

Chapter Five

Five Scriptures That Will Motivate You to Action

It could well be said of the scriptures, “truer words were never spoken.” That’s why the scriptures have such power, because we know they can be counted on. When we read a verse from the standard works, we don’t have to say, “do you have a reference on that?” because it *is* the reference. We don’t have to ask, “Are you sure that’s true?” because we know the scriptures are true. There’s no need to scour footnotes or look for original sources, because the scriptures come from the original source of the universe. Knowing the scriptures are true means we are accountable to be true to what we know.

Some people say scripture reading puts them to sleep, but others say it wakes them up. The scriptures are not passive. They are constantly telling us to get up, get going and get with it. Following are five of my favorite scriptures that help me when I need a little motivation.

Scripture One: “Awake and arise from the dust” Moroni 10:31

Moroni’s last words in the Book of Mormon are a wake-up call to “all the ends of the earth.” His message is direct, clear, and unapologetic – Awake, come unto Christ, deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and I’ll see you at the judgment bar (See Moroni 10:31-34).

The scriptures often use sleep as a metaphor for being spiritually inactive. Isaiah urged Zion to “awake and put on her beautiful garments” (Isaiah 52:1). Lehi told his sons to “awake” and “put on the armor of righteousness” (2 Nephi 1:23). Nephi’s younger brother Jacob told his brethren to “awake from the slumber of death” (Jacob 3:11). King Benjamin pled with his people to “awake to a remembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression” (Mosiah 2:40). Alma invited the Zoramites to “awake and arouse [their] faculties” as he taught them how to plant the testimony of Christ in their hearts. When God’s children are sinning or simply not living up to their spiritual potential, prophets are sent to shake them into spiritual consciousness.

Sometimes a prophet has to speak of with frightening images of chains and hell to roust someone from their spiritual slumber. Laman and Lemuel were physically present but in spiritual “la-la land” when Lehi tried to wake them up:

O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound ... Awake! and arise from the dust (2 Nephi 1:13-14.)

(I don’t know exactly what the “sleep of hell” is, but it is probably worse than a certain boy scout winter camp I’d like to forget.)

Sometimes our wake up calls are less dramatic. Perhaps we’ve attended an inspiring fireside, been touched during general conference, or felt a renewed desire to be a better person during our personal gospel study. This is like a spiritual alarm clock saying, “awake and arise from the dust!”

The best thing that can happen when the alarm goes off is to get up and get with it. However, the spiritual alarm clock has a procrastination feature called the “snooze button” that is a often a little too tempting. *I really want to start a scripture study program, but I’m going to wait until the kids are back in school. I know I need to stop wasting my time with television, and I will as soon as the reality-show season is over.*

Earth calling Amulek –

Sometimes even very good people can procrastinate the day of their awakening by making frequent use of the snooze button. Amulek was a good man of “no small reputation,” but his spiritual alarm clock rang for some time

before he answered the call. He was ignoring the wake-up call and he knew it: “I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know” (Alma 10:6). The story of Amulek is particularly interesting because the Lord persisted with Amulek, even though he had a pattern of repeatedly hitting the snooze button. That should give all of us hope if we’ve also made frequent use of the same delaying tactic.

Being awake has many advantages over being asleep, and being awake during the latter-days is especially important. When we’re awake, we hear the promptings of the Holy Ghost and can benefit from divine direction in every area of life. President Brigham Young observed:

There is no doubt, if a person lives according to the revelations given to God's people, he may have the Spirit of the Lord to signify to him His will, and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties, in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I am satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 12:104).

Those who are spiritually asleep are living beneath their privileges. Brigham Young wasn’t the only one to speak of what the Lord’s people are missing out on when they’re sleeping on the job. Among the many concerns that must have caused distress to the prophet Joseph Smith, Heber C. Kimball observed,

The greatest torment he [Joseph Smith] had and the greatest mental suffering was because this people would not live up to their privileges. There were many things he desired to reveal that we have not learned yet, but he could not do it. He said sometimes that he felt pressed upon and as though he were pent up in an acorn shell, and all because the people did not and would not prepare themselves to receive the rich treasures of wisdom and knowledge that he had to impart.

Along these same lines, I’ve often wondered what kind of messages the men of the Church could hear in priesthood conferences if we didn’t have to be reminded every six months to be decent husbands and fathers. What kind of spiritual treasures have we missed, because we haven’t awakened to our duty concerning the most simple and basic things?!

Sometime when you have a minute, read the message Alma gave the people of Zarahemla in Alma 5 – a group who were clearly living beneath their privileges. Next, read the message Alma gave to the people of Gideon in Alma 7. Note the incredible difference in tone and content between the two addresses. Because those in Gideon were spiritually awake, they were privileged to hear some of the most powerful teaching in the scriptures about the Savior and the breadth of his atonement (you might recall that Scripture Four from Chapter One of this book came from Alma’s discourse in Gideon). Those in Zarahemla, on the other hand, had to be reminded once again of their duty.

Scripture One says “wake up.” In the words of Sterling W. Sill, “stop doing immediately all the things you shouldn’t be doing, and start immediately to do the things you should.” (*The Majesty of Books*, Deseret Book, 1974, 147). Easier said than done? Of course it is. If that’s the case, start small – stop doing the one thing that is most causing you to live beneath your spiritual privileges, and start immediately doing the one thing that would bless your spiritual life the most. That’s a great way to wake up.

Lastly, keep your hands off that snooze button! Procrastination in spiritual matters is the sleep of hell spoken of by Father Lehi. Instead of snoozing, we can arise before it is “everlastingly too late,” (Helaman 13:38), and “awake to a sense of [our] awful situation” (Ether 8:24).

Robert Louis Stevenson observed, “You cannot run away from a weakness. You must sometime fight it out or perish. And if that be so, *why not now* and where you stand?” What a powerful quotation. Yes, why not now? And if not now, when? When is a better time to wake up? Later? It’s already later. It’s the latter-days, for crying

out loud. This is the worst time to continue putting off “putting off the natural man” (see Mosiah 3:19). Wake up now. Procrastinate later.

After the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, it is reported that Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, fully aware of the industrial might of the United States, made a grave and ultimately correct observation: “I fear we have awakened a sleeping giant, and filled him with a terrible resolve.” World War II is over now, but Satan’s war against righteousness rages on. Scripture One is like a spiritual alarm clock intended to awaken the sleeping giant, or the *spiritual* giant within each of us. Moroni’s words can fill us with a wonderful resolve, to come unto Christ, deny ourselves of ungodliness, live up to our privileges, and prepare our families and the world for the Second Coming.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie once remarked that we are living in “the Saturday night of time and that on Sunday morning the Lord will come.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Deseret Book Co., 1982], 30.) I suppose the primary song is correct then – Saturday is a special day – it’s the day we get ready for Sunday. If the Lord is coming Sunday morning, there’s no time to snooze. Scripture One says, “Up and at ‘em, house of Israel, “awake and arise from the dust.”

Scripture Two: “Ponder the path of thy feet” Proverbs 4:26

Now that we’re awake, what do we do? Well, the first thing most people do when they get out of bed is put their feet on the floor. Feet have symbolic meaning in the scriptures. They represent how one chooses to live, one’s personal direction, mission or goal (see Alonzo Gaskill, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*, Deseret Book, 2003, 37). To ponder the path of one’s feet, is to think about the purpose and direction of one’s life.

Suppose someone were to ask the question, “Why are you here?” We might answer, “Well, each of us came to earth to get a physical body, we came to be tested to see if we would do whatsoever the Lord commanded us – ” Suppose they interrupted us and said, “No, no, no, that’s why *everybody* is here. Why are *you* here?” That’s a different question. What is *your* life’s mission? What will *you* give your life to? How will the world be a different place because you were here? When that question is asked, we begin to ponder the path of our feet. Where am I going? What am I working towards? What is at the end of this road?

Perhaps the greatest map for showing us which way to walk are the scriptures. The psalmist wrote, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalms 119:105). Thus, the scriptures light the way that we should walk by offering general direction for all of God’s children.

Scriptural truths combined with the Holy Ghost offer a “show and tell” presentation as we ponder the path of our feet. Nephi taught that the “words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). While reading the scriptures, however, we may receive individualized revelation through the Spirit. Nephi continued, “If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5). Note the words, “show” and “tell.” The scriptures tell, the Holy Ghost shows.

Latter-day Saints are also greatly privileged to receive patriarchal blessings, which are usually more personal than the scriptures. President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “I would encourage you...to receive a patriarchal blessing. Study it carefully and regard it as personal scripture to you — for that indeed is what it is” (*Ensign*, November 1986, p.82). A patriarchal blessing written for the benefit and blessing of one individual can be a lot more specific than the standard works written for the benefit and blessing of billions. Sister Elaine Jack taught,

What does a patriarchal blessing say? Have you ever heard of one which says, “I am sorry — you’re a loser. Do the best you can on earth, and we’ll see you in about seventy years.” Of course not! And you never will, because of the divine qualities each of God’s children has inherited. *A patriarchal blessing is like a road map, a guide, directing you in your walk through life.* It identifies your talents and the good

things that can be yours. (*Ensign*, November 1989, p.87, *emphasis* added).

As you ponder the path of your feet on your “walk through life,” you may decide to compose your own statement of your life’s purpose. Most everyone is familiar with the idea of a mission statement. They are used by organizations of all kinds, as well as by individuals. A mission statement is a constitution which outlines a specific purpose or reason for existence and rules for action. Some have suggested that Moses 1:39, “For behold, this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man,” could be the Lord’s “mission statement.”

A personal mission statement comes after pondering the path of your feet. Once you have decided through your personal study, pondering and inspiration what your life can and should be, it is much easier to make decisions about how to spend your time and where to put your energies. Comedienne Lily Thomlin once quipped, “I always wanted to be somebody. I guess I should’ve been more specific.” A mission statement is more specific. A mission statement tells you what to say “yes” to, making it a lot easier to say “no” to those things which do not contribute or may distract you from your overall objectives. Further, a mission statement can keep you focused on the tree of life, and prevent you from getting lost in “strange roads” or “forbidden paths” (1 Nephi 8:28, 32).

It might be a good idea to write your mission statement in pencil, because pondering our path is not a one time exercise. Since the elements will combine to throw us off course, constant monitoring and course corrections may be necessary. I remember reading that an airliner is off-course *most* of the time, but because of constant course corrections, it eventually touches down on the right runway and reaches its intended destination. Similarly, our “path pondering” should be done constantly, to make sure the path we’re on is leading us towards the destination we desire.

A few years ago, I remember sharing a home teaching message which was written by President Thomas S. Monson. He spoke of the legendary World War II German Battleship the Bismarck, and how quickly it sent opposing ships to the bottom of the sea. However, during a famous battle, a torpedo scored a lucky hit on the rudder of the Bismarck, rendering it unable to steer. All the mighty battleship could do was go around in circles. Because it wasn’t going anywhere, allied ships pounded the Bismarck with artillery until it was eventually sunk. (Thomas S. Monson, “Sailing Safely on the Seas of Life,” *Ensign*, July 1999, 2).

Without a course or destination, all of our mighty potential may do nothing but go around in circles. The prophet Joseph Smith observed, “You know, brethren, that a very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept workways with the wind and the waves.” (D&C 123:16, see also James 3:4).

We can reach our destination regardless of the wind and the waves, with a very small helm, or in other words, a course, a purpose, a destination. A helm is part of the steering mechanism, and with our scriptures, our patriarchal blessing and the Holy Ghost, we can ponder the path of our feet, chart our divine destination and mission, and get under way on a course that will bless our families and build the kingdom.

Scripture Three: “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” D&C 60:13

It’s clear from the scriptures that the Lord is concerned with how we spend our time. Amulek testified, “If we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed” (Alma 34:33).

The key to improving our time lies with adjusting our idle. Most of us need to adjust our idle, and a few of us *worship* idles. When a car is sitting at a stoplight, it’s idling. The engine is on, it’s running, but it’s not delivering any power. The V6 in my minivan can take my family over Parley’s Summit at 65 mph without shifting down. That’s a lot of power. But at a stoplight, it just idles. Tremendous power at a standstill. Most of us are like that.

The Lord's displeasure with idleness is not mentioned only once, but several times in the scriptures:

Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness. (D&C 68:31)

Let every man be diligent in all things. And the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways. (D&C 75:29)

Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer. (D&C 42:42)

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. (Ezekiel 16:49)

Someone once observed that "Jesus chose his disciples when they were working. Satan chooses his when they are idle." A similar thought is expressed in the song of professor Harold Hill in "The Music Man." While trying to convince the townspeople of the trouble in River City, Professor Hill repeated an old English proverb, "Oh, the idle brain is the devil's playground."

Idleness and the relentless pursuit of leisure time isn't just a lifestyle choice, it's a sin. In fact, it's a tragedy. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:

One of the great tragedies we witness almost daily is the tragedy of men of high aim and low achievement. Their motives are noble. Their proclaimed ambition is praiseworthy. Their capacity is great. But their discipline is weak. They succumb to indolence. Appetite robs them of will. (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Be Thou an Example* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 60.)

The latter half of Scripture Three, "nor bury thy talent that it may not be known" is intriguing. It seems to me that the best possible use of our talents would be to help build the kingdom. But you can't build anything if you're always taking a break. Idleness buries talents. Brother Stephen R. Covey has written:

Too many vacations that last too long, too many movies, too much TV, too much video game playing — too much undisciplined leisure time in which a person continually takes the course of least resistance gradually wastes a life. It ensures that a person's capacities stay dormant, that talents remain undeveloped, that the mind and spirit become lethargic and that the heart is unfulfilled. (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Simon & Schuster, 1989, p.115).

Imagine the talents that could be discovered, developed and shared if we spent more time working on our own abilities than on television watching others develop theirs. Brigham Young remarked that "Your time... is property that belongs to the Lord... and if [you] do not make good use of it [you] shall be held accountable. (JD, Vol 12, 131-132.). According to tvturnoff.org, the average American watches over four hours of television per day. What could happen if we spent more time developing our own talents rather than on watching others develop theirs? We could spend more time strengthening our marriage than watching *The Bachelor*, spend more time working on our own musical gifts than worshipping *American Idol*, and find a way to survive without *Survivor*. What could be more exciting than discovering and developing a new skill? Our abilities could be used to serve others, bless our neighbors and build the kingdom. Why did the Lord give us talents if not to bless one another with them and use them to proclaim the gospel?

Anyone who carefully reads the Book of Mormon will begin to notice that wickedness and laziness go hand in hand. When the people become indolent, they are also called wicked. When the people become prideful they also become lazy. They would rather hunt than farm (farming is a lot more work), and they seek to put others in bondage so they

can “glut themselves with the labors of [others] hands.” (Mosiah 9:12; see also 2 Nephi 5:24, Alma 17:15, Alma 22:28).

Since wickedness and idleness are synonyms, we may well say that *idleness never was happiness*. Lying around, sitting around and hanging around never made anyone a happier person, only a rounder person. Og Mandino said it beautifully: “Activity and sadness are eternal opposites.” (*The Greatest Success in the World*, Bantam Books, 1981, 76.)

And if it’s rest you’re looking for, remember that idleness makes us more tired, not less. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle observed, “I never remember feeling completely tired by work, though idleness exhausts me completely” (Forbes, 437).

Scripture Three reminds us to adjust our idle. Each of us has great potential to climb over summits and fly over steep grades. Sitting and idling at crossroads is a waste of power and a waste of life. As President Kimball once said, “we have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward.” (“Let Us Move Forward and Upward,” *Ensign*, May 1979, p. 82.)

Scripture Four: “This is my work” Moses 1:39

The opposite of idleness is industry. Our Heavenly Father has all power, yet he has not chosen to retire. He possesses all things yet he does not spend eternity in idleness. As we’ve already discussed, the Lord describes his mission in these words, “this is my *work* and my glory.” I suspect that if we are to become like God, we will get there, at least in part, by working.

It seems that for some, the principle of work is declining in popularity. The relentless pursuit of leisure time has become the goal of a new generation. Most people ultimately discover that there is little satisfaction to be found in a labor-free lifestyle. Some have retired after winning the lottery, only to find themselves returning to work after a month or two out of sheer boredom. Og Mandino has written:

You were not created for a life of idleness. You cannot eat from sunrise to sunset or drink or play ... Work is not your enemy, but your friend. If all manners of labor were forbidden to thee you would fall to your knees and beg an early death... You may work grudgingly or you may work gratefully; you may work as a human or you may work as an animal. – *The Greatest Success in the World*, Bantam Books, 1981, 66.

We must work to make it through this life, but we alone decide whether to view our work as a blessing or a curse, or whether to work “as a human or as an animal.” President David O. McKay remarked that “we must realize that the privilege to work is a gift, that power to work is a blessing, that love of work is success.” (David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957], 381.)

President Gordon B. Hinckley reminded us that the origin of our work in mortality began with the fall of man: “Jehovah established the law when He declared, ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread’ (Genesis 3:19).” This law has often been called the “gospel of work.” President Hinckley continued:

I believe in the gospel of work. There is no substitute under the heavens for productive labor. It is the process by which dreams become reality. It is the process by which idle visions become dynamic achievements. We are all inherently lazy. We would rather play than work. We would rather loaf than work. A little play and a little loafing are good—that is one of the reasons you are here. But it is work that spells the difference in the life of a man or woman. It is stretching our minds and utilizing the skills of our hands that lifts us from the stagnation of mediocrity. (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 704-705.)

What kind of work should we do? We've already discussed that question a few pages ago while talking about Scripture Two, "Ponder the path of thy feet." The goal isn't only to work hard at something. There are probably a number of drug dealers who put in lots of hours. The goal is to working towards worthy objectives.

I remember hearing a story as a child that made quite an impression on me. A scientist conducted an experiment with what are called "processionary caterpillars." Processionary caterpillars follow one another as they look for food in a kind of "follow the leader" fashion. The scientist somehow succeeded in arranging these creatures around the rim of a flower pot. They followed each other in circles for several days until they eventually died of starvation. Food was only inches away, in the center of the flower pot, but they all died while appearing very busy. I remember well the lesson: *They died because they confused activity with accomplishment.* Again, the goal isn't just to be busy, but to be busy doing something worthwhile.

Once you find a purpose in life, a marvelous work in which to engage, your work becomes a mission and a pleasure. Perhaps your passion is to become a successful wife and mother and raise a family, or to become a world-class husband and father (that's my goal). We all know the oft repeated statement that "the most important work we will ever do will be within the walls of our own home." The world might not view these goals as particularly glamorous, but we recognize them as part of the work and glory of God. Once we know what we want to do, we go at it with everything we've got. George Bernard Shaw observed that true joy does not come from pursuing pleasure, but from working towards what you have chosen as your life's mission:

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. (Shaw, George Bernard (Preface to *Man and Superman*) as quoted by William Nichols in *Words to Live By*, p. 79.) As cited in *Christ's Ideals for Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1955], 277.)

Perhaps the greatest reward of work is satisfaction. It's always been interesting to me that after the Lord created the world, he said, "And I, God, saw everything that I had made, and, behold, all things which I had made were very good (Moses 2:31). Even the Lord took a moment to look over his work. On a scale a little less grand, what gives greater satisfaction than looking over a freshly mowed and trimmed lawn, or a remodeled room, or watching a son or daughter perform after being inspired (and perhaps pushed) by their parents to practice?

Margaret Thatcher observed, "Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's when you've had everything to do, and you've done it" (reference). Robert Louis Stevenson agrees: "I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work" (Sterling W. Sill, *The Laws of Success*, DB 1975, 62). We might modify the hymn to say "doing good *work* is a pleasure, a joy beyond measure."

Someone once remarked that if you see a man on top of a mountain, he didn't fall there. Rewards don't come in an instant, and neither does satisfaction unless effort is expended. Longfellow wrote, "The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night." (The Ladder of Saint Augustine)

Longfellow's statement reminds of how Helaman and his two-thousand stripling warriors successfully retook the city of Manti because they "toiled upward in the night," and marched "while their companions" (or in this case their enemies), slept.

Sometimes work is hard, tedious and even painful. In those situations the only thing that can keep us going is anticipating the satisfaction of a job well done. Some individuals work for many years to accomplish a singular goal. Olympic athletes prepare for a lifetime for their one moment. I don't consider myself a fan of boxing, but I appreciate the idea expressed by Muhammed Ali: "I hated every minute of the training, but I said, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'" (Cynthia Kersey, *Unstoppable*, Sourcebooks, 1998, 158).

The philosopher Korsaren believed that work was the antidote for just about any malady in life:

If you are poor, work. If you are burdened with seemingly unfair responsibilities, work. If you are happy, work. Idleness gives room for doubts and fears. If disappointments come, keep right on working. If sorrow overwhelms you and loved ones seem not true, work. If health is threatened, work. When faith falters and reason fails, just work. When dreams are shattered and hope seems dead, work. Work as if your life were in peril. It really is. No matter what ails you, work. Work faithfully – work with faith. Work is the greatest remedy available for both mental and physical afflictions. (*Forbes Book of Business Quotations*, 928.)

I honor anyone who works. I see young people flipping burgers or mowing lawns, and I honor them for working. There are so many less honorable things they could be doing. I honor any father who is out there trying to provide for his family in honest ways. I honor mothers who work all day inside the home, and mothers who are forced by circumstances to work outside the home.

If I have one fear concerning the youth of the Church, it is that they are not learning to work, and therefore not finding joy and satisfaction in their work. Many young men are masters at video and computer games, they can navigate the internet like Magellan, they know how to play and be entertained all day long. When these same young men begin their missions, they are suddenly expected to put in more than twelve hours a day in difficult and often monotonous work. Many of them experience depression because of their inability to perform at a level they've never attempted or experienced before.

I used to tease my parents about what they had me doing the day before I entered the MTC. I spent much of the day working in the yard. I must have hauled a dozen wheelbarrows full of cow manure up our sloping front lawn to the gardens in the back. When I finally put my calloused hands and aching back to bed that night, I said to myself, "I can't wait to go on a mission where I can get a break!"

I don't tease my parents anymore. In fact, I thank my Heavenly Father for a Mom and Dad who loved me enough to put me to work. I could labor as hard as the proverbial farmboy from Idaho, even though I was just a city boy from Salt Lake. That work ethic blessed me until the day the 747 lifted off the runway at Manila International Airport to take me home. I reclined my seat and closed my eyes with the peaceful assurance that I had worked hard on my mission. I knew it, and I knew that God knew it. That's satisfaction.

Scripture Four reminds us that work is honorable, work is good, and that God is still working in our behalf. Work is an important part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no hymn which says, "relaxation is great" or "hanging around is blessed," but there is one entitled "Sweet is the Work," and I believe that our Church work in behalf of our families and our brothers and sisters is the sweetest work of all.

Scripture Five: "I will go and do" 1 Nephi 3:7

There is a time to ponder, and there is a time to produce. After Nephi got his marching orders he went right to work. His assignment was not easy: he had to hike approximately 200 miles in a desert and get the plates of brass from a man who would probably try to kill him. Nephi's response to the Lord's request? "I will go and do."

Among the many admirable traits Nephi possessed, one of my favorites is his initiative. Once the Lord gave him a commandment, Nephi went into action, and he continued to act even when unexpected problems hedged up the way. He did not obtain the brass plates easily, but he persisted, and kept trying until he did.

When Nephi broke his bow, instead of sitting around murmuring like the rest of the family, Nephi "did make out of wood a bow, and out of a straight stick an arrow" (1 Nephi 16:23). If you look closely at that verse in your

scriptures, you'll notice footnote "a" on the word, "make." Footnote "a" refers you to the Topical Guide and the word "Initiative."

Nephi could have given up after he broke his steel bow, and complained to the Lord, "Now what do I do?" But he didn't. He remembered the commandment and relied on his faith that God would prepare a way. In his own words, Nephi was "led by the spirit not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" (1 Nephi 4:6). He preferred making tracks over making excuses. He took the initiative and moved ahead.

President Marion G. Romney observed, "While the Lord will magnify us in both subtle and dramatic ways, he can only guide our footsteps when we move our feet" (*Ensign*, May 1981, p. 91.). Some of us want the results without the work. That's backwards. As Robert Anthony once observed, you can't stand in front of your fireplace and demand, "Give me heat, then I'll give you wood." (*Doing What You Love, Loving What You Do*, Dr. Robert Anthony, Random House Audio Publishing, 1991, audio cassette side one.)

Many of us want to wait for a revelation before we go anywhere, but perhaps revelation requires a little action first. Elder John H. Groberg taught a principle which is largely responsible for the ring I'm wearing on my left hand:

In the past I have tried to figure out whether I should go into business or into teaching or into the arts or whatever. As I have begun to proceed along one path, having more or less gathered what facts I could, I have found that if that decision was wrong or was taking me down the wrong path—not necessarily an evil one, but one that was not right for me—without fail, the Lord has always let me know just this emphatically: "That is wrong; do not go that way. That is not for you!"

On the other hand, there may have been two or three ways that I could have gone, any one of which would have been right and would have been in the general area providing the experience and means whereby I could fulfill the mission that the Lord had in mind for me. Because he knows we need the growth, he generally does not point and say, "Open that door and go twelve yards in that direction; then turn right and go two miles . . ." But if it is wrong, he will let us know—we will feel it for sure. I am positive of that. So rather than saying, "I will not move until I have this burning in my heart," let us turn it around and say, "I will move, unless I feel it is wrong; and if it is wrong, then I will not do it." By eliminating all of these wrong courses, very quickly you will find yourself going in the direction that you ought to be going, and then you can receive the assurance: "Yes, I am going in the right direction. I am doing what my Father in Heaven wants me to do because I am not doing the things he does not want me to do." And you can know that for sure. That is part of the growth process and part of accomplishing what our Father in Heaven has in mind for us. ("What Is Your Mission?" *Speeches of the Year, 1979* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980], 97-98)

Sometimes you have to get going before you get guidance. I've always loved the story of the healing of the ten lepers recorded in Luke. When they asked the Savior for mercy, he told them to "go" and "shew themselves unto the priest." Jesus' instructions are interesting, because visiting the priest is what the lepers would be required to do *after* they were healed in order to be readmitted to society (*Jesus The Christ*, 43). But Jesus asked them to find the priest *before* they were healed. The lepers might have responded, "We can't show ourselves to the priest, we're not healed yet!" Instead, they decided to "go and do" what Jesus suggested. Luke records, "And it came to pass, that, *as they went*, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:14, *emphasis* added). It doesn't say, "and it came to pass, that as they just stood there, they were cleansed," it says, "as they *went*, they were cleansed." As someone once said, "God cannot steer a parked car." If we want to be guided, we've got to get going. There's something magical about moving forward with faith. H. W. Murray wrote:

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issue from the

decision, rising in one's favor, all manner of unforeseen incidences and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. (W. H. Murray, *Everest—The West Ridge*, San Francisco: Thomas F. Hornbein Sierra Club, 1966, p. 100.) Cited in (Neal A. Maxwell, *That My Family Should Partake* [Deseret Book Co., 1974], 27.)

All this talk of “going” and “doing” can become a little tiring. Some of us feel that all our “get up and go” “got up and went” years ago. But fatigue doesn’t come from doing things – it comes from not doing things, or more specifically, from not finishing things.

Do you want to know where fatigue comes from? It doesn’t come from working too hard. All the research shows that fatigue comes from not finishing your work. William James once wrote, “Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.” — Steve Chandler, *100 Ways to Motivate Yourself*.

Indeed, to “go and do” is much less exhausting than to “sit and stew.” Watch for the word “go” in the following verses: The Lord encouraged Moses, “Therefore go, and I will be thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Exodus 4:12). When Enoch complained that he was slow of speech, the Lord said, “Go forth and do as I have commanded thee...” (Moses 6:32). Isaiah admonished the house of Israel, “Go ye forth out of Babylon” (Isaiah 48:20). Lehi told Nephi, “Therefore go my son, and thou shalt be favored” (1 Nephi 3:6). Jesus told the Centurion, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee” (Matthew 8:13). The parable of the Good Samaritan concluded when Jesus told the lawyer, “go and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). The resurrected Christ told the apostles, “go ye therefore and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). These scriptures encourage not only action, but also direction. When Jesus asked the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67-68).

Dr. Brent Barlow once suggested that we could attach another meaning to the acronym, LDS: *Let’s Do Something!* Indeed, let’s go and do! Gospel inaction is an oxymoron. The gospel in action is redundant. We live in a world where there is always something righteous we can go and do. There are people to be loved, children to be raised, families to be taught, hearts to be lifted, knees to be strengthened. Going and doing will keep us active and positive. Elder Marion D. Hanks taught that the best antidote for feeling down is to get up and go:

“At the moment of depression, if you will follow a simple program, you will get out of it. Get on your knees and get the help of God; then get up and go find somebody who needs something that you can help them find. Then it will be a good day. (*BYU Speeches of the Year*, “Make It a Good Day!”, September 27, 1966, pp. 6-7.)

I remember as a youth being told that President Spencer W. Kimball had a two-word motto on his desk, “Do it.” Later those two words became quite famous as the slogan of an athletic shoe company. But I think I like the phrase best as it appears in an Old Testament verse which provides the perfect ending for the discussion of Scripture Five: “Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it” (Ezra 10:4).

Conclusion:

I love the old adage, “Some people dream of doing great things. Others wake up and do them.” I’ve read a number of motivational books, and listened to dozens of motivational seminars while traveling in my car, but nothing gets me going like the scriptures. As latter-day Saints, we are involved in the greatest work in the universe, and time is running out. Who can sleep through the last days when words like, “Awake and arise from the dust” thunder from the last page of the Book of Mormon? (Moroni 10:31). Aroused from a spiritual slumber, we “ponder the path of our feet,” fully aware of the commandment, “thou shalt not idle away thy time” (D&C 60:13). Then we’re off to work, knowing the “work and glory” of God is to help us reach our highest potential (Moses 1:39). Lastly, we “go and do,” with a happy heart, in anticipation of one day hearing the words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.” (1 Nephi 3:7, Matthew 25:21).