

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 12: "Seek Ye for the Kingdom of God"

(Jacob 1-4)

LESSON GOAL: To help us feel a greater desire to magnify our callings, be chaste, and invite others to come unto Christ.

1. Jacob magnifies his calling from the Lord.

From Jacob we learn at least three great lessons about what it means to *magnify an office unto the Lord*.

Notice what Jacob did:

1. **He obtained his errand from the Lord.** (Jacob 1:17). Perhaps part of our preparation for any new calling ought to be a visit or two to the temple to *obtain our errand from the Lord*.
2. **Jacob took the responsibility for his calling.** (Jacob 1:19). He was willing to answer for the sins of the people if he did not fulfill his calling in the correct way.
3. **He labored diligently.** (Jacob 1:7,8) "Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might enter into his rest

Hugh B. Brown: "President John Taylor said on one occasion... 'If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those you might have saved, had you done your duty.' This is a challenging statement. If by reason of sins of commission or omission lose what I might have had in the hereafter, I myself must suffer and doubtless, my loved ones with me. But...if any of us fail to teach, lead, direct, and help to save those under our direction..., then **the Lord will hold us responsible** if they are lost as a result of our failure" (*The Abundant Life*, 37).

2. Jacob warns against the love of riches, pride, and unchastity.

Jacob identifies three problems among the Nephites with which he will have to deal—materialism, pride, immorality.

Give yourself Jacob's test on these subjects:

1. [2:12] Are you seeking for wealth or riches? ("Seek not for riches . . ." D&C 6:7; 11:7).
2. [2:13] Can you resist the temptation to think you are better than others when you have more than they do?
3. [2:16] Can you resist the pride that may come with wealth and that may destroy your souls?
4. [2:17] Do you think of your brethren like unto yourself?
5. [2:17] Are you familiar with all and free with your substance?
6. [2:18] Is the kingdom of God more important to you than any business or financial success?
7. [2:19] Do you really have a hope in Christ?
8. [2:19] Do you seek for riches for the intent to do good?
9. [2:20] Do you recognize that all you have is a gift from God?
10. [2:21] Do you truly believe that all humans are as precious as you are?
11. [2:21] Do you understand (and live as though you understand) that the true purpose of life is to keep the commandments and glorify God?

C.S. Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the **comparison** that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone" (*Mere Christianity*, 109-10).

Larry W. Tippetts: "I have concluded that **religious people are particularly susceptible to pride**. Sometimes our very goodness, or our feeling that we have the truth, sets us up for a bad case of pride. One of the problems with pride is that **the more we are infected with it, the least likely we are to be aware of it**. President [Ezra Taft] Benson said, 'Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance.'

"Obviously, then, **we must assume we all have a problem with it**. We simply cannot fully love the Lord as long as there is any competing pride" (*Church News*, Sept. 2, 1989).

Ezra Taft Benson: "Pride is a very misunderstood sin. . . . **The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives**. They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

"Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as: rebellion, hard heartedness, stiffneckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended and sign seekers. **The proud wish God would agree with them**. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

"Certainly, to salvage our pride, **it is easy to place the blame on others**. We, nevertheless, need to rid ourselves of the festering burr before it becomes a consuming cancer that directs our rage at all we hold dear." (*Church News*, Aug. 1, 1992)

Brigham Young: "There are hundreds of people in these valleys, who never owned a cow in the world, until they came here, but now they have got a few cows and sheep around them, a yoke of oxen, and a horse to ride upon, **they feel to be personages of far greater importance than Jesus Christ was**, when he rode into Jerusalem upon an ass's colt. **They become puffed up in pride**, and selfishness, and their minds become attached to the things of this world. They become covetous, which makes them idolators. Their substance engrosses so much of their attention, **they forget their prayers**, and forget to attend the assemblies of the Saints, for they must see to their land, or to their crops that are suffering, until by and by the grasshoppers come like a cloud, and cut away the bread from their mouth, introducing famine and distress, to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God" (1853, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, 267).

Spencer W. Kimball: "All too frequently, one who has done many splendid things in life and made an excellent contribution **will let pride cause him to lose the rich reward** to which he would be entitled otherwise. We should always wear the sackcloth and ashes of a forgiving heart and a contrite spirit, being willing always to exercise genuine humility, as did the publican, and **ask the Lord to help us to forgive.**" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 297).

Gordon B. Hinckley: "Continuing with the words of Paul, 'For the love of money is the root of all evil' (1 Tim 6:10). It is the love of money and the love of those things which money can buy which destroys us. We all need money to supply our needs. **But it is the love of it which hurts us, which warps our values, which leads us away from spiritual things and fosters selfishness and greed.**" (*Ensign*, May 1997, 49).

Jeffrey R. Holland: "In the sermon on chastity, it is particularly revealing that Jacob is so sensitive to the women in his audience. Whether or not that was a result of having seen his mother in anguish over the wickedness of her eldest sons we cannot know, but it is interesting that in his unflinching declaration against sexual transgression. The Lord will not allow women to suffer. [Jacob 2:31-33,35]

"...That is a poetic, profound, 'piercing' indictment, and we have the feeling here that Jacob understood then what we unfortunately understand now--that **it is usually (but not always) the woman who suffers most in the tragedy of unchastity** and that usually (but not always) it is the transgressing man who causes the 'sobblings of the [women's] hearts to ascend up to God'" (*Heroes from the Book of Mormon*, 41-2).

Boyd K. Packer: "Some among us would rather criticize the Lord and His church than concentrate on the problems. That is a symptom of impenitence.

"Follow the Brethren.... If you don't understand a problem or a position of the Church, restrain your tongue. **Check the mote in your own eye before you criticize....** There is nothing in your lives that will destroy you if you will follow the Brethren. Enough evil doesn't exist in the world, even if it were brought together and focused on you, to destroy you **except you consent to it**" (Lucille Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower*, 158).

3. Jacob testifies of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Dean L. Larsen: "Jacob speaks of people who placed themselves in serious jeopardy in spiritual things because they were **unwilling to accept simple, basic principles of truth**. They entertained and intrigued themselves with 'things that they could not understand.' **They...obviously failed to stay within the circle of fundamental gospel truths** which provide a basis for faith. They must have reveled in speculative and theoretical matters that obscured for them the fundamental spiritual truths....

"There are other ways in which many of us often look beyond the mark. Sometimes **we focus too much of our attention and energy upon our temporal wants....** Too often we permit the narrow demands of our daily routine to dull our appreciation of the beauty of God's creations and the refining influences that are all about us. We fail to experience the fulfillment that comes from developing the gifts and talents with which we have been endowed. **We do not draw close enough to the Lord to know him and feel of his redeeming love.**" (*Ensign*, Nov 1987, pp11-12)

McConkie and Millet: "To feast upon the love of God is to partake freely of the powers of the Savior's atonement and the blessings of his gospel; it is to 'sing the song of redeeming love,' to glory in the salvation which is his and to eat of that bread of life and drink of those living waters, which are the food and drink of saved beings" (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, 26).

"Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God, having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh" (Jacob 4:11).