

**Using the Scriptures:
A Guidebook for Latter-day Saint Chaplains**

**By
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**This is dedicated to my wife Anna and our three
children: Charity, Faith, and Grace.**

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Guidebook: Instruction for Use

The purpose of this guidebook is to demonstrate how the scriptures can benefit Latter-day Saint chaplains in their ministry. In addition to education, skills, experience, and character, the scriptures can greatly enhance a chaplain's ministering efforts. Use of scriptures is one way in which chaplains can "teach with power and authority from God" (Mosiah 18:26). This guidebook focuses on how the scriptures can be effectively used in preaching and pastoral counseling, and how to effectively memorize scriptures to enhance these efforts.

The resources provided in the guidebook give the chaplains a source in not only the scriptures, but in how to use them in preaching, pastoral counseling and in other religious support activities or events. The scriptures are an important aspect of a chaplain's ministry. How they are utilized and when they are used are critical elements in providing not only religious support but in ministering to the religious needs of the men and women in the armed forces.

This resource primarily contains information about the purposes of scriptures, how to use scriptures in preaching and in pastoral counseling, and the value of memorizing scriptures as an important capability of the chaplain's ministry.

This guidebook also provides information on selected scriptures that can be used in pastoral counseling and in a ministry setting that are provided in formatted tables in the following areas: scripture and its purpose, scriptures about preaching, scriptures for pastoral counseling, and scriptures about treasuring up the word of God.

It is the author's belief that a balance needs to be struck between underutilizing and overutilizing the scriptures in the chaplaincy, nevertheless, most would benefit from additional use of scripture. The more the scriptures are valued and feasted upon in chaplains' personal devotion, the more meaningful they will become in their

ministry.

This guidebook therefore is a tool that chaplains can use to help them as they strive to utilize the scriptures more fully as the powerful resource that it was intended to be.

As chaplains impart the word of God found in the scriptures, the power of the Holy Ghost will touch the hearts of those whom they serve in meaningful and dramatic ways.

Use of Scripture for Latter-day Saint Chaplains

The scriptures are an invaluable resource for Latter-day Saint military chaplains. Since chaplains are responsible “for religious support and spiritual care,” scriptures are naturally an important tool in their ministry.¹ Scriptures can be useful for religious support in a variety of settings, including “worship, religious rites, sacraments and ordinances, holy days and observances, pastoral care and counseling, and religious education.”² They can be helpful in fulfilling various Latter-day Saint church callings, giving a short devotional in a spontaneous military setting, delivering a sermon in a general Christian worship service, and in “pastoral counseling for service-members and their dependents.”^{3,4}

Preaching in a non-denominational Christian service is one way in which Latter-day Saint chaplains fulfill their responsibility to “provide religious worship.”⁵ From the book of Alma, the reader learns that “the preaching of the word ha[s] a great tendency to lead the people to do that which [is] just” and has a “powerful effect upon the minds of the people” (Alma 31:5).⁶ In Christian general worship services, chaplains can “teach the principles of [the] gospel, which are in the Bible” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:12). Having a reservoir of memorized scriptures from which to draw upon gives the chaplain flexibility of tailoring a sermon based on the needs of the attendants

1. Department of the Air Force, *Chaplain: Planning and Organization*, AFI 52–101 (Washington, DC: Department of the Airforce, 2019), 1.1.

2. Department of the Army, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, AR 165–1 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2015), 2–3.

3. *Chaplain: Planning and Organization*, AFI 52–101, 1.2.1.4.

4. The scriptures can also be used for the personal spiritual development of the chaplain.

5. *Chaplain: Planning and Organization*, AFI 52–101, 2.1.

6. Preaching the word can also have a powerful effect on the hearts of the people (Alma 5:11–13).

and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.⁷ There are different styles of preaching, such as expository, narrative, textual, thematic, and topical preaching. The chaplain can incorporate one or more of these styles as he uses the scriptures to share the word of God with the congregants.

Similarly, chaplains can provide spiritual care through sharing short devotional messages with groups of servicemembers that inspire, encourage, and bring hope to the individual.⁸ The length of a devotional varies,⁹ but chaplains are sometimes only given one minute to deliver an inspiring message.¹⁰ Under these circumstances, chaplains could recite a scripture from memory as part of their devotional. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that “memorizing scriptures is like filling a filing cabinet with friends, values, and truths that can be called upon anytime, anywhere in the world.”¹¹

A specific role of chaplains is to “provide faith-based pastoral counseling [and] to deliver solution-focused care.”¹² It is important to note that pastoral counseling is not the same thing as biblical counseling. Biblical counseling, also known as nouthetic¹³ counseling, refers to “teaching and admonishing those in sin and struggles to

7. “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:21).

8. *Chaplain: Planning and Organization*, AFI 52–101, 1.1.

9. Devotional messages in a military setting are typically between two and three minutes long.

10. Roger Benimoff, *Faith Under Fire: An Army Chaplain's Memoir*, ed. Eve Conant (New York: Crown Publishers, 2009), 4.

11. Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, November 2011, 6.

12. *Chaplain: Planning and Organization*, AFI 52–101, 1.2.1.4.

13. Nouthetic comes from the Greek νουθετεῖν meaning “to admonish.” Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “nouthetic,” accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www-oed-com.erl.lib.byu.edu/view/Entry/246255>.

turn to God and His Word for answers, rather than turning to philosophies and therapies offered by the world.”¹⁴ As the bridge between modern psychotherapy and traditional biblical counseling, pastoral counseling lets chaplains use both scripture and psychotherapeutic techniques to meet the needs of the people they counsel. As David Benner put it, “Pastoral Counseling can be both distinctively pastoral and psychologically informed” as counselors utilize “appropriate insights of modern therapeutic psychology in a manner that protects both the integrity of the pastoral role and the unique resources of Christian ministry.”¹⁵

Chaplains need to exercise practical wisdom in their use of scripture. The word of God found in the scriptures has the potential to heal “the wounded soul” and bring others unto Christ (Jacob 2:8). When used inappropriately, however, the scriptures can be a hindrance rather than a help. Regarding the use of scripture in pastoral counseling, Benner explained, “it is crucial that they be employed with care and sensitivity. ... Prayer, Scripture reading, and other religious resources carry heavy, negative emotional freight for some people.”¹⁶ Although the scriptures should not be used as default spiritual band-aids for everyone that visits a chaplain, tactful use of scripture can enhance faith-based counseling.

Memorizing scriptures can greatly enhance the ability of the chaplain to use scriptures in devotionals, sermons, and pastoral counseling.¹⁷ As Latter-day Saint chaplains memorize scriptures, they are equipping themselves with “words of wisdom” that can be appropriately shared with servicemembers in teaching, pastoral counseling,

14. Bob Kelleman and Kevin Carson, ed., *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God's Care Through God's People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 56.

15. David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 14.

16. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 37–38.

17. Memorization can also be used by chaplains to remember quotes, poems, stories, names, historical facts, spiritual experiences, etc.

and other settings.¹⁸ When they need to teach a gospel principle or respond to a faith-related question, they can draw upon their memory bank of scriptures. As Elder Jörg Klebingat of the Seventy explained, “the Lord typically can only ‘bring to your remembrance’ (John 14:26) that which you first put there.”¹⁹ Principles of effective memorization include repetition, spaced review, and organized learning.

Repetition can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the content of the information that is being committed to memory.²⁰ Repetition is required in memorizing new information and in reviewing old information. A specific aspect of repetition is spaced reviews. Spaced reviews are one of the most effective ways to commit something to long-term memory, and they involve tactful use of repetition. Organized learning refers to systematizing the information that is memorized.

18. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118. President Thomas S. Monson considered the standard works to be the “best books” from which we seek “words of wisdom.” He explained, “Concerning making our personal lives and our homes libraries of learning, the Lord counseled, ‘Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.’ The standard works offer the library of learning of which I speak.” Thomas S. Monson, “Dedication Day,” *Ensign*, November 2000, 65.

19. Jörg Klebingat, *Effective Scripture Study: Key to Personal Revelation* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2015), chap. 8, Deseret Bookshelf.

20. For example, the learner can repeat information vocally or mentally, and can quiz oneself through flashcards, multiple choice questions, teaching a topic to someone else, etc.

Purposes of the Scriptures

This section will primarily draw from the standard works and words of the prophets to outline various purposes of the scriptures. The scriptures are essential to the life and ministry of chaplains in many ways. In one passage, Paul the Apostle explains that “the holy scriptures...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:15–16). From this one passage alone, multiple purposes of the scriptures are set forth. Among other things, the scriptures provide doctrine, knowledge, healing, convincing power, motivation to repent, protection against temptation, and direction.

Doctrine

Paul teaches that the scriptures are “profitable for doctrine” (2 Timothy 3:16). The word “doctrine” is translated from the Greek *didaskalia*, meaning “teaching.”²¹ “Christian doctrine is composed of teachings which are to be handed on through instruction and proclamation.”²² Within a Latter-day Saint context, doctrine refers to official Church teachings that are generally understood to represent eternal truths. The “doctrine resides in the four ‘standard works’ of scripture (the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and

21. John R. Kohlenberger III, Edward W. Goodrick, and James A. Swanson, *The Greek English Concordance to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), s.v. “*didaskalia*.”

22. Trent C. Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), s.v. “doctrine.”

Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price).”^{23, 24} The scriptures are a foundational source for teaching and understanding eternal truths.²⁵

Knowledge

About a year before his martyrdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “knowledge is necessary to life and Godliness,” “knowledge is revelation,” and “knowledge is the power of God unto Salvation.”²⁶ Knowledge is of great importance to Latter-day Saints, since it is understood that “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” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:19). Studying the scriptures is one of the primary ways through which we can obtain gospel knowledge. Through Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible,²⁷ he illuminated the truth that “the key of knowledge [is] the fullness of the scriptures (JST, Luke

23. “Approaching Mormon Doctrine,” Newsroom, May 4, 2007, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/approaching-mormon-doctrine>.

24. Former Church President Joseph Fielding Smith taught, “It makes no difference what is written or what anyone has said, if what has been said is in conflict with what the Lord has revealed, can set it aside. My words, and the teachings of any other member of the Church, high or low, if they do not square with the revelations, we need not accept them. Let us have this matter clear. We have accepted the four standard works as the measuring yardsticks, or balances, by which we measure every man’s doctrine.” Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (1955), 3:203.

25. “Because scriptures are generated from inspired communication through the Holy Ghost, they are pure truth. We need not be concerned about the validity of concepts contained in the standard works since the Holy Ghost has been the instrument which has motivated and inspired those individuals who have recorded the scriptures.” Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

26. “Discourse, 21 May 1843, as Reported by Howard Coray,” 40, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 15, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-21-may-1843-as-reported-by-howard-coray/5>.

27. The most significant changes and additions that Joseph Smith made in his translation of the Bible have been included in the most recent (2013) English edition of the standard works—in the footnotes and in an appendix.

The fulness of the scriptures likely refers to the standard works, as well as Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. In Doctrine and Covenants 104:58–59, the Lord instructs Joseph, “for this purpose I have commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my words, the fulness of my scriptures, the revelations which I have given unto you, and which I shall, hereafter, from time to time give unto you—For the purpose of building up my church and kingdom on the earth, and to prepare my people for the time when I shall dwell with them, which is nigh at hand.” The uncanonized text that immediately follows this verse provides additional context: “Therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall take the books of Mormon and also the copy-right, and also the copy-right which shall be secured of the Articles and covenants, in which covenants all my commandments which it is my will should be printed, shall be printed, as it shall be made known unto you; and also the copy-right of the New translation of the scriptures.”³⁰ From this passage, it seems that the Lord is describing what the fulness of the scriptures would tangibly consist of. He mentions the Book of Mormon, Articles and Covenants (which would later become the Doctrine and Covenants), and Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible (which would also lead to the Pearl of Great Price).

28. The summary of this verse in the Joseph Smith Translation Appendix of the 2013 edition of the standard works states simply that “the fulness of the scriptures is the key of knowledge.”

29. Referring to this verse, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “without the divine disclosures God has given to us [in the scriptures], we face all the usual dangers of incomplete information, but these are compounded by cosmic consequences when we are ignorant, or heedless, of these key truths. We should seek these ‘key’ truths, not simply because such truths are shiningly there, but because it is by their light ‘that we see everything else!’” Neal A. Maxwell, *Smallest Part* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1973), 7.

30. “Revelation Book 1,” p. 196, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed February 11, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-book-1/184>.

Healing

The words contained in the scriptures can provide healing for the reader. Jacob taught that “the pleasing word of God...healeth the wounded soul” (Jacob 2:8). As Nephi explained, “we write...that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26). Jesus Christ is the Master Healer,³¹ and the scriptures point the reader to him and teach “his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him” and receive spiritual healing (1 Nephi 15:14). The scriptures can be used “for the purpose of empowering people, families, and congregations to heal their brokenness and to grow toward wholeness in their lives.”³² Elder Scott taught, “Scriptures can calm an agitated soul, giving peace, hope, and a restoration of confidence in one’s ability to overcome the challenges of life. They have potent power to heal emotional challenges when there is faith in the Savior. They can accelerate physical healing.”³³

Convincing Power

In Doctrine and Covenants 11:21, the Lord explained how to receive “convincing power” (3 Nephi 28:29). He instructed, “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of

31. Carole M. Stephens, “The Master Healer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, November 2016, 10–11.

32. Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 8.

33. Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

men.” In reference to being blessed with this convincing power,³⁴ President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, explained that “with daily study of the scriptures, we can count on this blessing even in casual conversations.”³⁵ Alma declared that without the scriptures, “Ammon and his brethren could not have convinced so many thousands of the Lamanites of the incorrect tradition of their fathers” (Alma 37:8–9). While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder Jay E. Jensen taught that one of the main promises that come through scripture study is the “power to teach convincingly.”³⁶

Motivation to Repent

Alma explains that the scriptures “brought [the Lamanites] unto repentance; that is, they brought them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and to rejoice in Jesus Christ their Redeemer” (Alma 37:9). The scriptures are filled with admonitions to repent. President Russell M. Nelson explains, “The word repent (to teach the doctrine of repentance) in any of its forms (repent, repentance, repented, repenteth, and so on) appears 72 times in the King James Version of the Bible and 68 times in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. In the Book of Mormon, the word repent in any of its forms appears 360 times.”³⁷ President Nelson taught that “when we choose to repent, we choose to change! We allow the Savior to transform us

34. Nephi, one of the twelve Nephite disciples, was blessed with convincing power to the extent that it was impossible for others to not believe what he taught. “And Nephi did minister with power and with great authority. And it came to pass that they were angry with him, even because he had greater power than they, for it were not possible that they could disbelieve his words” (3 Nephi 7:17–18). He had been given stewardship by his father Nephi, the son of Helaman, over all the plates and records that made up the Nephites’ scriptural library (3 Nephi 1:2), and he had been tutored by his father “who knew concerning the true points of doctrine” (Helaman 11:23).

35. Henry B. Eyring, “Feed My Lambs,” *Ensign*, November 1997, 83.

36. Jay E. Jensen, “Remember Also the Promises,” *Ensign*, November 1992, 81.

37. Russell M. Nelson, “Repentance and Conversion,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 104.

into the best version of ourselves. ... When we choose to repent, we choose to become more like Jesus Christ!”³⁸ Elder Weatherford T. Clayton of the Seventy declared, “when we read the scriptures and ponder them, we are repenting. As we make changes because of what we are learning about Christ and His gospel, we are repenting.”³⁹

Protection Against Temptation

The scriptures equip the reader with power against the temptations of the adversary.⁴⁰ Nephi explained, “whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24). President Nelson similarly promised “that as you daily immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon, you can be immunized against the evils of the day, even the gripping plague of pornography and other mind-numbing addictions.”⁴¹ Jesus also promised in his mortal ministry that “whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37). He demonstrated this principle by how he reacted when the devil tempted him in the wilderness. “For each of the temptations that Satan proposed Jesus responded with scriptural passages. The lesson for us is clear: We should never underestimate the power of the scriptures to counter the adversary.”⁴²

38. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.

39. Weatherford T. Clayton, “The Rock of Our Redeemer” (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 14, 2017), 2, speeches.byu.edu.

40. Paul implored, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). This armor included “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

41. Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, November 2017, 63.

42. Gaye Strathearn, “Christ Used Scripture to Counter Adversary,” *Church News*, Jan. 4, 2002.

Direction

The scriptures can effectively guide us through this journey of mortality.⁴³ Nephi declared, “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).⁴⁴ Alma compared the words of Christ to the *Liahona*.⁴⁵ He taught, “For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise” (Alma 37:45). Bishop H. David Burton, former Presiding Bishop, taught, “The scriptures provide direction, warnings, encouragement and a map to pattern our lives after.”⁴⁶ Elder Scott taught,

Throughout the ages, Father in Heaven has inspired select men and women to find, through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, solutions to life’s most perplexing problems. He has inspired those authorized servants to record those solutions as a type of handbook for those of His children who have faith in His plan of happiness and in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We have ready

43. “Our Father in Heaven understood that for us to make desired progress during our mortal probation, we would need to face difficult challenges. Some of these would be almost overpowering. He provided tools to help us be successful in our mortal probation. One set of those tools is the scriptures.” Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

44. If the reader treasures up the word, the Holy Ghost is then able to “bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26), and the Holy Ghost “will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

45. Referring to the *Liahona*, Nephi explained that “the pointers which were in the ball...did work according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them. And there was also written upon them a new writing, which was plain to be read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it. And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did go forth up into the top of the mountain, according to the directions which were given upon the ball” (1 Nephi 16:28–30).

46. “Safe Trip Home,” *Church News*, May 8, 2010.

access to this guidance through the treasure we call the standard works—that is, the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price⁴⁷

Applications for Latter-day Saint Chaplains

Since the scriptures can provide doctrine, knowledge, healing, convincing power, motivation to repent, protection against temptation, and direction, they are very applicable to Latter-day Saint chaplains. Concerning doctrine, Latter-day Saint chaplains are expected to “be firmly grounded in the teachings and doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”^{48, 49} Since it is a prerequisite for chaplains to earn “a post-baccalaureate graduate degree in the field of theological or related studies from a qualifying educational institution,” they are often seen as experts in religious matters, including the scriptures and church doctrine.⁵⁰ In order to live up to that expectation, it would be wise for chaplains to strive to learn “line upon, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” until they know “concerning the true points of doctrine” (2 Nephi 28:30; Helaman 11:23).⁵¹

Since “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,” chaplains can use the scriptures as the

47. Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

48. “Introduction,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/military/military-chaplain-introduction?lang=eng>.

49. They are also expected to possess the attributes of “faith, hope, charity, love, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, kindness, godliness, humility, and diligence.” Additionally, they are expected to “possess good listening and [pastoral] counseling skills, and have a strong and abiding testimony of the restored gospel.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Introduction.”

50. Department of Defense, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, DOD Instruction 1304.28 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 4.

51. “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass” (Deuteronomy 32:2).

doctrinal basis for teaching (2 Timothy 3:16). As President Boyd K. Packer explained, “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”⁵² In pastoral counseling and informal ministering opportunities, chaplains will have opportunities to teach doctrinal principles from the scriptures, which can result in positive changes to attitude and behavior.^{53, 54} In preaching at general Christian worship services, Latter-day Saint chaplains can “teach the principles of [the] gospel, which are in the Bible,” but they normally do not include direct references to restoration scripture (Doctrine and Covenants 42:12).⁵⁵ However, it is implied in their theology.⁵⁶ Additionally, in their personal preparation, they can study restoration scripture and the words of the living prophets to be personally edified and to make sure that they stay

52. Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17.

53. President John Taylor reported, “Some years ago, in Nauvoo, a gentleman in my hearing, a member of the Legislature, asked Joseph Smith how it was that he was enabled to govern so many people, and to preserve such perfect order; remarking at the same time that it was impossible for them to do it anywhere else. Mr. Smith remarked that it was very easy to do that. ‘How?’ responded the gentleman; ‘to us it is very difficult.’ Mr. Smith replied, ‘I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.’” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Publishing by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 284.

54. “And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:77).

55. Restoration scripture includes The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Holy Bible (including Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible).

56. “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince” (Titus 1:9). Paul the Apostle further taught, “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).

within the parameters of Latter-day Saint doctrine as they preach.^{57, 58}

It is essential for chaplains to equip themselves with “the key of knowledge, the fullness of the scriptures” (JST, Luke 11:53). The scriptures can be used to unlock “great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (Doctrine and Covenants 89:19). As chaplains diligently study the scriptures to acquire more gospel knowledge and doctrinal understanding, they develop a greater capacity to live their lives according to gospel principles and the laws of God,⁵⁹ and “to bring others “to the knowledge of the truth” (Alma 37:19).

Since the scriptures can provide personal healing, chaplains

57. It can also be helpful to study the words of the living prophets and other church leaders to understand how the scriptures are interpreted and applied within the Church today. This will help chaplains be true to “the points of doctrine which [have] been laid down by the prophets” (Helaman 11:22).

58. The Lord commanded Hyrum Smith, “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men. But now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, and then shall all things be added thereto” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:22).

59. The scriptures can help chaplains in their own spiritual growth and personal development. Principles from the standard works can facilitate healthy paradigm shifts. For example, one scripture that can result in a change of attitude and behavior is Alma 7:24, “And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works.” Understanding this scripture could change a person’s focus from perfectionistic pressure on a checklist of desired actions toward a focus on becoming like the Savior and developing his attributes. As chaplains focus on developing the attributes of faith, hope, and charity, they will find that their actions flow from their character in natural, powerful ways. Another important scriptural principle is that chaplains should focus on receiving honor from God, instead of from other people. One scripture that teaches this principle is John 5:41, in which Jesus explains, “I receive not honour from men.” It is a natural inclination to want to be recognized, but chaplains can work on caring more about what God thinks than what others think.

can rely on the scriptures as they cope through difficult trials.⁶⁰ The words in the scriptures have the potential “to heal the brokenhearted” and can be used to help those whom they serve develop “hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection” (Luke 4:18; Moroni 7:41). The scriptures can also provide solace to the inquiring mind and help navigate others through trials of faith. The scriptures provide “answers [to] the great questions of the soul.”⁶¹ As *Preach My Gospel* states,

As we begin to understand that the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are the way to the abundant life, we will appreciate that these principles help answer any question and fill any need. For example, we understand that repentance, forgiveness, and the covenant to serve others are essential in improving relationships with our spouses. We see that faith in Christ, accepting and keeping covenants, and following the promptings of the Spirit can help teenagers avoid the powerful temptations that surround them. The gospel can resolve almost any question or need. This is why you are to “teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:12).⁶²

As chaplains diligently work to “treasure up in [their] minds continually the words of life,” they invite the Lord’s power into their lives and ministry (Doctrine and Covenants 84:85). As they do the work necessary to obtain the word of God, they will be able to teach “with power and authority of God” and bring others unto Christ “because of the convincing power of God which is in them” (Alma 17:3; 3 Nephi 28:29). Since the scriptures provide motivation

60. “And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them” (Doctrine and Covenants 112:13).

61. Ezra Taft Benson, “Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, November 1988, 5.

62. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (Salt Lake City, UT: Publishing by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), 114.

to repent, protection against temptation, and direction, they can be used by chaplains to assist others along their personal spiritual journeys.⁶³ However, scriptures need to be tactfully employed so that the chaplain does not come across with a condemning or commanding demeanor.⁶⁴ When used effectively, the word of God is a powerful tool that can change hearts.⁶⁵

Elder Scott taught, “Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.” Accordingly, it is very important for chaplains to spend consistent personal time in the scriptures.⁶⁶ The following scriptural compilation is intended to reinforce chaplains’ understanding regarding the importance and applicability of the scriptures.

63. Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “the preferred strategy of the adversary is to lead people away from God and cause them to stumble by emphasizing the philosophies of men over the Savior and His teachings.” Quentin L. Cook, “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” *Ensign or Liahona*, November 2016, 41. Chaplains can help combat the efforts of the adversary by emphasizing teachings from the scriptures.

64. They may “use boldness, but not overbearance” (Alma 38:12).

65. “Did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi? And was he not a holy prophet? Did he not speak the words of God, and my father Alma believe them? And according to his faith there was a mighty change wrought in his heart. Behold I say unto you that this is all true. And behold, he preached the word unto your fathers, and a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts” (Alma 5:11–13).

66. President Nelson has recently taught, “As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to hear Him need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths. We simply cannot rely upon information we bump into on social media. With billions of words online and in a marketing-saturated world constantly infiltrated by noisy, nefarious efforts of the adversary, where can we go to hear Him? We can go to the scriptures...Daily immersion in the word of God is crucial for spiritual survival, especially in these days of increasing upheaval. As we feast on the words of Christ daily, the words of Christ will tell us how to respond to difficulties we never thought we would face.” Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2020, 89.

Scriptural Compilation on the Purposes for the Scriptures

As a source of truth, knowledge, and doctrine, the standard works outline many different purposes of the scriptures. As chaplains prayerfully study the following verses, they can deepen their understanding concerning the purposes and blessings of the scriptures. This experience can motivate them to access the power of the scriptures in new and meaningful ways in their personal lives and ministries.⁶⁷

Purposes for the Scriptures
Convincing Power
D&C 11:21–22
Guidance
2 Nephi 32:3
Alma 31:5
D&C 33:16
Psalms 119:105
Healing
Jacob 3:8
Hope
Romans 15:4 (KJV) (NIV)
Knowledge and Doctrine
Alma 17:2–3
JST, Luke 11:53
2 Timothy 3:15–16 (KJV) (NIV)
Titus 1:9 (KJV) (NIV)
Lead by Faith
Helaman 15:7
Lead to Salvation

67. Chaplains can prayerfully consider the following question posed by Elder Scott: “How do you personally use the scriptures?” Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

D&C 35:20
D&C 68:4
Motivation to Repent
Alma 37:8–9
Persuade to Believe
1 Nephi 19:23
2 Nephi 33:4–5
Preparation for the Second Coming
D&C 104:58–59
Preserve the Commandments
1 Nephi 5:21
Protection Against Temptation
1 Nephi 15:24
Helaman 3:29–30
Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37
Principles for Teaching
D&C 42:12–15
<i>What do these scriptures mean to you? What other related scriptures can you find? How would you use these scriptures?</i>

Using Scriptures in Preaching

This section will give an overview of the various styles of preaching, including expository, narrative, textual, thematic, and topical, to illustrate the different ways that the scriptures can be effectively used in a preaching setting. Aspects of the different preaching models can be employed in giving a talk, preaching at a General Christian worship service, and sharing a spontaneous or planned short devotional message. The commonality between each style of preaching is that they all require the use of scripture to declare the

word of God.⁶⁸ In a discussion on applications for Latter-day Saint chaplains, principles of effectively using the scriptures in preaching will be shared, followed by a scriptural compilation on preaching.

Expository

As Graeme Bradford explains,

True expository preaching is biblical preaching. It selects a passage of Scripture that is a natural thought unit. It finds out what the author is trying to say to the original listeners. It makes the main idea of the passage the main idea of the sermon, and the sub-ideas of the passage the sub-ideas of the sermon. It allows the preacher to blend his or her ideas into the mold set by the scriptural passage. It demands that the authority for preaching comes from the authority of the Word of God. It applies the message of the passage to current problems inhabiting the lives of people in the congregation.⁶⁹

Floyd Bresee similarly states, “Expository preaching is preaching based on a significant Bible passage so that the sermon’s principal lessons originate in Scripture and are applied to a present human need. In its broadest sense, expository preaching is simply biblical preaching.”⁷⁰ Jeff Ray explains that expository preaching is “the detailed explanation, logical amplification, and practical explanation of a passage of Scripture.”⁷¹ Donald Miller defines expository preaching as “an act wherein the living truth of some portion of Holy Scripture, understood in the light of solid exegetical and historical study and made a living reality to the preacher by the Holy Spirit,

68. “The scriptures provide the strength of authority to our declarations when they are cited correctly.” Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

69. Graeme Bradford, “Making Expository Preaching Relevant and Interesting,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, September 2000, 26–27.

70. W. Floyd Bresee, “Expository Preaching,” *Ministry: International Journal for Clergy*, January 1994, 7.

71. Jeff Ray, *Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), 11.

comes alive to the hearer.”⁷²

There are three main stages associated with expository preaching. An expository sermon “(1) discovers the actual intent of the biblical writer; (2) finds the timeless truth that is taught; and (3) applies that truth to the contemporary hearers in their cultural context.”⁷³ Discovering the author’s intent requires careful scripture study and focused sermon preparation. It is important to read the verses that precede and follow the selected pericope to fully contextualize what is going on in the passage.⁷⁴ “Biblical stories...serve to help us learn timeless principles, which can then be brought into the full light of the contemporary human scene.”⁷⁵

Narrative

Des Cummings, Jr. simply defines narrative preaching as “preaching the story passages of Scripture. The narrative sermon focuses on revealing to the hearer the truth about life contained in the interactions between God and man and fellow human beings.”⁷⁶ Fred B. Craddock explains, “biblical material is appropriate to storytelling. Much of it exists in forms of stories. Some of it still carries the residue of story and some of it is going to be put in the air, if not as story, at least in oral form.”⁷⁷ He further instructs, “Stories are not decorative embroidering on the gospel. The gospel itself is a story, and one will not do well using stories only to illustrate a heavy text. One does well as a storyteller when reaching the point wherein the story carries the gospel, like a seed carries its future in its own

72. Donald Miller, *The Way to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 17.

73. Bradford, “Making Expository Preaching Relevant and Interesting,” 27.

74. Expository preaching “comes mainly from a Bible passage longer than two or three consecutive verses.” Andrew W. Blackwood, *Expository Preaching for Today* (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1953), 13.

75. Bradford, “Making Expository Preaching Relevant and Interesting,” 27–28.

76. Des Cummings, Jr., “Narrative Preaching,” *Ministry: A Magazine for Clergy*, August 1984, 7.

77. Fred B. Craddock, *Craddock: On the Craft of Preaching* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2011), 20.

bosom.”⁷⁸

Textual

Expository and textual preaching are closely related, and there is a lot of overlap between the meaning of these two preaching forms. The difference between these two styles usually has to do with the length of the selected passage of scripture. Steven P. Vitrano explains, “The textual sermon may involve a sentence or two, a paragraph, or a longer passage such as a chapter or a whole book of the Bible. A sermon involving a longer passage has traditionally been called an expository sermon.”⁷⁹ Rex D. Edwards further explains the difference between the two:

What is the distinction between the textual and the expositional sermon? In the textual sermon, the text—usually a verse—furnishes the topic of the main divisions of the message. It may follow the natural divisions of the text, it may consist of inferences drawn from the text, or it may be based upon a great truth within the text. When the sermon divisions are derived partly from the text and partly from the subject, we have a textual-topical sermon. An expository sermon, on the other hand, is based upon a passage or a unit of Scripture, and the theme with its divisions and development comes from that passage. The expositor is concerned about the biblical truth as the sacred writer declared it.⁸⁰

Thematic

Thematic preaching is based on an overarching theme from the scriptures. W. Floyd Bresee simply defines a sermon theme as “the

78. Craddock, *On the Craft of Preaching*, 24.

79. Steven P. Vitrano, “Preaching from Longer Passages,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, June 1974, 42.

80. Rex D. Edwards, “The Art of Expository Preaching,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, December 1994, 6.

gist of your sermon in a sentence.”⁸¹ There is significant overlap between thematic preaching and the other forms of preaching. In a broad sense, many, if not most, sermons can be considered thematic because there is a central theme. Themes are not the same thing as topics. Bresee explains,

Do not, however, confuse your sermon subject with your sermon theme. Your subject is what you’re going to talk about. Your theme is what you’re going to say about it; Congregations quite often remember the preacher’s subject, but the subject, by itself, has nothing to carry people through the week. It won’t help your people much to remember that your subject was “The righteousness of Christ,” but it will help them to remember your theme, “We are saved, not because we are good, but because Christ is good.” It won’t attract many people to your congregation’s fellowship if they remember that your sermon subject was “the church,” but some might be power fully drawn by remembering your theme, “Surrounded by loving Christians, we learn to love Christ.”⁸²

Topical

Bresee defines a topical sermon as “one in which the subject is chosen and the Bible as a whole is researched on that topic. The content and form owe more to the topic than to any one passage of Scripture. Topical preachers usually begin their sermon by choosing a topic and then developing it in depth with the aid of a topical Bible or a concordance.”⁸³ Normally, a specific theme will also arise from topical preaching. There is a lot of overlap between the various styles of preaching, and it is often the case that a sermon is the combination of two or more different styles. Bresee explains, “There is signif-

81. W. Floyd Bresee, “Finding a Theme,” *Ministry: A Magazine for Clergy*, June 1984, 9.

82. Bresee, “Finding a Theme,” 9.

83. W. Floyd Bresee, “Should You Try Topical Preaching?”, *Ministry: International Journal for Clergy*, November 1991, 26.

icance, however, in whether we begin our sermon preparation by investigating a passage, a topic, [a theme,] or a narrative.”⁸⁴ The final product of the sermon will likely include elements of expository, narrative, textual, thematic, and topical preaching.

Applications for Latter-day Saint Chaplains

Thomas G. Long explains that the opportunity “to be a preacher is to be entrusted with the task of speaking the one word that humanity most urgently and desperately needs to hear, the glad tidings of God’s redemption through Jesus Christ.”⁸⁵ The various styles of preaching can aid Latter-day Saint chaplains in effectively declaring the word of God. It is important for chaplains to develop their own personal style of preaching. They can also employ principles from other styles depending on the message they are impressed to deliver. Bresee explains, “Our purpose in preaching is to teach a biblical Christ and motivate our listeners to follow Him. We never do it well enough. Maybe a little experimentation with different sermon types will help us do it better.”⁸⁶

Vitrano explains that God “will impress you with the theme or lead you to the text He wants you to proclaim. Whether you proceed topically or textually you will always proceed Biblically. In other words, as you read and study the Bible you will be impressed to preach upon either one of the great truths of the Bible or one of the great texts of the Bible.”⁸⁷ Since “the preaching of the word ha[s] a great tendency to lead the people to do that which [is] just,” and has a “more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else,” it is important for sermons or talks to be rooted in the word of God (Alma 31:5). Bresse teaches, “The closer we stay to

84. Bresee, “Should You Try Topical Preaching?”, 27.

85. Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 13.

86. Bresee, “Should You Try Topical Preaching?”, 27.

87. Steven P. Vitrano, “Organizing the Topical Sermon,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, February 1974, 41.

getting our sermons from Scripture, the more balanced they will be and the more balanced our listeners will become.”⁸⁸

For Latter-day Saint chaplains who have the opportunity to preach regularly, it is important “to make sure that you schedule regular time for sermon preparation. Without a plan, the tyranny of the urgent will take over.”⁸⁹ Good sermons require much preparation and effort. Craddock explains, “Preaching is the concerted engagement of one’s faculties of body, mind, and spirit.”⁹⁰ It takes a daily, personal investment of time studying the scriptures and regular time devoted to personal preparation to develop sermons that are relevant and inspiring to the individuals in the congregation. “The message of the text must be translated into the idiom of the congregation and presented in such a way that it is clearly seen to address the contemporary situation.”⁹¹

Teaching in the Savior’s Way provides multiple principles that can help chaplains as they prepare to preach.⁹² The manual begins by declaring that “the goal of every gospel teacher [or preacher] ... is to teach the pure doctrine of the gospel, by the Spirit, in order to help God’s children build their faith in the Savior and become more like Him.”⁹³ Teaching, or preaching, in the Savior’s way is more than just a skill to be learned—it is a process of repenting and becoming

88. Bresee, “Expository Preaching,” 8.

89. Derek J. Morris, “Preach Effectively without Notes,” *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, October 2006, 14.

90. Fred B. Craddock. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985, 17.

91. Joseph J. Battistone, “How to Prepare Effective Biblical Sermons,” *Ministry: Magazine for Clergy*, February 1979, 9.

92. The principles discussed in this manual can help chaplains preach in the Savior’s way. For the purposes of this discussion, the words “teach” and “preach” will be used synonymously. These principles can be helpful in delivering sermons, sharing devotions, and in small group worship in a military setting.

93. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* (Salt Lake City, UT: Publishing by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016).

incrementally more like the Savior.⁹⁴ “Power to truly teach in His way will come as you learn of Him and follow Him.”⁹⁵ It is vital for chaplains to be worthy so that the Spirit can teach through them.⁹⁶ The manual instructs, “Do all you can to invite the influence of the Holy Ghost.”⁹⁷ As chaplains prepare themselves spiritually, “the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him,” will carry the message “unto the hearts” of the people in the congregation (1 Nephi 10:17; 2 Nephi 33:1).⁹⁸ One of the most important principles of teaching in the Savior’s way is to “love those you teach.”⁹⁹ The manual explains,

Everything the Savior did throughout His earthly ministry was motivated by love—His love for His Father and His love for all of us. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can be filled with this same love as we strive to be true followers of Christ (see John 13:34–35; Moroni 7:48; 8:26). With Christlike love in our hearts, we will seek every possible way to help others learn of Christ and come unto Him. Love will be the reason and motivation for our teaching.

As chaplains prepare to deliver their messages, they can “pray to know and understand [the audience’s] specific needs, and ask Heavenly Father to ‘prepare their hearts’ (Alma 16:16) to learn the things

94. “The Savior’s power to teach and lift others came from the way He lived and the kind of person He was. The more diligently you strive to live like Jesus Christ, the more you will be able to teach like Him.” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 13.

95. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 4.

96. The Lord declared, “if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:14).

97. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 10.

98. “Sometimes teachers may be tempted to think that it is their knowledge or methods or personality that inspires those they teach. This attitude prevents them from inviting the Holy Ghost to teach class members and change their hearts. Your purpose as a teacher is not to make an impressive presentation but rather to help others receive the influence of the Holy Ghost, who is the true teacher.” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 10.

99. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 6.

that will help meet those needs.”¹⁰⁰ Chaplains should be willing to adjust their style of preaching to meet the needs of the people they teach.¹⁰¹ “Christlike teachers are not committed to a particular style or method; they are committed to helping people build faith in Jesus Christ and become more like Him.”¹⁰²

It is vital for chaplains to teach correct doctrinal principles.¹⁰³ “The doctrine found in the scriptures and in the words of latter-day prophets has the power to change hearts and increase faith.”¹⁰⁴ “The Savior has commanded us to ‘teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom’ (D&C 88:77). As we do, the Holy Ghost bears witness of the truthfulness of the doctrine and inspires people to live it. Doctrine does not change—rather, it changes us, and it changes those we teach.”¹⁰⁵ As chaplains study the following scriptural compilation on preaching, they can be blessed with personal revelation concerning additional applications of preaching in the Savior’s way. They can also consider how the various styles of preaching can help them achieve the objectives outlined in the scriptures.

Scriptural Compilation on Preaching

The standard works contain hundreds of references to preaching. Preaching is a foundational principle in the Bible and in restoration scripture. This scriptural compilation is a representative sample of relevant scriptures on preaching for Latter-day Saint chaplains. These

100. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 6.

101. “The central focus of your teaching plan should be the needs of the people you are teaching and the gospel principles that will meet those needs.” *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 17.

102. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 7.

103. “Latter-day Saint chaplains serve people of all faiths. They must be able to minister effectively in a pluralistic religious environment without compromising their own religious beliefs. They ensure that individuals are afforded religious freedom and help facilitate the religious and spiritual needs of these individuals.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Guidelines for Latter-day Saint Chaplains* (Salt Lake City, UT: Publishing by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2017), 1.

104. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 5.

105. *Teaching in the Savior’s Way*, 20.

verses provide insights concerning what to preach, how to preach, and why preaching is important.

Scriptures About Preaching	
What to Preach	
2 Nephi 25:26	D&C 112:28
Alma 37:33	D&C 20:1–4
Mosiah 18:20	Deuteronomy 20:1–4 (KJV) (NIV)
Alma 29:13	Psalms 40:9 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 52:9	Isaiah 61:1 (KJV) (NIV)
How to Preach	
2 Nephi 26:29	D&C 50:13–14
2 Nephi 33:1	D&C 50:17–18
Alma 5:13	D&C 118:3
Alma 43:2	D&C 121:41–42
Helaman 5:17	Acts 9:20
Moroni 6:9	Romans 10:15 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 38:41	1 Corinthians 2:4 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 42:14	2 Timothy 4:2 (KJV) (NIV)
The Importance of Preaching	
Alma 4:19	D&C 128:57
Alma 31:5	1 Corinthians 9:14
Helaman 11:23	1 Corinthians 9:16–17 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 20:46	1 Peter 4:6 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 50:22	Articles of Faith 1:5
<i>What do these scriptures mean to you? What other related scriptures can you find? How would you use these scriptures?</i>	

Using Scriptures in Pastoral Counseling

This section will draw upon counsel from Howard Clinebell and upon Clara Hill's helping model to discuss how to properly use the scriptures in pastoral counseling. It will include cautions and limitations associated with sharing scripture in a pastoral counseling setting, and a discussion on specific applications for Latter-day Saint chaplains. This section concludes with a compilation of scriptures that can be used in pastoral counseling.

Effective Use of Scripture in Pastoral Counseling

Spiritual strategies that pastoral counselors could implement include “sharing Scripture, Christian meditation, Bible reading and memorization, worship, solitude and silence, forgiveness, and Christian inner healing prayer.”¹⁰⁶ Clinebell suggests five main ways in which scripture sharing can be an effective tool in pastoral counseling:

The first is *to allow biblical wisdom to inform the process, spirit, and goals of caring/counseling relationships...* A second and very valuable use of the Bible in pastoral care and counseling is *to comfort and strengthen people in crises...* A third use of the Bible in counseling relationships is *to illuminate the spiritual dynamics and problems of counselees...* A fourth use of the Bible in pastoral care and counseling is *to help heal spiritual pathology by changing unhealthy beliefs...* A fifth use of biblical wisdom is *to be a key resource in the teaching and growth-cultivating dimensions of caregiving.*¹⁰⁷

In Clara Hill's foundational work, *Helping Skills: Facilitating Exploration, Insight, and Action*, she presents a three-stage psychotherapeutic model to be used in helping professions. This is “an integrated model that is grounded in practice, theory, and research.”¹⁰⁸

106. John C. Thomas, ed., *Counseling Techniques: A Comprehensive Resource for Christian Counselors* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 177.

107. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care*, 234-235.

108. Clara E. Hill, *Helping Skills: Facilitating Exploration, Insight, and Action*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2014), xiii.

Although she uses the terms “helper” and “client,” the skills and principles found in Hill’s model can be effectively applied by chaplains in a pastoral counseling setting.¹⁰⁹ Scripture sharing is an effective pastoral counseling tool that can be implemented within each of the three stages of Hill’s model. Her model includes the exploration stage, the insight stage, and the action stage.

The exploration stage involves restatements of thoughts and reflections of feelings. The goals for this stage are “establishing rapport and a trusting relationship; attending, listening, and observing; helping clients explore their thoughts and narratives; facilitating the expression of emotion; and learning about clients.”¹¹⁰ It is normally the necessary prework that leads to insight and action. “The insight stage builds on the foundation of the exploration stage. Going beyond exploration to insight and understanding requires a deep sense of empathy and belief in clients. In this stage, helpers see beyond defenses and inappropriate behaviors and help clients come to accept and understand themselves more deeply.”¹¹¹ The three main goals of this stage are “challenging clients to foster awareness, facilitating insight, and working with the therapeutic relationship through immediacy.”¹¹²

The action stage involves the use of exploration skills and skills for facilitating insight. “After clients have explored and gained insight, they are ready for the action stage, during which helpers collaborate with clients to explore the idea of change, explore options for change, and help them figure out how to make changes.”¹¹³ “The emphasis in this stage is on helping clients think about and make decisions about action rather than on dictating action to clients.”¹¹⁴ The goals of the action stage are “for helpers to encourage clients to

109. For the purposes of this guidebook, the term “helper” can be substituted with “chaplain,” and the term “client” can be substituted with “counselee.”

110. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 117.

111. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 228.

112. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 240.

113. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 334.

114. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 334.

explore possible new behaviors, assist clients on deciding on actions, facilitate the development of skills for action, provide feedback about attempted changes, assist clients in evaluating and modifying action plans, and encourage clients in processing feelings about action.”¹¹⁵

To share scripture in an effective manner, lots of exploration must first take place. “The appropriate use of religious resources in counseling is preceded by a pastor’s awareness of both the person’s problems as well as his or her religious background and present attitudes toward religion.”¹¹⁶ In addition, “before using such resources, a pastor should ask whether they would be meaningful or appreciated. This demonstrates respect for the person’s feelings and beliefs and will often open up profitable discussion about spiritual conflicts and blocks.”¹¹⁷

Clinebell counsels, “*Use religious words and resources only after one has some awareness of care receivers’ problems as well as their background, their feelings, and their attitudes about religion.*”¹¹⁸ Thus, scripture sharing should normally not take place towards the beginning of the exploration stage. As chaplains work with service members, they will assess the religiosity of the individuals and use scriptures accordingly.

Clara Hill suggests that “by listening carefully and nonjudgmentally to what clients say and asking them about relevant cultural beliefs, helpers can often hear underlying existential concerns and then assist clients, via interpretation, to understand these critical issues.”¹¹⁹ Existential concerns are inherently spiritual. Effective exploration can be employed in order to uncover these existential concerns. When appropriate, scriptures can be used to address these concerns. It is important for the helper to explore the counselee’s thoughts and feelings regarding any scriptures shared.

115. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 344.

116. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 38.

117. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 38.

118. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care*, 233.

119. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 280.

“Helpers can also help clients understand themselves in terms of existential concerns.”¹²⁰ In order to achieve this goal, appropriate scriptures could be shared to facilitate insight for the client regarding their existential concerns. Helpers can “assist clients, via interpretation, to understand these critical issues.”¹²¹ “To Use the Bible to share about grace or any other important and relevant theological concept, we must know the Bible well ourselves, apply a sound hermeneutic, and have our own regular daily time of prayer and reading.”¹²² In order for the strategy of scripture sharing to be effective, the scriptures must be “used meaningfully in the personal life of the pastor.”¹²³

Regarding the action stage, Clara Hill suggests:

Another cultural consideration is that helpers may need to incorporate spirituality into the action stage (e.g., using prayer as an action strategy) for clients for whom spirituality and religion are important issues...if helpers are not responsive to such needs, clients may feel disrespected and may devalue the helping process. But because spirituality is a sensitive topic, helpers might wait to pick up clues from clients as to whether they would like a focus on spirituality. And of course helpers should only work with spirituality if they feel that they can do so authentically.¹²⁴

This is especially true in pastoral counseling because there is the expectation that the pastoral counselor can provide effective spiritual counseling. Scripture sharing could be effectively used to provide increased spiritual motivation for the counselee. Scripture reading assignments could also be made in this stage to give the counselee the opportunity to grow through the word of God.

120. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 279.

121. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 280.

122. Thomas, *Counseling Techniques*, 182.

123. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 37.

124. Hill, *Helping Skills*, 409.

Applications for Latter-day Saint Chaplains

In addition to applying the principles described by Clinebell and Hill, it is important for Latter-day Saint chaplains to tactfully draw upon the words of truth contained in the Bible, and the rest of the standard works, where appropriate.¹²⁵ The following scriptural compilation is a list of example scriptures that could be used in pastoral counseling to address various concerns. The list is by no means comprehensive, and it is expected that chaplains will develop their own lists of scriptures that are meaningful to them and that they could use in pastoral counseling settings.

Scriptural Compilation on Pastoral Counseling Topics

This scriptural compilation addresses the following pastoral counseling topics: addiction, anxiety, depression, grief, same-sex attraction, and trauma. KJV and NIV verses are included for biblical references. Most servicemembers are more familiar with the NIV, but some, including Latter-day Saint servicemembers, might prefer the KJV. Chaplains can choose whether to rely on multiple translations or focus primarily on a single Bible translation in pastoral counseling and other ministering efforts. For clarity, the selection of KJV and NIV biblical verses included in the list sometimes differs, depending on the translation.

Scriptures for Pastoral Counseling	
Addiction	
1 Nephi 15:24	Matthew 26:41 (KJV) (NIV)
2 Nephi 2:27	1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV) (NIV)
2 Nephi 4:16–35	Galatians 5:16 (KJV) (NIV)
Mosiah 7:33	Philippians 4:13 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 84:49	1 Peter 5:8 (KJV)
Anxiety	

125. Restoration scripture within the standard works is normally only used in pastoral counseling when the counselee is a Latter-day Saint.

1 Nephi 18:21	D&C 38:41
Alma 7:11–12	D&C 42:14
Moroni 8:16	D&C 50:13–14
Alma 43:2	D&C 50:17–18
Helaman 5:17	D&C 118:3
Moroni 6:9	D&C 121:41–42
Depression	
Alma 7:11–12	Deuteronomy 31:8 (KJV) (NIV)
Alma 26:27	1 Kings 18:4–8 (KJV) (NIV)
Moroni 7:41	Psalms 23:4 (KJV) (NIV)
Matthew 11:28–30 (KJV) (NIV)	Psalms 40:1–3 (KJV) (NIV)
Romans 8:38 (KJV) (NIV)	Psalms 91 1–15 (KJV) (NIV)
Grief	
3 Nephi 12:4	Psalms 23:4 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 42:45	Psalms 31:9 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 101:4	Psalms 31:18 (KJV) (NIV)
Matthew 11:28 (KJV) (NIV)	Psalms 40:1–3 (KJV) (NIV)
John 14:18 (KJV)	Psalms 121: 1–8 (KJV) (NIV)
Same-sex Attraction	
1 Nephi 11	D&C 62:1
Alma 7:7–12	1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)(NIV)
Trauma	
3 Nephi 25:2	John 14:18 (KJV)
Moroni 9:25	Psalms 23:4 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 112:13	Psalms 41: 1–3 (KJV) (NIV)
Matthew 11:28–30 (KJV) (NIV)	
<i>What do these scriptures mean to you? What other related scriptures can you find? How would you use these scriptures?</i>	

Memorizing Scriptures

Elder Scott taught, “When scriptures are used as the Lord has caused them to be recorded, they have intrinsic power that is not communicated when paraphrased.”¹²⁶ This section discusses principles of memorization that can be used to commit scriptures to memory. Basic principles of memorization include repetition, spaced review, and organized learning. This section concludes with a discussion of specific applications for Latter-day Saint chaplains, including how the habit of memorizing scriptures can enhance the chaplain’s use of scripture for preaching in a general Christian worship service, giving devotionals in spontaneous and planned settings, and in pastoral counseling with servicemembers and their families. A compilation of scriptures is also included to reinforce the importance of treasuring up the word of God.

Repetition

Repetition is a foundational principle in memorization. Practice through repetition reinforces the information that is being learned or memorized and makes it easier for a person to recall. The human brain responds favorably to repetition, and it creates and reinforces memory pathways to make the process of recall more efficient. “Research strongly suggests that increased practice builds greater myelin [insulating sheath] along the related pathways, improving the strength and speed of the electrical signals and as a result, performance.”¹²⁷ Learners can repeat information through writing the information over and over again, quizzing oneself or with a partner, speaking out loud, mentally reciting, or reviewing flash cards.

Spaced Review

As Elder Klebingat explains, “memorizing scriptures and being able to recall them for the rest of our lives requires diligent and regular study.”¹²⁸ Spaced review, also known as spaced repetition, refers to the repetition of material over time. For example, in learn-

126. Richard G. Scott, “He Lives,” *Ensign*, November 1999, 88.

127. Peter Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 171.

128. Klebingat, *Effective Scripture Study*, chap. 8.

ing a new scripture, the learner will review it a few times over the next couple of days. After the scripture to their satisfaction has been successfully reviewed, the learner stops the review process and waits for a few days, then the review process continues until the scriptures are memorized. The process is repeated as needed to maintain successful recall. “Spaced Repetition has proven to be an effective way in learning and memorizing complex topics.”¹²⁹

Organized Learning

Organized learning refers to the systematic way in which a learner memorizes information. Joshua Kang suggests, “The process of recording Scripture on your mind and heart does have a mechanical aspect. It requires certain methods and a great deal of perseverance.”¹³⁰ One way to implement the principle of organized learning is to create scripture chains. Elder Klebingat defines a scripture chain as “a collection of two or more scriptures that address a specific theme or subject in a logical manner.”¹³¹ In determining the content for a scripture chain, he suggests the following question: “If I had to explain to someone [fill in the blank], what scriptures would I use and in what order would I share them?”¹³² Chaplains can organize scriptures by topic or question. Having a systematic and organized way of memorizing scriptures helps the chaplain in their role as a pastoral counselor and in providing religious support.

129. Devansh P. Shah, Nikhil M. Jagtap, Shloka S. Shah, and Anant V. Nimkar, “Spaced Repetition for Slow Learners,” in *2020 IEEE Bombay Section Signature Conference*, (Mumbai, India: IEEE, 2020), 146, <https://doi.org/10.1109/IBSSC51096.2020.9332189>.

130. Joshua Choonmin Kang, *Scripture by Heart* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 80.

131. Klebingat, *Effective Scripture Study*, chap. 8.

132. Klebingat, *Effective Scripture Study*, chap. 8.

Applications for Latter-day Saint Chaplains

Memorizing scriptures can help chaplains in situations where they are called upon to give a short devotion or inspirational message, in pastoral counseling related to concerns addressed in the scriptures, and in giving a talk at church or a sermon in a general Christian worship service. Memorized scriptures can also bless the personal lives of chaplains. Elder Scott taught, “Great power can come from memorizing scriptures. To memorize a scripture is to forge a new friendship. It is like discovering a new individual who can help in time of need, give inspiration and comfort, and be a source of motivation for needed change.”¹³³ When scriptures are memorized, they can be pondered and reflected on throughout a person’s life. Elder Scott explains,

Pondering a scripture...gives great direction to life. The scriptures can form a foundation of support. They can provide an incredibly large resource of willing friends who can help us. A memorized scripture becomes an enduring friend that is not weakened with the passage of time. Pondering a passage of scripture can be a key to unlock revelation and the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost...Scriptures can communicate different meanings at different times in our life, according to our needs. A scripture that we may have read many times can take on nuances of meaning that are refreshing and insightful when we face a new challenge in life.”¹³⁴

In discussing principles of memorization, it is important to remember that there are a variety of ways in which these principles can be applied. Some prefer to use regular flashcards. Others prefer to use online flashcards.¹³⁵ However, the most important thing is to find a system that works for the learner. The following scriptures

133. Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

134. Scott, “Power of Scripture,” 6.

135. Computer programs, such as Anki and Quizlet, are effective online resources that could be used to assist chaplains in their memorization efforts.

reinforce the process of memorization and treasuring up the word of God.

Scriptural Compilation on Treasuring Up the Word of God

Scriptures About Treasuring up the Word of God	
Examples of Treasuring Up the Word	
Matthew 4: 3–4 (KJV) (NIV)	Joshua 1:8 (KJV) (NIV)
Matthew 4:10 (KJV) (NIV)	Psalms 119: 15–16 (KJV) (NIV)
Matthew 21:42 (KJV) (NIV)	Jeremiah 20:9 (KJV) (NIV)
Deuteronomy 11:18 (KJV) (NIV)	
Importance of Treasuring Up the Word	
D&C 11:21	Colossians 3:16 (KJV) (NIV)
D&C 84:85	Psalms 1:1–3 (KJV) (NIV)
Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37	Psalms 37:31 (KJV) (NIV)
John 15:7 (KJV) (NIV)	Psalms 119:11
Colossians 3:16 (KJV) (NIV)	
<i>What do these scriptures mean to you? What other related scriptures can you find? How would you use these scriptures?</i>	

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