had time to correlate and cross-reference with the Bible at the rapid rate at which he was translating the Book of Mormon—but it's all here!

So not only do I now have a greater testimony of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but I also have a reaffirmation of my absolute conviction that the system Joseph Smith had for translating the Book of Mormon was a gift from God.

Now, I realize some of you are probably thinking to yourselves that you couldn't possibly have time to complete an assignment like this.

I know how you feel. I thought the same thing of myself—that there's no way I can have time to do all of this. I needed to remind myself that a comment like this is not a faith-promoted comment. A faith-promoted comment would be “I know I don't have time for this, but I'm going to make time for it. And I'll fulfill it with what time I have.”

Each of us who takes this challenge will finish in our own time frames. For me, much of the joy of this came from getting it all done in just six weeks. This intense study over a relatively short period of time allowed me to appreciate the complementary nature of the learnings to be found in the Old Testament, the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

To those of you who feel you don't have time, if you will make a sacrifice, you will be well rewarded and very, very grateful for the change of perspective, increased knowledge, and improved depth of your conversion. I know this is true because I have seen the same rewards in my own life.

## Russell M. Nelson April General Conference 2017

God so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son to help us. And His Son, Jesus Christ, gave His life for us. All so that we could have access to godly power—power sufficient to deal with the burdens, obstacles, and temptations of our day. Today I would like to speak about *how* we can draw into our lives the power of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

We begin by learning about Him. “It is impossible for [us] to be saved in ignorance.” The more we know about the Savior’s ministry and mission—the more we understand His doctrine and what He did for us—the more we know that He can provide the power that we need for our lives. Earlier this year, I asked the young adults of the Church to consecrate a portion of their time each week to study *everything* Jesus said and did as recorded in the standard works.<sup>9</sup> I invited them to let the scriptural citations about Jesus Christ in the Topical Guide become their personal core curriculum.

I gave that challenge because I had already accepted it myself. I read and underlined *every* verse cited about Jesus Christ, as listed under the main heading and the 57 subtitles in the Topical Guide. When I finished that exciting exercise, my wife asked me what impact it had on me. I told her, “I am a different man!”

I felt a renewed devotion to Him as I read again in the Book of Mormon the Savior’s own statement about His mission in mortality. He declared:

“I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross.”

As Latter-day Saints, we refer to His mission as the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which made resurrection a reality for all and made eternal life possible for those who repent of their sins and receive and keep essential ordinances and covenants.

It is doctrinally incomplete to speak of the Lord’s atoning sacrifice by shortcut phrases, such as “the Atonement” or “the enabling power of the Atonement” or “applying the Atonement” or “being strengthened by the Atonement.” These expressions present a real risk of misdirecting faith by treating the *event* as if *it* had living existence and capabilities independent of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Under the Father’s great eternal plan, it is the Savior who suffered. It is the Savior who broke the bands of death. It is the Savior who paid the price for our sins and transgressions and blots them out on condition of our repentance. It is the Savior who delivers us from physical and spiritual death.

There is no amorphous entity called “the Atonement” upon which we may call for succor, healing, forgiveness, or power. Jesus Christ is the source. Sacred terms such as *Atonement* and *Resurrection* describe what the Savior did, according to the Father’s plan, so that we may live with hope in this life and gain eternal life in the world to come. The Savior’s atoning sacrifice—the central act of all human history—is best understood and appreciated when we expressly and clearly connect it to Him.