

Elder Ulisses Soares
How Can I Understand
(CR April 2019)

1. God's prophets have consistently instructed that we need to raise our families "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" and "in light and truth." President Nelson recently said, "In this day of rampant immorality and addictive pornography, parents have a sacred responsibility to teach their children the importance of God [and Jesus Christ] in their lives."
2. Brothers and sisters, the warning of our beloved prophet is a further reminder of our individual responsibility to seek to learn and to teach our families that there is a Father in Heaven who loves us and who has developed a divine plan of happiness for His children; that Jesus Christ, His Son, is the Redeemer of the world; and that salvation comes from faith in His name. Our lives need to be rooted upon the rock of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, which might help us individually and as families to have our own spiritual impressions engraved in our hearts, helping us to endure in our faith.
3. You may recall that two disciples of John the Baptist followed Jesus Christ after hearing John witness that Jesus was the Lamb of God, the Messiah. These good men accepted Jesus's invitation to "come and see" and abode with Him that day. They came to know that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and followed Him for the rest of their lives.
4. Likewise, when we accept the Savior's invitation to "come and see," we need to abide in Him, immersing ourselves in the scriptures, rejoicing in them, learning His doctrine, and striving to live the way He lived. Only then will we come to know Him, Jesus Christ, and recognize His voice, knowing that as we come unto Him and believe in Him, we shall never hunger nor thirst. We will be able to discern the truth at all times, as occurred to those two disciples who abode with Jesus that day.
5. Brothers and sisters, that doesn't happen by chance. Attuning ourselves to the highest influences of godliness is not a simple matter; it requires calling upon God and learning how to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the center of our lives. If we do so, I promise that the influence of the Holy Ghost will bring truth to our heart and mind and will bear witness of it, teaching all things.
6. The Ethiopian's question, "How can I [understand], except some man should guide me?" also has a special meaning in the context of our individual responsibility to put the principles of the gospel we have learned into practice in our lives. In the Ethiopian's case, for example, he acted upon the truth he learned from Philip. He asked to be baptized. He came to know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.
7. Brothers and sisters, our actions must reflect what we learn and teach. We need to show our beliefs through the way we live. The best teacher is a good role model. Teaching something that we truly live can make a difference in the hearts of those we teach. If we desire people, whether that be family or not, to joyfully treasure up the scriptures and the teachings of living apostles and prophets of our day, they need to see our souls delighting in them. Likewise, if we want them to know that President Russell M. Nelson is the prophet, seer, and revelator in our day, they need to see us raise our hands to sustain him and realize that we follow his inspired teachings. As the well-known American saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words."
8. Maybe some of you are at this exact moment asking yourselves, "Elder Soares, I have been doing all these things and have been following this model both individually and as a family, but unfortunately, some of my friends or dear ones have distanced themselves from the Lord. What should I do?" For those of you who are right now experiencing these feelings of sadness, agony, and maybe regret, please know that they are not totally lost because the Lord knows where they are and is watching over them. Remember, they are His children too!
9. It is hard to understand all the reasons why some people take another path. The best we can do in these circumstances is just to love and embrace them, pray for their well-being, and seek for the Lord's help to know what to do and say. Sincerely rejoice with them in their successes; be their friends and look for the good in them. We should never give up on them but preserve our relationships. Never reject or misjudge them. Just love them! The parable of the prodigal son teaches us that when children come to themselves, they often desire to come home. If that happens with your dear ones, fill your hearts with compassion, run to them, fall on their neck, and kiss them, like the father of the prodigal son did.
10. Ultimately, keep living a worthy life, be a good example to them of what you believe, and draw closer to our Savior, Jesus Christ. He knows and understands our deep sorrows and pains, and He will bless your efforts and dedication to your dear ones if not in this life, in the next life. Remember, brothers and sisters, always that hope is an important part of the gospel plan.
11. Throughout many years of service in the Church, I have seen faithful members who have consistently applied these principles in their lives.