

**3 Nephi 17:1-3***Homes, Ponder, Ask, Prepare*

1 To ponder is to meditate, to think, to feast, and to treasure. It is more than a mental method, it is a spiritual striving to obtain and to understand truth. We should follow the process taught by the Savior to the Nephites as he taught them sacred principles. He then instructed them to “Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand and prepare your minds for the morrow.”

L. Lionel Kendrick, *Ensign*, May 1993, pp. 14-15.

2 However talented men may be in administrative matters; however eloquent they may be in expressing their views; however learned they may be in worldly things—they will be denied the sweet whisperings of the Spirit that might have been theirs unless they pay the price of studying, pondering, and praying about the scriptures.

*Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998], 238.

3 Pondering is a form of prayer.  
Marion G. Romney, CR, Apr. 1973, p. 117.

4 The worshippers at Rameumptom so ritualized their religion that they never spoke of their God “again until they had assembled themselves together a week later at the holy stand” (Alma 31:23.) Note the contrast in how Jesus instructed His followers on this hemisphere: [3 Nephi 17:3]. See how the Master focuses on the family—on pondering, praying, preparing together! It should not surprise us, if we routinize our religion and do not assign the highest priority to the kingdom, that our hearts and minds will quite naturally drift to other things

Neal A. Maxwell, *Ye Must Press Forward* [1977], 30-31.

5 Often the answers will come as you study the scriptures... Pondering the scriptures will lead you to ask the right questions in prayer. And just as surely as the heavens were opened to Joseph Smith after he pondered the scriptures in faith, God will answer your prayers and He will lead you by the hand.

Henry B. Eyring, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 81.

6 Pondering, which means to weigh mentally, to deliberate, to meditate, can achieve the opening of the spiritual eyes of one’s understanding. Also, the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon the ponderer....

We are constantly reminded through the scriptures that we should give the things of God much more than usual superficial consideration. We must ponder them and reach into the very essence of what we are and what we may become....

To soundly plant good seed in your heart requires prolonged, intense, unremitting pondering. It is a deep, ongoing, regenerating process which refines the soul.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 33-34.

7 We pay too little attention to the value of meditation... In our worship there are two elements: one is spiritual communion arising from our own meditation; the other, instruction from others, particularly from those who have authority to guide and instruct us. Of the two, the more profitable introspectively is the meditation. Meditation is the language of the soul... Meditation is a form of prayer....

Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 31-32

8 When our children were young... we decided to read the Book of Mormon with the goal to complete the book by the end of the school year. Each morning we read a chapter before breakfast, and we reached our goal. While I would not wish to take anything away from the good things that came from that experience for all of us, we reflected in the end that perhaps our focus was more on our goal than on what we were learning in the process. In the early-morning rush hour that ended at the breakfast table, we had little time to share ideas or ponder on the meaning of God's word in our lives. [3 Nephi 17:3]... The Savior has given us a pattern to follow as we study the scriptures. We hear a word, we ponder upon its meaning, we ask our Heavenly Father to help us understand, and then our minds and hearts are prepared to receive the promised blessings. Pondering is more than reading words; it is searching for meanings that will help us as we relate to one another and as we make choices in our lives. It is allowing the word to move from our minds to our hearts. The Spirit bears witness to our hearts as we prayerfully seek to know the things of our Heavenly Father.... By so doing, we help... [our children] keep the eternal perspective always in focus so they never forget who they are and where they are and where they are going.

Anne G. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 10.

9 Two important points can be drawn from this statement. First, the Savior is placing a proper emphasis on the family and home for gospel instruction and spiritual experience. King Benjamin, when he instructed his people, also had the people organized "every man according to his family" (Mosiah 2:5). They were taught as families, counseled together as families, pondered and prayed as families. The most important gospel instruction and enduring spiritual impressions occur within homes. "The family is the basic unit of the kingdom of God on earth," declared President Spencer W. Kimball. "The Church can be no healthier than its families... It is the duty of parents to so teach by example and precept that the child will fill the measure of his creation and find his way back to the glories of exaltation. Wise parents will see to it that their teaching is orthodox, character-building, and faith-promoting.... It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children. The Sunday School, the Primary, the MIA and other organizations of the Church play a secondary role." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 331-32.)

Second, the Lord is teaching them the importance of pondering as an essential element in acquiring spiritual knowledge. The things of God are not understood through hearing or reading alone. True gospel instruction occurs only as the spirit of revelation teaches and testifies of the truths presented (see D&C 9:77-9; 42:14; 50:17-25). “Man must take time to meditate,” President Ezra Taft Benson has taught, “to sweep the cobwebs from his mind so that he might get a more firm grip on the truth and spend less time chasing phantom and dallying in projects of lesser worth... Take time to meditate. Ponder the meaning of the work in which you are engaged. The Lord has counseled, “Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds” (D&C 43:34). You cannot do that when your minds are preoccupied with the worries and cares of the world.” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 390.) Pondering opens the mind to intellectual insights and understanding and opens the heart to spiritual promptings and assurances. Hearing and reading alone could be compared to panning for gold in a small stream—finding occasional fragments of gold dust and nuggets; whereas, when coupled with serious pondering and prayerful pleading with the Lord for spiritual understanding, our efforts become like the heavy excavation that uncovers a mountainside full of gold veins of gospel understanding.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3, pp. 113-114.

### **3 Nephi 17:4**

- 10 Earlier in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 29:11-14), the Lord promises that in the mouths of three great scriptural witnesses the divinity of Christ would be established. It is of interest to note that evidently the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to all of the peoples who were to write these great scriptural witnesses. He appeared as a resurrected being to the Jews, from whom we get the Bible; He appeared as a resurrected being to the Nephites, from whom we get the Book of Mormon; and He promises here that He is going to appear as a resurrected being to the lost tribes of Israel, from whom shall come the third great scriptural witness.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 271

- 11 Lost books are among the treasures yet to come forth. Over twenty of these are mentioned in the existing scriptures. Perhaps most startling and voluminous will be the records of the lost tribes of Israel (see 2 Nephi 29:13). We would not even know of the impending third witness for Christ except through the precious Book of Mormon, the second witness for Christ! This third set of sacred records will thus complete a triad of truth. Then, just as the Perfect Shepherd has said, “My word also shall be gathered in one” (v. 14). There will be “one fold and one shepherd” (1 Nephi 22:25) in a welding together of all the Christian dispensations of human history (see D&C 128:18).

Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 52.

**3 Nephi 17:5-10***Jesus Blessed People*

- 12 Calling for the sick and the blind, the halt and the maimed, the leprous and the withered, those that were “afflicted in any manner,” Christ asked that they be brought forward that he might heal them... Sensing with divine insight that these people desired to behold the miracles he had performed for their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, and recognizing instantly that their faith was sufficient for them to be healed, Christ responded to each need within the multitude, “and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him.” In response to such an outpouring of compassion and mercy, all of the congregation, the healed as well as the whole, did “bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come... did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears.” [3 Nephi 17:5-7, 9-10.]

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 268-69.

**3 Nephi 17:10***Worship Him*

- 13 To Worship the Lord is to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, to center our whole hearts upon Christ and that salvation which comes because of him. It is to walk in the light as he is in the light, to do the things that he wants done, to do what he would do under similar circumstances, to be as he is. To worship the Lord is to walk in the Spirit, to rise above the carnal things, to bridle our passions, and to overcome the world.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration*, p. 371.

**3 Nephi 17:11-25***Blessed the Children*

- 14 When the Savior invited the multitude to behold their little ones, was He speaking in the collective sense of a group of little children? Or was He drawing their attention, and ours, to the individual nature and importance of each of those little *ones*—each of those little individuals? I believe that by His example, the Savior was teaching us of the individual and tender care we should give to each one of our little children—indeed to each of our Heavenly Father’s children. It may be the loveable toddler or the wayward teen, the grieving widow... It may even be your own son or daughter or your own husband or wife.

Wm. Rolfe Kerr, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996], 80.

- 15 With these sweet children gathered around him, something of their innocence, beauty and future brought to the Savior a painful acknowledgement of what damage a sinful world could bring to them. Standing with the children as a visual aid, as it were, for the entire congregation of Nephites who looked on, Christ “groaned within himself, and said: “Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.”

Apparently thinking of the evil from which they must be protected, Christ knelt and offered one of the most remarkable prayers ever uttered—

Jeffrey Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, p. 269

16 Can we imagine anything more lovely, more touching, and more glorious, than this scene must have been? Can we conceive the joy that must have filled the hearts of these Nephites as they beheld the angels of Heaven descending from the Courts of Glory and ministering to their little ones? How deep must have been their love for the Savior Who had brought these blessings to them? How strong must have grown their faith in Him? We cannot recall a circumstance in recorded history that draws Earth nearer to Heaven than this, or that seems to bind the ties so strongly that unite the Powers of Eternity with the children of mortality.

George M. Reynolds and Janne S. Sjodahl, *A Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 7:175.

17 Angels in heaven are your associates in teaching [children] the gospel. You parents, remember that home is the nearest thing to heaven, or should be, and that parenthood is next to Godhood. When any person, Primary teacher, officer, or anyone else helps the parents to improve the home they are helping to accomplish His avowed purpose “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

Hugh B. Brown, *The Abundant Life*, p. 205.

18 [Angels] came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire...; and the angels did minister unto them. What do you mean by minister?... When angels come and minister, what they do is bring the word. That’s what their ministry is, to bring the word, so they come and talk with us.... That’s what ministry is—to take care of you, to explain things to you, to satisfy you.

Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3*, pp. 351-52.

19 His invitation in verse 11 was neither casual nor inconsequential. “He commanded that their little children should be brought.” And notice what verse 11 doesn’t say. It doesn’t say never mind the little ones because they aren’t accountable yet. It doesn’t say the children were to be taken elsewhere so they wouldn’t disrupt the proceedings. And it doesn’t imply that the children won’t understand... “So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst” (v. 12). Do any of us ever consider serving children to be beneath us? Clearly the Savior felt that the Nephite children were worthy not only to be in his presence, but they were also worthy of his time and his attention. The children need him, and he stood right in their midst. Verse 12 also indicates that Jesus waited “till they had all been brought to him.” He wasn’t looking for a representative sample, and he wasn’t content with just some children. He wanted them all to be there, and he ministered to them all. Then Jesus prayed unto the Father so powerfully that “no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous thing.” (v.17). And the children were there! They heard the prayer; they saw the event, and they were affected by it. Children can understand and should witness marvelous events—events like priesthood blessings, special ward and family fasts, the testimonies and prayers of their parents and leaders, and gospel discussions with people they love. “He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.” (v.21). Jesus was ministering to a group of about 2500 men, women, and children. Consider how much time it must have taken for him to bless and

pray over each child, “one by one.” He must have held many of them in his arms or on his lap. And he wept because he was overcome with joy. “He spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.” (v. 23). Jesus specifically directed the attention of the multitude to the children. To me, the word *behold* is significant. It implies more than just ‘look and see.’ When the Lord instructed the Nephites to behold their little ones, I believe he told them to give attention to their children, to contemplate them, to look beyond the present and see their eternal possibilities.... It’s significant to me that later the Savior gave the most sacred teachings only to the children, then loosed their tongues so they could teach the multitude. (See 3 Ne. 26:14). Is it any wonder that following the Savior’s visit to the Nephites, they lived in peace and righteousness for two hundred years? Because of miraculous instructions, blessings, an attention they and their children received, righteousness was perpetuated by their children’s children for many generations. Let us not underestimate the capacity and potential of today’s children to perpetuate righteousness. No group of people in the Church is as receptive to the truth....” Michaelene P. Grassli, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, pp.92-94.

20 One of the greatest expressions of love for children that I have seen occurred when I was serving as a stake president in Chile. President Spencer W. Kimball visited Chile for an area conference. Members of the Church from four countries met together in a stadium that held about fifteen thousand people. We asked President Kimball what he would like to do after the conference. His eyes full of tears, he said, “I would like to see the children.” One of the priesthood leaders announced over the microphone that president Kimball would like to shake the hands or bless each of the children in the stadium. The people were astounded—there was a great silence. President Kimball greeted about two thousand children one by one, crying as he shook their hands or kissed them or put his hands on their heads and blessed them. The children were very reverent and looked at him and cried too. He said he’d never felt this kind of spirit in his life. It was a tremendous moment in the lives of all the Church members there. Janet Peterson and Eduardo Ayala, “Friend to Friend,” *Friend*, Mar. 1996, 6-7.

### **3 Nephi 17:24**

21 *Angels Minister, Tongues Loosed*

Could it be with you as it was with the Nephite children?...

With the power of the Spirit, you too can speak great and marvelous things in your own family...

You may never see angels descending out of heaven, but I can promise you as you bear testimony and pray in your families, unseen angels will minister to you.

Carol B. Thomas, *Ensign*, May 2001 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 2001], 90.