

Mosiah 26

To understand and feel the truth and importance of the principles they identified in Mosiah 26:29–30, consider showing the video “[Atonement—Not a One-Time Thing](#)” (3:01), which is available on LDS.org.

“Faithful Lehi learned the same sad lesson. Nephi chose to believe when others in the family did not. The same cause was named. Lehi had taught them things they found hard to understand, ‘save a man should inquire of the Lord; and they being hard in their hearts, therefore they did not look unto the Lord as they ought’ (1 Nephi 15:3). “You will in this year teach doctrine and recount stories of faith and courage. I hope your students will remember the doctrine and the stirring stories. But most of all, when the year is done, some—oh, how I pray it could be all—of your students will be more inclined to ‘inquire of the Lord,’ because of their experiences with you. “For instance, many of you will soon come to the stories of the conversion of Saul and the martyrdom of Stephen. You will teach the doctrine of the Godhead. But you can help your students feel Jesus’ love in the rebuke, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me’ (Acts 9:4) and the comfort given to a dying martyr by the Holy Ghost in a vision of the Savior, standing by the Father. Your students can feel that the Savior reaches out to them to repent and that a loving Father and his Son watch over them in the worst of times. If they can feel that, they will be more likely to ‘look unto the Lord as they ought.’ They will be more likely to pray to know the truth, a prayer that will be answered with an increase in faith and with instructions of what they are to do. You then will have done more than you may be able to see with mortal eyes. But the Lord will see, and He and your students and their parents will someday call you blessed” (Eyring, “[Helping Students Inquire of the Lord](#)”).

Vs 1-2 - True Doctrine

"True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior," Elder Boyd K. Packer explained. "The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior." (CR, October 1986, p. 20.) "It is one thing," Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written, "to teach ethical principles, quite another to proclaim the great doctrinal verities, which are the foundation of true Christianity and out of which eternal salvation comes. True it is that salvation is limited to those in whose souls the ethical principles abound, but true it is also that Christian ethics, in the full and saving sense, automatically become a part of the lives of those who first believe Christian doctrines." Further, "it is only when gospel ethics are tied to gospel doctrines that they rest on a sure and enduring foundation and gain full operation in the lives of the saints." (*New Witness*, pp. 699, 700.)

Vs 1-4 – Rising Generation

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961) of the First Presidency taught: “The youth of the Church are hungry for things of the Spirit; they are eager to learn the gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted. ...“... You do not need to disguise religious truths with a cloak of worldly things; you can bring these truths to [them] openly” (Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual, *The Charted Course of the Church in Education*, rev. ed. [pamphlet, 1994], 3, 9).

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency emphasized the need to teach the youth of the Church to believe in God: “No charge in the kingdom is more important than to build faith in youth. Each child in each generation chooses faith or disbelief. Faith is not an inheritance; it is a choice. Those who believed King Benjamin learned that. Many of their children chose later not to believe. The scriptures give as a reason, ‘for they would not call upon the Lord their God’ (Mosiah 26:4)” (“Inquire of the Lord” [remarks at an evening with Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Feb. 2, 2001], 1, www.ldscs.org).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why older Church members mentor those younger than them: “So much that we do in this church is directed toward you, those whom the Book of Mormon calls ‘the rising generation’ (Mosiah 26:1; Alma 5:49). We who have already walked that portion of life’s path that you are now on try to call back to you something of what we have learned. We shout encouragement. We try to warn of pitfalls or perils along the way. Where possible we try to walk with you and keep you close to our side” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 38).

Vs 6-7 – Admonished by the Church

When sins go unchecked the Spirit ceases to strive with the Church as it might. "The Spirit of God," stated George Q. Cannon, "would undoubtedly be so grieved that it would forsake not only those who are guilty of these acts, but it would withdraw itself from those who would suffer them to be done in our midst unchecked and unrebuked; and from the President of the Church down, throughout the entire ranks of the Priesthood, there would be a loss of the Spirit of God, a withdrawal of His gifts and blessing and His power, because of their not taking the proper measures to check and to expose their iniquity" (*JD* 26:139). President John Taylor delivered the following penetrating counsel: "I have heard of some Bishops who have been seeking to cover up the iniquities of men: I tell them, in the name of God, *they will have to bear them themselves*, and meet that judgment; and I tell you that *any man who tampers with iniquity, he will have to bear that iniquity*, and if any of you want to partake of the sins of men, and uphold them, you will have to bear them. Do you hear it, you Bishops and you Presidents? *God will require it at your hands*. You are not placed in position to tamper with the principles of righteousness, nor to cover up the infamies and corruptions of men," (CR, April 1880, p. 78)

Vs 12 - President Boyd K. Packer said: "Remember that soothing, calming effect of reading the scriptures. Next time you are where they are read, notice how things settle down. Sense the feeling of peace and security that comes." "Now, from the Book of Mormon, this closing thought: The prophet Alma faced a weightier problem than you, bishop, will likely see in your ministry. Like you, he felt uncertain; and he went to Mosiah. Mosiah wisely turned the problem back to him, saying: "Behold, I judge them not; therefore I deliver them into thy hands to be judged." "And now the spirit of Alma was again troubled; and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter, for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God." "And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him' (*Mosiah 26:12-14*). "That voice will speak to you, bishop. That is your privilege. I bear witness of that, for I know that He lives. May God bless you, bishop, the inspired judge in Israel, and those who come to you, as you counsel them in the Lord's own way" (*That All May Be Edified*, 96-97).

Vs 20 – Calling and Election

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805-44) outlined the process by which one obtains this promise: "After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), ... then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John" (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, *History of the Church*, 3:380). He then read John 14:12-27]. Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150.)

Vs 24-28 Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917-2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we can know the Lord: "We can choose to know the Lord by reading the scriptures every day; by communicating with him in fervent prayer at least morning and night, and in times of trial, every hour or more, if needed; and by keeping his commandments. Remember, 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.' (*1 John 2:3-5*.)" (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, *Finding Peace in Our Lives* [1995], 74).

Repentance

Atonement provided us the key to unlocking the cleansing power – we must turn it

Holman Hunt, the artist, felt inspired to capture this stirring scripture on canvas. One day he was showing his picture of "Christ Knocking at the Door" to a friend when the friend suddenly exclaimed: "There is one thing wrong about your picture."

"What is it?" inquired the artist.

"The door on which Jesus knocks has no handle," replied his friend.

"Ah," responded Mr. Hunt, "that is not a mistake. You see, this is the door to the human heart. It can only be opened from the inside."

And thus it is. Jesus may stand and knock, but each of us decides whether to open.

(Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 212)

Elder Theodore M. Burton (1907–89), who served as a member of the Seventy "It saddens me when I hear how some of our members and even sometimes our local leaders treat people who have to be disciplined for transgression. I realize there is a tendency to equate the word *discipline* with the word *punish*, but there is a difference between these words. In English ... the word *discipline* has the same root as the word *disciple*. A disciple is a student, to be taught. In dealing with transgressors, we must remember that they desperately *need* to be taught" (Book of Mormon Institute Teacher Manual in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 81–82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 65).

Vs 29, 35 – Confess Sins

"We must confess all our sins to the Lord. In addition, we must confess serious sins—such as adultery, fornication, homosexual relations, spouse or child abuse, and the sale or use of illegal drugs—which might affect our standing in the Church, to the proper priesthood authority. If we have sinned against another person, we should confess to the person we have injured. Some less serious sins involve no one but ourselves and the Lord. These may be confessed privately to the Lord" (*Gospel Principles* [2009], 111).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Jesus Christ has prescribed a very clear method for us to repent and find healing in our lives. The cure for most mistakes can be found by seeking forgiveness through personal prayer. However, there are certain spiritual illnesses, particularly those dealing with violations of the moral law, which absolutely require the assistance and treatment of a qualified spiritual physician. ... "If you 'awake to a sense of your awful situation' [*Ether 8:24*] and wish to return to full spiritual health, see your bishop. He holds the keys and can help you along the pathway of repentance" (Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual, Boyd K. Packer, "The Key to Spiritual Protection," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 28).

"*Confession*. 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy' (*Proverbs 28:13*). Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to disclose fully to your Heavenly Father all that you have done. Kneel before Him in humble prayer, acknowledging your sins. Confess your shame and guilt, and then plead for help. "Serious transgressions, such as violations of the law of chastity, may jeopardize your membership in the Church. Therefore, you need to confess these sins to both the Lord and His representatives in the Church. This is done under the care of your bishop or branch president and possibly your stake or mission president, who serve as watchmen and judges in the Church. While only the Lord can forgive sins, these priesthood leaders play a critical role in the process of repentance. They will keep your confession confidential and help you throughout the process of repentance. Be completely honest with them. If you partially confess, mentioning only lesser mistakes, you will not be able to resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. The sooner you begin this process, the sooner you will find the peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness" (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 134).

President Brigham Young spoke out on the matter of confession of sin as follows:

I believe in coming out and being plain and honest with that which should be made public, and in keeping to yourselves that which should be kept. If you have your weaknesses, keep them hid from your brethren as much as you can. You never hear me ask the people to tell their follies... do not tell about your nonsensical conduct that nobody knows of but yourselves.

President Young's statement suggests that he was annoyed by many people coming to confess follies of a minor nature. In my own experience there have been those who seemed to have an obsession to confess their weaknesses, and time and time again they have returned to my office to add another little confession or another little detail of the earlier confession. Undoubtedly, President Young had people like this who would be willing to confess sins to be able to get an audience with the Prophet. His advice here is to keep to oneself follies which do not concern others. Certainly it is not necessary to parade one's minor errors. However, a major sin involves more than the two contracting parties. The law of God has been broken; the law of the Church has been involved. The transgressors have offended their God, the Church, the people of the Church. Thus the confession of major sins should be made to the appropriate Church leaders, while less grave sins should be confessed to the persons offended.
(Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 177.)

When the apples in a barrel rot, it is not enough to throw away half of the spoiled apples from the and replace them with fresh apples on top. This would result in all the apples rotting. Instead it would be necessary to empty the barrel and completely clean and scrub-perhaps disinfect the entire inside. Then the barrel could be safely filled again with apples. Likewise in clearing up problems in our lives it is well also to go to the bottom and confess all the transgressions so that repentance begins with no half-truths, no pretense, no unclean residue.
(Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 180)

The formula for repentance requires that we confess. Our first confession is to the Lord in prayer. When our mistakes are not grievous ones, and if they are personal, that may be all that is required by way of confession. If our transgression includes tampering with the procreative capacities of another of either gender, then there is a necessary confession beyond prayer. From His priesthood the Lord has designated the bishop to be the common judge. If your transgression is serious, and your conscience will tell you whether it is or not, seek out the bishop.

The bishop represents the Lord in extending forgiveness for the Church. At times he must administer bitter medicine.... There is the idea abroad that one can send a postcard of prayer and receive in return full forgiveness and be ready at once for a mission or for marriage in the temple. Not so. There are payments to be made. If a bishop offers comfort only and, in misguided kindness, seeks to relieve you of the painful but healing process in connection with repentance, he will not serve you well. (Boyd K. Packer, *Things of the Soul*, 115.)

Two confessions necessary

There are thus two confessions and two sources of forgiveness. A sinner must always confess all sins, great and small, to the Lord; in addition, any sins involving moral turpitude and any serious sins for which a person might be disfellowshipped or excommunicated must also be confessed to the Lord's agent, who in most instances is the bishop. The bishop is empowered to forgive sins as far as the church is concerned, meaning that he can choose to retain the repentant person in full fellowship and not impose court penalties upon him. Ultimate forgiveness in all instances and for all sins comes from the Lord and from the Lord only.

(Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 236.)

You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. If they are serious transgressions, such as immorality, they need to be confessed to a bishop or stake president. Please understand that confession is not repentance. It is an essential step, but is not of itself adequate. Partial confession by mentioning lesser mistakes will not help you resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to fully disclose to the Lord and, where necessary, His priesthood judge all that you have done. Remember, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 76)

Sincerity of heart – planned repentance

I believe, to use an insurance phrase, we must pay the deductible. We must experience sorrow enough, suffering enough, guilt enough so we are conscious and appreciative of the heavier burden borne by the Savior. My soul pains when His atonement is treated lightly, when the blessing of repentance is reduced to simply “taking care of it with the bishop,” when there is brief confession without humility or godly sorrow. This attitude of entitlement rather than privilege was recently expressed by a young Church member who wrote: “I have done bad things that I knew were bad because I’ve been taught that ever since I can remember. . . . I know repentance is a great gift. Without it I would be lost. I am not ready to repent of my sins; but I know that when I am ready, I can.” Such indulgence in premeditated sin shows pitiful misunderstanding of repentance. (J. Richard Clarke, *Ensign*, May 1993, 10)

We are concerned that some young people who are anticipating serving a mission or being married in the temple have a very lax attitude toward sin. ‘I’ll just have a few ones,’ they say, ‘and then I’ll repent quickly, and go on my mission (or get married in the temple), and everything will be alright’ . . . Such persons want the present convenience or enjoyment of sin and the future effects of righteousness, in that order. They want to experience the sin, but avoid its effects. . . . There is something very peculiar about the state of mind or heart of the person who deliberately commits sin in the expectation that he or she will speedily and comfortably repent and continue as a servant of God, preaching repentance and asking others to come unto Christ. . . . Am I suggesting that the benefits of the atonement are not available for the person who heedlessly sins? Of course not. But, I am suggesting that there is a relationship between sin and suffering, that is not understood by people who knowingly sin in the expectation that all the burden of suffering will be borne by another, that the sin is all theirs, but the suffering is all His. That is not the way. Repentance, which is an assured passage to an eternal destination, is nevertheless not a free ride. (Dallin H. Oaks, *BYU Fireside*, Aug. 5, 1990)

“I have done things that I knew were bad. I have been taught they were ever since I can remember. I know repentance is a great gift; without it I would be lost. But I’m not ready to repent of my sins, yet I know when I am ready I can.” How tragic. The thought of intentionally committing serious sin now and repenting later is perilously wrong. Never do that. 14 Many start that journey of [page 39] intentional transgression and never make it back. Premeditated sin has greater penalties and is harder to overcome. (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 39)

Vs 39 What does it mean to “pray without ceasing”? It means simply that you continue in the practice of prayer. [Saying] ‘he constantly brushed his teeth’ doesn’t mean he did it twenty-four hours a day. The interesting thing is that in a Semitic language like Arabic, the only way you can say continually, or go on doing a thing is *lāzalla* or *lam yazil/mā zalla*, he did not cease. *Mā zalla yaktubu*, “he did not cease writing,” means he wrote from time to time, or he wrote regularly. . . . When it says, ‘they continued in prayer without ceasing,’ that doesn’t mean they had a monastic fanaticism here, or anything like that” (Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 2:183).

Vs 30 - As often as my people repent will I forgive them

Though God's power to forgive, like his power to love, is infinite, it was not Alma's intention to suggest that we can continuously break the same law under the guise of repentance. "Repentance is a thing," declared Joseph Smith, "that cannot be trifled with every day. Daily transgression and daily repentance is not that which is pleasing in the sight of God." (*Teachings*, p. 148.)

Vs 30 –31 – Forgive Others

Remember that we must forgive even if our offender did not repent and ask forgiveness. . . . Do we follow that commandment or do we sulk in our bitterness, waiting for our offender to learn of it and to kneel to us in remorse? . . . this reconciliation suggests also forgetting. Unless you forget, have you forgiven? . . . No bitterness of past frictions can be held in memory if we forgive with all our hearts. (Spencer W. Kimball, *CR*, Oct. 1949, 132-33)

Vs 36 – Blotted Out

President Harold B. Lee stated: “Sometimes, too, stake presidents, bishops, and others are so anxious about not offending someone, that they do not confront them when there is serious moral transgression. “I was in a stake conference recently where one of the bishops frankly stated that he had determined that he would never excommunicate any person no matter what the sin. I told him that if this was his true feeling, then he was in the wrong position as a common judge in Israel. Whenever I have been asked by a bishop or stake president as to how he should handle a given case, I have usually replied that it was his responsibility as a bishop to make that decision and not mine as a General Authority, and that in making his decision he had better be sure that he was right. To be a judge requires spiritual guidance, tact, and wisdom, but it takes courage when action is necessary. I do not think such situations call for stake presidents and bishops to be insensitive or militant, but stake presidents and bishops must realize that the gospel is designed to change us all, to make us more like the Master. When we let members lead a double and destructive life, instead of doing them a favor as we suppose, we damage them, sometimes, irreparably. We must let the light of gospel standards shine fully, and not try to deflect the penetrating rays of its standards. The gospel is to save man, not to condemn them, but to save, it is sometimes necessary to confront and to discipline as the Lord has directed us. When individuals are on the wrong path, our task is to redirect them lovingly, and not to watch idly from our vantage point on the straight and narrow path” (Teachings of Harold B. Lee, 117–18).

The scriptures speak of Church members being ‘cast out’ or ‘cut off,’ or having their names ‘blotted out’. This means excommunication. (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 100)

The lord is on your side and you must remember that numerous people are saved by excommunication. They are not lost by excommunication. They are saved through excommunication. (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 100)

What, then, is the role of church discipline, in contrast to the punishment that is the intended result of the judgment of a criminal court? In its primary purpose—to save the souls of transgressors—church discipline is intended to facilitate repentance. Personal suffering is inevitably part of that process. Sometimes, as in the discipline of disfellowshipment or excommunication, both punishment and suffering will be inflicted by the decision of the disciplinary council. But the infliction of punishment and personal suffering is not the purpose of a disciplinary council.

The objective of church discipline is to facilitate repentance, whose purpose is to qualify a transgressor for the mercy of God and the salvation made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Consequently, church discipline is not an instrument of punishment but a catalyst for change. The purpose of the suffering that must occur as part of the process of repentance is not to *punish* the transgressor, but to change him. The broken heart and contrite spirit required to “answer the ends of the law” introduce the repentant transgressor to the change necessary to conform his life to the pattern prescribed by his Redeemer. The sinner must repent or he must pay the full penalty of suffering for his own sins. The object of God's laws is to save the sinner, not simply to punish him, but there is no exemption from the conditions a transgressor must meet to qualify for the mercy necessary for salvation. The repentant transgressor must be changed, and the conditions of repentance, including confession and suffering, are essential to accomplish that change. To exempt a transgressor from those conditions would deprive him of the change necessary for his salvation. That would be neither just nor merciful. (Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way*, 225.)

“Church discipline encourages members to keep the commandments of God. Its mere existence ... stresses the seriousness and clarifies the meaning of the commandments of God. This is extremely important in an otherwise permissive society. ... “The shepherd has a responsibility to protect the flock. ... That responsibility may require him to deny [the sinner] the fellowship of the Saints or even to sever his membership in the flock. As Jesus taught: ‘If he repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people, for behold I know my sheep, and they are numbered.’ (3 Ne. 18:31; see also Mosiah 26:34–36.)” (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, Dallin H. Oaks *The Lord's Way* [1991], 216, 227).

President James E. Faust of the First Presidency “Church discipline is not limited to sexual sins but includes other acts such as murder, abortions, burglary, theft, fraud and other dishonesty, deliberate disobedience to the rules and regulations of the Church, advocating or practicing polygamy, apostasy, or any other unchristian conduct, including defiance or ridicule of the Lord’s anointed, contrary to the law of the Lord and the order of the Church. ...“Among the activities considered apostate to the Church include when members ‘(1) repeatedly act in clear, open, and deliberate public opposition to the Church or its leaders; (2) persist in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority; or (3) continue to follow the teachings of apostate cults (such as those that advocate plural marriage) after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority’ (*General Handbook of Instructions* [1989], p. 10-3)” (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 52–53; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 37–38).

In 1985 the First Presidency issued an invitation for everyone to come back, which reminded us of our duty toward those who have had their names “blotted out”: “We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions. “To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: ‘I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.’ (D&C 64:10)“We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased activity and to those who have become critical, we say, ‘Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints.’“We are confident that many have longed to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you” (Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual, Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson, “An Invitation to Come Back,” *Church News*, Dec. 22, 1985, 3).

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the essential elements of repentance: “Spencer W. Kimball [gave] a superb guide to forgiveness through repentance. It has helped many find their way back. He [identified] five essential elements of repentance.

“**Sorrow for sin.** Study and ponder to determine how serious the Lord defines your transgression to be. That will bring healing sorrow and remorse. It will also bring a sincere desire for change and a willingness to submit to every requirement for forgiveness. ...

“**Abandonment of sin.** This is an unyielding, permanent resolve to not repeat the transgression. By keeping this commitment, the bitter aftertaste of that sin need not be experienced again. ...

“**Confession of sin.** You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. If they are serious transgressions, such as immorality, they need to be confessed to a bishop or stake president. Please understand that confession is not repentance. It is an essential step, but is not of itself adequate. Partial confession by mentioning lesser mistakes will not help you resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to fully disclose to the Lord and, where necessary, His priesthood judge *all* that you have done. ...

“**Restitution for sin.** You must restore as far as possible all that which is stolen, damaged, or defiled. Willing restitution is concrete evidence to the Lord that you are committed to do all you can to repent.

“**Obedience to all the commandments.** Full obedience brings the complete power of the gospel into your life with strength to focus on the abandonment of specific sins. It includes things you might not initially consider part of repentance, such as attending meetings, paying tithing, giving service, and forgiving others. ...

“I would add a sixth step: **Recognition of the Savior.** Of all the necessary steps to repentance, I testify that the most critically important is for you to have a conviction that forgiveness comes because of the Redeemer. It is essential to know that only on His terms can you be forgiven” (Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual, Richard G. Scott, “Finding Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 76).