Learning to Identify Doctrine and Principles

Some gospel doctrine and principles are clearly stated in the scriptures. Other doctrine and principles may be implied in the storyline and only found by studying an entire book of scripture, a chapter, or a single verse. You can practice the following important steps whenever you are studying the scriptures to help you identify gospel truths:

1. Read slowly and carefully.

2. Look for clearly stated truths. These are sometimes indicated when the author uses words like "thus we see," "therefore," "wherefore," or "behold."

3. Look for implied truths. You can find these truths by asking yourself questions like the following:

   a. Are there any important ideas, words, or phrases—especially any that help you come to better know Heavenly Father and His plan or Jesus Christ and His gospel?

   b. What are the cause-and-effect relationships in this story?

   c. What is the moral or point of the story?

   d. Why do you think the writer included these events or passages?

4. Write in your own words what you found and mark the words in the scriptures that teach it.

5. Ponder why the truth is important to you. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

Ponder [and] examine every word, every scriptural gem. . . . Hold it up to the light, and turn it, look and see what's reflected and refracted there. . . . Such an examination may unearth a treasure hidden in a field: a pearl of great price; a pearl beyond price. ("Students Need Teachers to Guide Them" [address to Church Educational System religious educators, June 20, 1992], 4)

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS