

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz production  
Week 27  
Alma 17-22

There are so many topics we could discuss this week. These chapters are loaded with many wonderful doctrines. One thing that has been on my mind this week is the very beginning of Chapter 17. Alma is journeying from the land of Gideon to the land of Manti when he bumps into the sons of Mosiah. Verse 2 tells us that “these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel **first** appeared unto him”. For me when I hear a phrase like this, it makes me question what its full meaning is. Why did he phrase it as the “First time” the angel appeared to him. Were there other times?

I would like to really dive into this next part, the end of verse 2 and verse 3 which says: “they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had **searched** the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

**3** But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and **fasting**; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with **power** and authority of God.”

I think that those are the characteristics that we all desire to have. Could you imagine how your life would be different if you waxed strong in the truth, having the spirit of prophecy, revelation and being able to teach with power and authority from God? These verses make it seem easy to obtain. All you have to do is: Search the scriptures diligently, and give yourselves to much prayer and fasting. That's all...I say that kind of tongue and cheek because it is not easy. But it does give us deeper understanding to the Saviors words in Matthew 7:7; “**Ask**, and it shall be **given** you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you.”

See I think sometimes we believe that a casual prayer or an occasional casual looking will produce the same results as a heart felt pleading or a diligent seeking. It is clear that 2 or 3 routine prayers a day, or 1 monthly skipping of 2 meals wont cut it if we are truly seeking to have an audience with the creator of the universe.

To me the first part of this is to really master the art of prayer. It takes time and dedication to really understand how to communicate with God. Some people make it seem easy. But, for most of us it takes effort and a lot of practice. I have 3 resources that I would like to pull from that have helped me in my pursuit of effective prayer. The first is one that I often turn to in order to get my head right before I pray. It is in the Bible Dictionary under the topic of prayer, there is one paragraph that says:

“As soon as we learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God (namely, God is our Father, and we are His children), then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part ([Matt. 7:7–11](#)). Many of the so-called difficulties about prayer arise from forgetting this relationship. Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant but that are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part before we can obtain them. Prayer is a form of work and is an appointed means for obtaining the highest of all blessings.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bd/prayer?lang=eng>

The second resource is in 3rd Nephi chapter 13 verses 5-13. This is when Jesus teaches the people how to pray. He says:

**5** And when thou [prayest](#) thou shalt not do as the [hypocrites](#), for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

**6** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast [shut](#) thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father, who [seeth](#) in secret, shall reward thee openly.

**7** But when ye pray, use not [vain repetitions](#), as the [heathen](#), for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

**8** Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father [knoweth](#) what things ye have need of before ye [ask](#) him.

**9** After this [manner](#) therefore [pray](#) ye: Our [Father](#) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

**10** Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**11** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

**12** And [lead](#) us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**13** For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”

Jesus, who was the perfect example, was the Master of Prayer. President Holland in this last General conference said this about Jesus praying:

“Ultimately, we can look to the example of the Savior, who prayed so very, very often. But it has always been intriguing to me that Jesus felt the need to pray at all. Wasn’t He perfect? About what did He need to pray? Well, I have come to realize that He too, with us, wanted to “seek [the Father’s] face, believe his word, and trust his grace.”

Time after time, He retreated from society to be alone before piercing heaven with His prayers. At other times, He prayed in the company of a few companions. Then He would seek heaven on behalf of multitudes who would cover a hillside. Sometimes prayer glorified His clothing. Sometimes it glorified His countenance. Sometimes He stood to pray, sometimes He knelt, and at least once He fell on His face in prayer.

Luke describes Jesus's descent into His expiation as requiring Him to pray "more earnestly." How does one who was perfect pray more earnestly? We assume that all of His prayers were earnest, yet in fulfilling His atoning sacrifice and through the pain that attended its universal reach, He felt to pray ever more pleadingly, with the weight of His offering finally bringing blood from every pore."

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/13holland?lang=eng>

He Brings up a very good point that if Jesus is able to more earnestly pray to the Father for help then shouldn't we also be able to increase our desire for heavenly help in times of need?

If you have access to the deseret bookshelf, Elder Gene R. Cook has a book on there titled "Receiving answers to our prayers". This book helped me a ton in understanding how to unlock or decode the process of receiving answers. Listen to some of what he says:

"When we begin to learn how to obtain answers to our prayers, we are able to tap into the Lord's power and goodness to help us in our lives. But if our prayers are ineffective, or if we don't really learn to rely on the Lord, we're usually left to our own devices.

Often people will say, "I try to pray, but the Lord just doesn't speak to me. I know he lives, and I know he loves me, but he just doesn't answer my prayers. Maybe he wants me to live my life on my own, without his help."

It's true that the Lord wants us to constantly exercise our agency to do good, to grow, to develop, to learn to act for ourselves and not to be acted upon. However, he has promised every one of us the gift to be able to receive constant direction from the Holy Ghost. He has promised to help us in every aspect of our lives, if only we will let him.

I firmly believe that the problem is *never* with the Lord when we don't receive answers to our prayers. He is constant and true; he never fails in any of his promises. Rather, the failing is in us.

Often we just don't know how to obtain the answers we seek. Maybe we're not diligent enough in the seeking, or maybe we ask without listening to the Lord's reply. Maybe we haven't prepared our hearts to receive whatever the Lord might send. Maybe we haven't understood and practiced some of the basic principles he has taught us regarding prayer. Maybe we have allowed our will to dominate and have not truly sought his holy will.

I think the Lord at times must be saddened that while he has offered us so much, we're satisfied with so little. But when we begin to learn how to obtain answers to our prayers, we start to see the divine ways in which the Lord works, and we see we *can* receive the Father's many gifts.”

He then goes on to outline 2 stories about his family and his sons that lost something very valuable to them. And how the family was able to pray and in an impossible way find the lost items. In his stories he highlights the 5 principles of prayer and how they work to bring to pass the answers and blessings of the Lord which they were seeking. These are the 5 things he says we need in order to open the windows of Heaven, he says:

“The Lord helps us in our lives and answers our prayers if we—

1. Pray and ask sincerely.
2. Repent. The faster you heed the Lord, the faster he will heed you.
3. Read the scriptures and obtain the Spirit.
4. Make promises to do better in areas in which you have problems.
5. Get rid of all doubt and anger in your heart.

I testify to you that if you do these things and it is right for you, the Lord will answer your prayer. I know that it was not by luck or chance that we found the [lost items], and I know the Lord really did guide me to find it when I was ready. I testify to you that this is true and it really did happen. . . . I have a testimony that the Lord

lives and loves each one of us and will help us if we will only reach out to him and obey his commandments.”

<https://read.deseretbook.com/media/454/read/5091885?src=Y2hhcF8zLnhtbA%3D%3D>

Over the years there have been times in my life when I have struggled to have an effective prayer. When I have felt like the heavens are closed to me. But, once I have come out the other side and revelation has again begun to flow I have realized that it wasn't God that had pulled away, but my own self that was not seeking Him in the way that was required. I think that in the next life when we are able to look back on our mortal experience we will be shocked to find out that God spoke to us more often and more diligently than we were able to see or receive. I think that we might be surprised to find out that we had more help from Heaven than we realized, when we thought we were doing something all on our own.

I testify that God is present in your life every single day. That He is speaking to you every single day. And that we might be able to hear Him is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.