

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

from **MORMON DOCTRINE** by Elder Bruce R. McConkie

The process of living on earth, of seeking to work out one's salvation with fear and trembling before God, is in itself a course of education; it is a system of training, study, and discipline whereby the mental and moral powers are schooled and prepared for graduation into the eternal realms.

- Education is gained primarily from the Spirit of the Lord by revelation and secondarily from study, research, and investigation.
- Education also consists in gaining a knowledge of God and the saving truths of the gospel. No man can be saved in ignorance of Jesus Christ and the laws of salvation. . .

from **TEACHINGS OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCH, JOHN TAYLOR, Chapter 10**

A. We must be "alive in the cause of education" for ourselves and our children.

We are commanded of the Lord to obtain knowledge, both by study and by faith. We must teach our children and ourselves in every branch of education: our bodies, health, how to avoid disease, what to cook and eat, physiology of the human system, the best books, virtue, chastity, about the earth, how to read and write, how to speak correctly,

B. All true intelligence comes from God and expands our minds and souls.

Every branch of true knowledge known to man has originated in God. The principles of the gospel are calculated to expand the mind, enlarge the heart, make all men feel their relationship to God. Truth and intelligence enlarge the capacity to expand the soul.

C. The Church helps educate us about this world and the world to come.

We need teaching continually, line upon line, precept upon precept. Hence, we have various organizations of the priesthood to teach, to instruct.

- The Relief Society has done a good work and is a great assistance to our bishops; they console, bless, encourage. Continue to be diligent and faithful in instructing and training your own daughters in the fear of God.

D. Education, used righteously, can help us build Zion.

We should be acquainted with all things, should obtain intelligence both by faith and study:

- Become acquainted with governments, nations, and laws.
- Observe God's laws and fear him.
- Cultivate literary tastes
- Men of literary and scientific talent should improve that talent; all should magnify the gifts God has given them.
- The knowledge of God and our relationship to each other.

from **THE LORD'S WAY** by Elder Dallin H. Oaks

During mortality, we must learn something of the earth and its living things, and we should **also learn about the things of God**—His nature, His gospel, and His commandments for his children.

- The Lord has told us to "seek learning even by study and also by faith."
 - Seeking learning **by study**, we use the method of reason. **Reason is a thinking process** using facts and logic that can be communicated to another person and tested by measurable criteria
 - Seeking learning **by faith**, we must rely on revelation. **Revelation is communication from God** to man. It cannot be defined and tested like reason. **Revelation is an experience.**

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (D&C130:18-19).

- Note that **intelligence** is something more than **knowledge**. And note also the implication that **knowledge is obtained by diligence and intelligence is obtained by obedience**.
- We come close to an important mystery of the gospel when we understand that **the intelligence God desires us to obtain is much more than knowledge, and it cannot be obtained without obedience and revelation**. That is the Lord's way, and it is far beyond the ways of the world.

from **LEARNING IN THE LIGHT OF FAITH**, Edited by Elder Henry B. Eyring

PAUL ALAN COX—"Journey to City Creek: Adding Scholarship to Discipleship":

The gospel of Jesus Christ does not grant special status to theologians, philosophers, or other academics.

. . . Academics credentials are not requisite for service in the Lord's kingdom.

- Brigham Young's statement on education: "Will education feed and clothe you, keep you warm on a cold day, or enable you to build a house? Not at all. Should we cry down education on this account? No. What is it for?"

The improvement of the mind; to instruct us in all arts and sciences, in the history of the world, in the laws of nations; to enable u to understand the laws and principles of life, and how to be useful while we live” (JOD 14:83).

- Simply stated, **adding scholarship to discipleship better prepares us to build the kingdom.**

ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL--“The Disciple-Scholar”:

There is no democracy among truths. They are not of equal significance. These gradations might be represented geometrically by a wide, layered circle.

- **The outer layer:** Truths which are accurate descriptions of reality—facts. Short shelf life, momentary utility.
--Airline schedules, exchange rates, stock values. Useful and cannot be ignored.
- **Next circle inward:** Proximate and important truths, but not ultimate.
--These truths are useful and valuable; they are verifiable by the scientific method.
--Astrophysics tells us much about the *what* and *how* of the universe but not *why* it exists.
- **Center circle:** The “deep things of God” which come only by revelation from God; have greater significance.
--Highest order of truth, are revealed from God and tell us *why* the universe exists.

For a disciple of Jesus Christ, academic scholarship is a form of worship, another dimension of consecration.

To be a disciple-scholar in our time is a call to high adventure and to consecration! Just as one’s quest for knowledge should be unending, so too should the quest for greater love, meekness, and patience.

- In considering consecration, it is well to remember that under this principle nothing is held back. **One’s will is to be swallowed up by the will of God.**
- Most forms of holding back are rooted in pride or are prompted by the mistaken notion that somehow we are diminished by submission to God. Actually, **the greater the submission, the greater the expansion.**

ELDER CECIL D. SAMUELSON, JR.—“The Importance of Meekness in the Disciple-Scholar”:

Meekness as a noun means **patience and long-suffering**. This includes the capacity to bear pain or trials without complaint; self-control, calmness, tolerance. **Meek does not mean timid, tentative or vacillating.**

A real scholar is meek and has much to be meek about because he or she, like Nephi, does “not know the meaning of all things (1 Ne. 11:17). The scriptures teach that “to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Ne. 9:29). Remember, the Lord “despise those who are puffed up because of their learning” (2 Ne. 9:42).

- **The books I read, the movies I see, and even the thoughts I think may, in themselves, have some value but cannot and should not replace the scriptures, prayerful contemplation, and the counsel of our living oracles.**
- While we strive to be both scholars and disciples of quality, we are faced with the challenges of not only the wicked world without but also **the temptations and foibles of the “natural man” within.**

ELDER HENRY B. EYRING—“Faith, Authority, and Scholarship”:

You will find yourself working harder to learn because you have confidence that there is truth and that the Lord knows it. You will have to work hard because the truth He will reveal through His prophets to you will cover only a fraction of what you want to understand, and that will be focused mostly on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And when the prophets do speak on something which comes close to some scholarly interest of yours, you will listen very carefully, both because you have faith in their authority and because you know God would only prompt them to comment when it matters. **The creation of the earth and of mankind must matter. Which forms of government we should prefer must matter. Whether abortions are performed must matter. Whether gambling is legalized must matter.**

So with a heart guided by the Holy Ghost you will listen carefully, ready to submit when the Spirit clarifies the message for you. And when it is not yet clear, you will be persistent in your pondering, modest in your lack of understanding, and obedient to God’s authority vested in His servants.

JAMES S. JARDINE—“Consecration and Learning”:

Consecration, doing things “unto the Lord,” is both an attitude and an action. When we consecrate ourselves, we consciously reaffirm that **our works are for His glory and not ours.** . . . Consecration is not a once-in-a-lifetime event; it is a daily devotion. If we have truly consecrated our learning, we will serve with “all our mind,” whether it is in organizing the nursery or teaching a Gospel Doctrine class.

Consecration of our learning also broadens us and helps us avoid the pitfalls of narrow expertise.

- Because academia often makes us specialists, focusing our learning and education into expertise in a particular field, **there is a special challenge not to measure life and others by that expertise alone.**
- **We should beware of the potential of specialization to narrow us.** At its best, specialization can develop gifts or talents that allow us to serve others in unique or customized ways.
- **When we consecrate our learning, we invite the Spirit into our mental processes.** We believe the Spirit can lift us beyond the limitations of our senses.
- **If we genuinely consecrate ourselves and our learning, we will receive a “higher” education.**