Week 06 is scheduled for study Jan. 30-Feb. 5, 2023. This week is a review of the obvious. We will look at Christ's position as our Messiah, our deliverer. We will also look at some of the evidences of his power and position with God.

Day 1

The Savior used the scriptures both to resist Satan's temptations and to testify of His own divine mission (see Luke 4:1-21). Ponder how the scriptures can build your faith and your resolve to resist temptation.

Matthew 4:1-2 - Communing with God prepares me to serve Him.

It can be easy to gain the mindset that we don't need to spend time communing with God, because we don't know what it is we are supposed to accomplish to further His work of helping Him save us and those around us. Yet that is exactly what we are here to do. The salvation of the human race is a family work, not just the work of one man. Jesus did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves, but we are also supposed to do for others what they cannot do for themselves.

There are poor that need feeding, housing, clothing, medical and social help. There are people hurting who need comfort and solace. Our neighbors may need to be loved into accepting God's plan for their salvation. Strangers we meet may need random assistance, some love, attention, or just a listening ear. All around us there are needs

waiting and needing to be fulfilled. We are imperfect and largely ignorant of what those needs are. The Spirit can lead us to help those who need us most, or where we can do the most good. But we must first be willing to actively participate in loving our brothers and sisters on a daily basis.

Communing with God not only helps us receive the promptings we need to go and do more good than we could on our own, but that communion also teaches, and reveals to us, more about the plan of salvation, the scriptures, and gospel principles than we knew before. And just as importantly, spending time with God each day also teaches us about ourselves and what we need to do to improve so that happiness is more often within our grasp. Above all else, spending time with God in prayer and contemplation each day teaches us, over time, of the character and personality of God, our Father.

Prayer is one way to communicate with God. Including Him in our thoughts from moment to moment and hour to hour is another way. When we consider a course of action, do we ask God what He recommends? Do we tell Him why we think a particular feeling or course of action feels favorable? Do we ask Him to influence our decisions so that they can be consecrated for the welfare of our soul, and to the benefit of those we hope to help?

One of the biggest things that holds us back from making spiritual progress in this life is not including our Father in Heaven in our daily thoughts. It is that lack of eternal perspective that keeps us grounded in the here and now. That grounding prevents us from looking at things as they relate to the eternities. Don't we all need to be thinking and acting as an eternal being and not as one who only exists for 80 years and then blips into nothingness? Changing how we look at life and how we act from moment to moment makes a huge difference in our attitudes and our abilities to comprehend and accept spiritual things. It is only when we begin to look up, instead of at the ground, that we begin to experience the change of perspective that will elevate our behavior in life.

As you read the New Testament, consider how many times it talks openly about Jesus going apart from those around him to spend time in prayer to his Father. He relied upon this time spent with the God of heaven to comfort him, guide him, and to be confident in what he needed to do each day. Jesus didn't call the shots in mortality. His stated objective was and always has been to do the will of His Father. So each and every

day of his life he sought to do God's will. Surely this is a good indication that it would be folly for us to think we can go even a day without seeking God's will in our own life.

Day 2

The Savior used the scriptures both to resist Satan's temptations and to testify of His own divine mission (see Luke 4:1-21). Ponder how the scriptures can build your faith and your resolve to resist temptation.

Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13 - Jesus Christ set the example for me by resisting temptation.

Nature of temptation

Let's consider the nature of temptation for a moment. What makes something tempting to you may not be at all tempting to me. Why? Because to be considered a temptation there has to be something desirable in the payoff for doing that thing. If you hand me a red hot poker and try to entice me to stick it up my nose, you will probably fail miserably in your objective. But, it you give a stick coated in a hallucinogenic drug and give it to an addict, he might be more willing to stick it up his nose, no matter how unpleasant it may feel. The payoff of the drug may be a big enough draw to suffer the pain of the stick in the nose.

When we know the true nature of what a sin does to us we are less likely to engage in that sin. It is for this reason Satan has found so many ways to misrepresent or dress up the appearance of sin. If he didn't lie about what he was promising us he would lose a lot more of us to righteous living. The scriptures serve two main purposes in our lives. First, they reveal the true nature of sin in all its ugliness. They try to entice us to embrace doing and being good so we can avoid the pitfalls of the sins in our life. Second, the scriptures give us the strength to resist sin by helping us see past the veneer, the false coating of pleasure that sin usually comes packaged in. The more we study the scriptures, the more often we are able to resist the sins that come into our mind and heart or are bombarding us from the world.

We need to remember that temptations are never fully truthful. That is the nature of a temptation. This means that when we accept a temptation as factual, we are choosing

to play into a fantasy that will only, ultimately, lead to suffering and sorrow. Truth is the actual state of something as it was in the past, is in the present, and how it will be in the future. The scriptures teach truth. This makes the scriptures a measuring rod of sorts to which we can hold up the temptations that come into our life and see how they measure up to the truth. Admittedly, they probably didn't have cocaine in the Book of Mormon. But we can hold up any habit-forming substance against the will of the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 89 where the Lord talks about His law of health. This should be sufficient to teach us what the Lord would probably say about cocaine or any other habit-forming drug.

Use the scriptures

Jesus didn't just learn from the scriptures. He knew the scriptures. He could quote them, cite them, and explain them to others. He had studied them in earnest. When temptation came along, no matter how blatant or subtle, he was able to refer back to the scriptures and knew if the desirable thing being presented to him would lead to happiness or sorrow. We only know of three temptations Satan presented to Christ. There have to be many, many more of them. But in each of the three examples we do have, Jesus answered Satan with the scriptures. This serves as a good example for us. When presented with tempting things, search the scriptures to see what the nature of that temptation is in the scriptures.

Since not all temptations can be found in Holy Writ, we have to remember that the scriptures teach us how to think the way God does. They use the stories from the prophets and others to show us how the Lord thinks, how He reasons, and to help us keep our faith alive so we can live like the faithful in the pages of our scriptures. Within the scriptures we have stories of faith, courage, humility, obedience, suffering, forgiveness, etc. All of these serve as examples to teach us how to live a life that is pleasing to God.

I was taught once that the temptations to sin are most successful in a life that is relatively empty of good works. If I want to build up a resistance to sin I need to fill my life with good works, with service to others. Leave no room, nor time, for frivolous time-wasting sins, always be seeking to do good. The more we steep our thinking in the stories and doctrines of the scriptures, the more resistant to temptations we become. Christ, as always, was the perfect example of this. He took the opportunities to do his

Father's will very seriously. He was always either seeking God's will or doing God's will. Jesus never just sat around and played games or shot the breeze. There was just too much to do.

Day 3

The Savior used the scriptures both to resist Satan's temptations and to testify of His own divine mission (see Luke 4:1-21). Ponder how the scriptures can build your faith and your resolve to resist temptation.

Luke 4:16-32 - Jesus Christ is the prophesied Messiah.

For the next couple of minutes I would like you to consider the nature of Christ as the Messiah. I hope you read the scriptures for today's lesson. When you read verses 18-19 what did you get from your reading?

> 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
>
> 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Here is a rewrite of verse 18 with my own clarifications in it. Hopefully this will help make my point.

> The Spirit (Holy Ghost) of God (our Father) is upon me (Jesus), because he (God our Father) hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he (God) hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Did you catch the frame of reference in that verse? Jesus is a messenger sent from God. He was anointed, which is a physical act of setting someone apart for a specific purpose, usually to be a king. And why did God set Jesus apart to act as His messenger? It was to come among us and preach the gospel to those without means, showing His (God's) compassion for the lowest among us. Jesus was sent to us to heal those of us with broken hearts in this life, to preach deliverance to those captured by sin and imprisoned by ignorance and spiritual darkness. He was sent to bring sight to the blind physically, as well as spiritual sight to those who lived in spiritual darkness. His was a

mission to bring the light of knowledge to all mankind. Jesus was to set at liberty those who have been enslaved by lives of sin.

This is what it means to be a Messiah, the Deliverer. He came on assignment from God to redeem our souls from our lost and fallen state, to open our eyes to spiritual truths, and to open the door to exaltation through repentance and faith on his (Jesus') name as the only one who is able to do all these things for us. Sometimes we say that Jesus didn't testify of himself, but he certainly didn't do it in a boasting or bragging way. He certainly was never shy about declaring what his real mission was among the people of Israel. He was there to bring them salvation from sin, but that would require them to look to him as their one and only way back to God, the universal Father of us all.

I can't really say how many times I have read that verse in my 65+ years of living. But when I read it this time I saw things very differently than in times past. Jesus did not come of his own choice, meaning it wasn't his idea and his plan. He came at the bidding of his Father in Heaven, and came to fulfill God's will in all things. When we go out and live our lives in righteous ways, bear our testimony, serve and love others, we are doing what Jesus did. We are fulfilling the will of our Father in Heaven. And the rewards will be the same, for Jesus has promised that those who live their lives as he lived his will receive all that the Father has, just like he will.

Day 4

The Savior used the scriptures both to resist Satan's temptations and to testify of His own divine mission (see Luke 4:1-21). Ponder how the scriptures can build your faith and your resolve to resist temptation.

Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11 - As I trust in the Lord, He can help me reach my divine potential.

I would like to make a quick point about the calling of the Twelve Apostles. When we read that Jesus saw Peter and Andrew, and subsequently the rest of the Apostles, the scriptures seem to say that Jesus simply said, "Follow me" and the Twelve dropped everything and did just that. I do not believe for a minute that this is true.

Many in Israel were actively looking for the promised Messiah. They were burdened by the occupation of their nation by Rome. They wanted deliverance, and their leaders had convinced them that their deliverer would be a military leader who would free them. Knowing that their promised deliverer was going to appear, there was much discussion about how he would make his appearance, and where he would first show up.

Jesus spent some months in Capernaum preaching the gospel to the people. Peter, Andrew, and their friends and relatives had all heard about what Jesus was teaching. They all were looking for their deliverer to come. So when Jesus finally told them he was the deliverer and invited them to follow him, they did so willingly and gladly. Matthew only gives us a bare bones description of events, but Luke fleshes out the story more. Luke makes it clear that Jesus was working miracles everywhere he went, and openly declaring that the kingdom of heaven had already come. He openly declared himself to be the Son of God, and even the devils he cast out announced to one and all that the man addressing them was God's anointed one.

Now let's consider for a moment the actual topic of today's lesson. What do you think of this - who else, other than Jesus, can help you reach your divine potential? Is there anyone in heaven or earth more perfectly suited to do this than Jesus of Nazareth? As I pointed out in yesterday's lesson, this is precisely what Jesus was anointed to come to earth to accomplish. There is no one else qualified to show us the way to become what we have the potential of becoming. That is why God stated that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He, and he alone, merits all our faith and hopes for the glories of eternity.

FHE/Personal Study

Matthew 4:11 - Jesus and angels

I have heard the question asked and discussed whether Jesus actually knew who he really was during his ministry. I would answer with a resounding "yes!"

Consider this - Jesus knew enough about his own personal position and power with God that when he thought of John the Baptist in prison he sent angels to minister to his cousin. How many people do you know who have the ability to dispatch angels to do their bidding? So we know that Jesus at least knew that the angels of heaven were

subject to his commands. That is a level of power I have never seen at the hands of even the greatest of prophets.

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print a PDF copy of the article.

NT06-2023 - The Spirit of the Lord Is Upon Me

Week 06