



Doctrinal Mastery Core Document

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Doctrinal Mastery Core Document

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Introduction to Doctrinal Mastery

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Helaman taught his sons, “It is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation” (Helaman 5:12). Building a foundation upon Jesus Christ—which includes coming to understand, believe, and live according to His doctrine—will deepen our conversion and commitment as His disciples, protect us against the influences of the adversary, and help us bless the lives of others.

One of the ways we accomplish this is by studying the scriptures sequentially together in class. Another way we build our foundation upon Jesus Christ and His doctrine is through an effort called Doctrinal Mastery.

Doctrinal Mastery focuses on two outcomes:

1. *Learn and apply divine principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge.* Heavenly Father has revealed principles for acquiring spiritual knowledge. These principles include acting in faith, examining concepts and questions with an eternal perspective, and seeking further understanding through divinely appointed sources. We develop doctrinal mastery as we apply these principles

during and outside of class and seek answers to doctrinal, personal, social, and historical questions in a way that invites the Holy Ghost to strengthen our faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

2. *Master the doctrinal mastery scripture passages and the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they teach.* This outcome is achieved by:
 - a. Knowing the doctrine taught in the doctrinal mastery scripture passages.
 - b. Explaining the doctrine clearly using the associated doctrinal mastery scripture passages.
 - c. Being able to remember and locate the doctrinal mastery scripture passages and memorize the key scripture phrases.
 - d. Applying the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the principles of acquiring spiritual knowledge in our daily choices and in our responses to doctrinal, personal, social, and historical issues and questions.



Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge

God is the Source of All Truth

1. God knows all things and is the source of all truth. 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” (Doctrine and Covenants 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.
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 and are willing to live according to that which He has revealed. Our sincere desire will lead us to seek truth through prayer and to diligently study the word of God.
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” (Doctrine and Covenants 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. 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. 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 covenants, ordinances, 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. Learning to recognize and avoid unreliable sources can protect us from misinformation and from those who seek to destroy faith. As we seek help from the Holy Ghost and turn to the Lord's divinely appointed sources for answers and direction, we can be blessed to discern between truth and error. We can trust in the Lord's promise that “by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

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. Pray for guidance about how you can best help those with questions.
 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.

Doctrinal Mastery Scripture Passages and Key Scripture Phrases by Course

Old Testament

Moses 1:39: “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

Moses 7:18: “The Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind.”

Abraham 2:9–11: The Lord promised Abraham that his seed would “bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations.”

Abraham 3:22–23: As spirits we “were organized before the world was.”

Genesis 1:26–27: “God created man in his own image.”

Genesis 2:24: “A man . . . shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one.”

Genesis 39:9: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

Exodus 20:3–17: The Ten Commandments

Joshua 24:15: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.”

Psalms 24:3–4: “Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.”

Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . . and he shall direct thy paths.”

Isaiah 1:18: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

Isaiah 5:20: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.”

Isaiah 29:13–14: The restoration of the gospel is “a marvellous work and a wonder.”

Isaiah 53:3–5: “Surely [Jesus Christ] hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”

Isaiah 58:6–7: The blessings of a proper fast

Isaiah 58:13–14: “Turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight.”

Jeremiah 1:4–5: “Before I formed thee in the belly . . . I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

Ezekiel 3:16–17: The prophet is “a watchman unto the house of Israel.”

Ezekiel 37:15–17: The Bible and the Book of Mormon “shall become one in thine hand.”

Daniel 2:44–45: God shall “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.”

Amos 3:7: “The Lord God . . . revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

Malachi 3:8–10: The blessings of paying tithing

Malachi 4:5–6: Elijah “shall turn . . . the heart of the children to their fathers.”

New Testament

Matthew 5:14–16: “Let your light so shine before men.”

Matthew 11:28–30: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 16:15–19: Jesus said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom.”

Matthew 22:36–39: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour.”

Luke 2:10–12: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 22:19–20: Jesus Christ commanded, partake of the sacrament “in remembrance of me.”

Luke 24:36–39: “For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”

John 3:5: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

John 7:17: “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”

John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 6:19–20: “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.”

1 Corinthians 11:11: “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 15:20–22: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:40–42: In the Resurrection, there are three degrees of glory.

Ephesians 1:10: “In the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ.”

Ephesians 2:19–20: The Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

2 Thessalonians 2:1–3: “The day of Christ . . . shall not come, except there come a falling away first.”

2 Timothy 3:15–17: “The holy scriptures . . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”

Hebrews 12:9: Heavenly Father is “the Father of spirits.”

James 1:5–6: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”

James 2:17–18: “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead.”

1 Peter 4:6: “The gospel [was] preached also to them that are dead.”

Revelation 20:12: “And the dead were judged . . . according to their works.”

Book of Mormon

1 Nephi 3:7: “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.”

2 Nephi 2:25: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.”

2 Nephi 2:27: “They are free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or . . . captivity and death.”

2 Nephi 26:33: “All are alike unto God.”

2 Nephi 28:30: God “will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept.”

2 Nephi 32:3: “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”

2 Nephi 32:8–9: “Ye must pray always.”

Mosiah 2:17: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”

Mosiah 2:41: “Those that keep the commandments of God . . . are blessed in all things.”

Mosiah 3:19: “[Put] off the natural man and [become] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord.”

Mosiah 4:9: “Believe in God; . . . believe that he has all wisdom.”

Mosiah 18:8–10: Be “baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness . . . that ye have entered into a covenant with him.”

Alma 7:11–13: “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind.”

Alma 34:9–10: “There must be an atonement made, . . . an infinite and eternal sacrifice.”

Alma 39:9: “Go no more after the lusts of your eyes.”

Alma 41:10: “Wickedness never was happiness.”

Helaman 5:12: “It is upon the rock of our Redeemer . . . that ye must build your foundation.”

3 Nephi 11:10–11: “I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”

3 Nephi 12:48: “Be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”

3 Nephi 27:20: “Come unto me and be baptized . . . that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost.”

Ether 12:6: “Ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.”

Ether 12:27: “If men come unto me . . . then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

Moroni 7:45–48: “Charity is the pure love of Christ.”

Moroni 10:4–5: “Ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ . . . [and] by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History

Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20: Joseph Smith “saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description.”

Doctrine and Covenants 1:30: “The only true and living church.”

Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”

Doctrine and Covenants 6:36: “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”

Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3: “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost.”

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1: The Aaronic Priesthood “holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism.”

Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–11: “The worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”

Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16: “How great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!”

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19: “I, [Jesus Christ], have suffered these things for all.”

Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6: The prophet’s “word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth.”

Doctrine and Covenants 29:10–11: “I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory . . . and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years.”

Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17: “Marriage is ordained of God.”

Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43: “He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven.”

Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11: “Of you it is required to forgive all men.”

Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–24: “By [Jesus Christ] the worlds are and were created.”

Doctrine and Covenants 82:10: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say.”

Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–22: “In the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.”

Doctrine and Covenants 88:118: “Seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”

Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–21: The blessings of the Word of Wisdom

Doctrine and Covenants 107:8: “The Melchizedek Priesthood . . . has power and authority . . . to administer in spiritual things.”

Doctrine and Covenants 121:36, 41–42: “The rights of the priesthood . . . cannot be controlled nor handled only on the principles of righteousness.”

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23: “The Father has a body of flesh and bones . . . ; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost . . . is a personage of Spirit.”

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4: “The new and everlasting covenant of marriage.”

Doctrine and Covenants 135:3: Joseph Smith “brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God.”

