

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz production
Week 4
1 Nephi 11-15

Let's start in chapter 15 because there is something really cool that I would like to show you. Nephi returns to his tent after having this amazing vision and he finds his brothers arguing about Lehi's vision. Now, let's consider what Nephi just saw. Nephi is a strong and valiant man that will be an amazing leader to his people after the Nephites and the Lamenites separate and become enemies. The Nephites are a good and delightsome people under the leadership of Nephi. And the Lamanites are a blood thirsty, ferocious people under the leadership of Lamien and Lemuel. So you could imagine how Nephi is feeling. It's about the same as you and I feel. It goes something like this: If I strive to keep God's commandments, do what is right and treat other people good then nothing bad will happen in my life and everything is going to be smooth sailing. Does that sound familiar? Does that philosophy resonate with your personal beliefs? We don't know exactly what Nephi believed about that, but after seeing his entire posterity destroyed because of wickedness and the Lamanites surviving, you could imagine that he was probably a little upset. This is how he describes what he is feeling:

“4 And now I, Nephi, was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts, and also, because of the things which I had seen, and knew they must unavoidably come to pass because of the great wickedness of the children of men.

5 And it came to pass that I was overcome because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destruction of my people, for I had beheld their fall.” (1 Nephi 15:4-5)

That must have been an awful feeling knowing that no matter how good Nephi would try to be, no matter how much he preached and taught his people they would still be destroyed. Im sure it was hard to find any motivation or hope after that revelation.

But, there he found himself, standing in front of his evil brothers arguing about this vision that their father just explained to them. How would you respond if you were Nephi? What would you say to your brothers after just seeing what he just saw? That is something to consider as we look at this great man, humble himself and respond with kindness and charity. This is what Nephi says:

“For he (Lehi) truly spake many great things unto them, which were hard to be understood, save a man should inquire of the Lord”. (1 Nephi 15:3)

Before we unpack this, let's look first at Lamien and Lemuels response so we can contrast the two. Nephi asks what it is they are arguing about and Lamien responds:

“7 Behold, we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken concerning the natural branches of the olive tree, and also concerning the Gentiles.

8 And I said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord?

9 And they said unto me: **We** have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us.” (1 Nephi 15:7-9)

I love that we have the blessing to read about Nephi, Lamien and Lemuel right at the beginning of this book because, most of us believe that we are like unto Nephi, yet when we really look at what we say and what we do and how we respond to God we will find that we are really more like Lamien when it comes to spiritual things. As I have pondered these two responses in the course of my life I have found that I respond more like Lamien when it comes to really understanding the things of God. When I hear something that I don't understand I tend to say what Lamien said “The Lord maketh no such things known unto me”. Or in modern language we would say “That is not important for us to understand”, or “we will just take the prophets word for it we don't need to ask for ourselves, after all he is the prophet.” I'm sure we could make a massive list of things that we say that are the same response as Lamien. But, instead of focusing on that Let's go back to how Nephi responds to Lehi's dream because that is who we really want to be like, right?

One of the most insightful and wonderful verses in all of the Book of Mormon Nephi says: “1 For it came to pass after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat **pondering** in mine heart I was **caught away** in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high **mountain**, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot.” (1 Nephi 11:1)

Just so we understand the contrast here, Lamien and Lemuel are arguing saying that God doesn't make these kinds of things known unto them and Nephi does what? He first desires to understand, then he believes, then he sat pondering.

President Marion G. Romney back in 1978 said this:

“Nephi doesn't use the word *prayer* in introducing his account of his great vision.

There is no doubt in my mind but that Nephi's pondering was in essence a prayer.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1978/04/prayer-and-revelation?lang=eng>

Well, isn't that just an enlightening thought. Have you ever considered that pondering on the things of the Lord could be a version of prayer. This opens up a whole world of possibilities when we are taught to pray always and pray without ceasing.

Many prophets have referred to this verse as the key to unlocking the doors of heaven. Which I would have to agree with them. With these three points if we truly understood and implemented

them, we will open up a world of revelation that we have been missing in our lives. Do you want to have dreams and visions? Do you want to receive a clear and perfect understanding of the answers to your prayers? Then study and restudy, practice and re-practice the principles contained in this verse. And in the next verse.

Let me show you what I mean.

Nephi had a problem, he did not understand what Lehi's dream ment. But he wanted to know, he wanted to understand. That is the "desire" part. Then that desire drove him to do something about it. He turned to God. Do you think that he would have turned to God if he did not believe that God could and would answer his prayer? It is highly unlikely. Nephi had felt the spirit's promptings before. He knew that God could and would answer his prayer if he asked in faith. He had done it before, why wouldn't he do it again. In his own words this is what he said to God about his belief: "I have **trusted** in thee, and I will **trust** in thee forever." (2 Nephi 4:34)

Then after he prayed and asked God to please help him understand what the vision ment he pondered on it. This is where I think we drop the ball in our lives. To ponder means: "think about (something) carefully, especially before making a decision or reaching a conclusion."

https://www.google.com/search?q=definition+of+ponder&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS1070US1070&og=definition+of+Ponder&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGQyBwgAEAAyGQyBwgBEAAyGQyBwgCEAAyGQyBwgDEAAyGQyBwgEEAAyGQyBwgFEAAyGQyDQgGEAAyhgMYgAQYigUyDQgHEAAyhgMYgAQYigUyDQgIEAAyhgMYgAQYigUyDQgJEAAyhgMYgAQYigXSAQgzNTAwajFqN6gCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Most of the time when we ponder on something we are pondering on how we can get what we want. Let's use this for an example: I am in need of new employment and I don't know what it is that I'm supposed to do or where I am supposed to apply. So my thoughts are consumed with things like this: "What can I do?" "Where should I go?" "Which places should I apply at?". These are all good questions to ask when considering new employment. But, do they solicit an answer from God? What if we were to flip the script and ponder on these questions instead: "What would God like me to do?" "Where would God like me to be to make the biggest difference on His children that He loves?" Where would God like to apply at, that will teach me of His love and mercy?"

How does pondering those questions change how our thoughts and feelings are directed? This is where prayer becomes powerful and it also brings up a very common question that we need to consider in this form of prayer: How do we know what it is we are supposed to pray for? I love this topic because it is something that Jesus addressed right here in the book of Mormon. After His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus shows up at the temple. We read about this in 3rd Nephi. After instituting the sacrament, they are baptized and receive the holy Ghost Jesus teaches them how to pray. This this is what it says:

"24 And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him;

and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.” (3 Nephi 19:24)

The principle that we learn from this verse is that: If you want to receive a revelation you first must receive a revelation. This is what we also learn from the account of Nephi that we are studying. After he tells us that he had a desire and believed then pondered this is the next step: “I sat **pondering** in mine heart I was **caught away** in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high **mountain**, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot. And the Spirit said unto me: Behold, what **desirest** thou?” (1 Nephi 11:1-2)

That is it. That is what you are looking for. To be caught away in the spirit, and to be instructed to ask. But, this process will not happen until you and God know that you will not ask for anything that is contrary to God’s will. That is why it is so critical that we know what God wants for us, what His desires are for our future.

See, prayer is rarely a one time thing when it comes to answers that are important. This process takes time. How much time? As long as it takes. Pray and ponder until you are filled with desire and you can't help but long for the presents of God. You will know you are getting close because you will feel it. It will draw you to Him, your soul will long for His comfort and peace and the world will just melt away. This is not just the key to heaven, this is the way to blow this hinges off the pearly gates. And the heavens will rejoice over you. They did for Nephi with his efforts and they will for you as well.

In the words of the Angel: “[and] the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the **earth**, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou **believest** in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired.” (1 Nephi 11:6)

Prayer can be powerful and meaningful. It can change the course of your life and you can have your every desire. I want that for you and God wants that for you. Fear not...only believe. I testify that God is anxious to talk with you, to meet with you and to bless you.

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.