

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 92.2)

LESSON 15 (STUDY NOTES)

“Look to God and Live”

Hook	
Goal	
Overview	(see below)
Conclusion	

Lesson 15: Look to God and Live

Narratives/principles to cover

-more complaining, contention between Aaron/Miriam, Miriam cursed

-calling of the 70 elders

-“would that all were prophets” (major theme of these two lessons)

-and yet no one is like Moses

Spying on Canaan, report of Joshua and Caleb

God’s offer to Moses!!! (Numbers 14, wipe out Israelites and start over with Moses)

Bronze serpent

Manual:

To encourage class members to overcome worldly desires and fears and look to the Savior and his prophets for guidance. (look past “things of the world”)

I. Sunday School

- a. How can we “look to God and live”? (Bronze serpent narrative)
- b. Focusing on what is important (Canaan scouting narrative)
- c. Balance of personal and institutional revelation
- d. Conclusion: Receiving guidance and strength from proper sources

II. Scholarship

- a. Return to the reading
- b. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Remember to bring up the Korah rebellion)
- c. Spies to Canaan (Just point toward Lesson 18)
- d. Meaning of the bronze serpent

This is another example of the “who can be a priest?” debate.

Miriam (from ABD)

“There is little doubt that the view of Miriam as sister of Moses and Aaron is the product of a long history of tradition. The three leaders are presented together without kinship terminology in Numbers 12 and Micah 6:4. The designation of Miriam as Aaron’s sister in Exod 15:20 may be an attempt by a late priestly writer/editor to relate this early cult leader to Aaron...Contemporary scholarship suggest that biblical genealogies reflect much more about functional relationships than actual biological ties...Thus, in linking Miriam with Moses and Aaron, late priestly genealogists offer much the same view of Miriam as do Numbers 12 and Mic 6:4, as a religious leader alongside Aaron and Moses”

“In presenting Miriam, biblical writers from earliest to latest periods of composition offer only glimpses of a woman in the wilderness community who exercised leadership in the cultic sphere and who claimed authority as a spokesperson for the Divinity. Martin Noth (GPT, 182) was undoubtedly correct in saying that ‘at one time much more was told about her which is now completely lost’” (IV.870)

Nehushtan (also see notes in Annotated Reading) , read from ABD

Wilson GHBW (Genealogy and History in the Biblical World)

III. Study Notes

- a. Balance of personal and institutional revelation (important part of the discussion) Korah Revolt (Numbers 16, very worth discussing)

Core question of the revolt: Who is holy? Who can officiate in religious ceremonies? (See Num. 16:1-3)

This is a weaving together of two originally separate revolts: One by the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram and their allies, and then the revolt over holiness led by Korah.

Let's look at rebellion and consequences:

Korah and the Levites rebel about Moses' authority → they have a religious test (kind of like two battling quorums of deacons preparing the sacrament) → fire swallows up all the people offering incense (16:35)

The Reubenites rebel → the earth opens up and swallows all the rebels, even women and little children (16:32).

And God wanted to wipe everyone out until Moses and Aaron intervene (16:22)

And even after all that, God sends a plague that kills 14,700 (on top of those swallowed up and bbq'd in the previous chapter)

Rebellion and consequences:

- b. What do we make of the God of these chapters (including God's offer to wipe out Israelites and start over with Moses)

- c. Optimism, pessimism, brain chemistry and outcomes (Documentary Happy, Jonathan Haidt and Happiness Hypothesis, 50% genetics of optimist/pessimist, three ways of changing: cognitive behavioral therapy (training yourself to think/respond to stimulus differently), meditation, medication. Also insights from Biology of Ideology—conservatives respond to threats/dangers more quickly and longer

- d. What are other places we can “look” in addition to God? (if we have a harder time feeling a connection with God, for example)

In part 3, for the sake of completeness, where should someone “look” who has a hard time believing in God?

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Time Focus

1. Past: Focus on positives
2. Past: Focus on negatives
3. Present: Hedonism
4. Present: Fatalism
5. Future: Goal-oriented
6. Future: Transcendental, life begins on death

Optimal: Fluidity, but high past positive, moderately high future/goal orientated, moderate present hedonism (enjoy life fully), low on past and present negative.

Being in the moment also increases happiness (Flow)

General Conference quotes

Uchtdorf, Grateful in any Circumstances <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

It might sound contrary to the wisdom of the world to suggest that one who is burdened with sorrow should give thanks to God. But those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude can find a purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding.

Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I'm suggesting that instead of being thankful *for* things, we focus on being thankful *in* our circumstances—whatever they may be.

This type of gratitude transcends whatever is happening around us. It surpasses disappointment, discouragement, and despair. It blooms just as beautifully in the icy landscape of winter as it does in the pleasant warmth of summer.

When we are grateful to God *in* our circumstances, we can experience gentle peace in the midst of tribulation. In grief, we can still lift up our hearts in praise. In pain, we can glory in Christ's Atonement. In the cold of bitter sorrow, we can experience the closeness and warmth of heaven's embrace.

We sometimes think that being grateful is what we do *after* our problems are solved, but how terribly shortsighted that is. How much of life do we miss by waiting to see the rainbow before thanking God that there is rain?

Being grateful in times of distress does *not* mean that we are pleased with our circumstances. It *does* mean that through the eyes of faith we look beyond our present-day challenges.

This is not a gratitude of the lips but of the soul. It is a gratitude that heals the heart and expands the mind.

Being grateful *in* our circumstances is an act of faith in God. It requires that we trust God and hope for things we may not see but which are true. By being grateful, we follow the example of our beloved Savior, who said, "Not my will, but thine, be done."⁹

True gratitude is an expression of hope *and* testimony. It comes from acknowledging that we do not always understand the trials of life but trusting that one day we will.

In any circumstance, our sense of gratitude is nourished by the many and sacred truths we *do* know: that our Father has given His children the great plan of happiness; that through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can live forever with our loved ones; that in the end, we will have glorious, perfect, and immortal bodies, unburdened by sickness or disability; and that our tears of sadness and loss will be replaced with an abundance of happiness and joy, "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over."¹⁰

Richard Scott, Healing from abuse: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/04/to-heal-the-shattering-consequences-of-abuse?lang=eng>

Oaks, Good, Better, Best

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2007/10/good-better-best?lang=eng>

As we consider various choices, we should remember that it is not enough that something is good. Other choices are better, and still others are best. Even though a particular choice is more costly, its far greater value may make it the best choice of all.

Consider how we use our time in the choices we make in viewing television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, or reading books or magazines. Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best. When the Lord told us to seek learning, He said, “Seek ye out of the *best* books words of wisdom” ([D&C 88:118](#); emphasis added).

Stake presidencies and bishoprics need to exercise their authority to weed out the excessive and ineffective busyness that is sometimes required of the members of their stakes or wards. Church programs should focus on what is best (most effective) in achieving their assigned purposes without unduly infringing on the time families need for their “divinely appointed duties.”

Some uses of individual and family time are better, and others are best. We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.

Jeffrey Holland, Look to God and Live: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1993/10/look-to-god-and-live?lang=eng>

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Healing from abuse: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/04/to-heal-the-shattering-consequences-of-abuse?lang=eng>

Oaks, Good, Better, Best

http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_killingsworth_want_to_be_happier_stay_in_the_moment

(Focus on the future, then be in the present ;))

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On being fully alive:

(quote from that?)