

Resources for Managing Spiritual Demands

Among missionaries, a common reaction to excessive stress is to question the strength of their testimony or the truthfulness of the gospel. This struggle often stems from a lack of resources to deal with excessive stress rather than a lack of testimony. If you have such difficulties, try the suggestions below that seem right to you. Also refer to the “General Principles for Managing Stress” section on pages 17–22 for additional ideas.

A

Learning to Strengthen My Testimony

- **Realize that questions are healthy.** Joseph Smith received many revelations in response to honest questions. Scriptures, teachers, and reason can help with some questions, but only the Spirit can confirm that God is real, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the Church is true.
- **Understand what faith is.** To have faith is to trust the Lord’s perfect goodness, love, wisdom, and fairness, even though we do not perfectly understand. Alma teaches that “faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21). You do not need “perfect knowledge” to have faith. Study Alma 32 for help in building your faith. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 116–17.)
- **Be patient.** Time and experience will help you make sense of some things that are confusing now. Remember Nephi’s assertion: “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). Build on what you know by the Spirit to be true about God. (See *Preach My Gospel*, 120.)
- **Keep the commandments.** We gain trust in the Lord when we learn by experience the value of His teachings. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

“Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another.”

—*Doctrine and Covenants* 90:24

B

Learning to Repent

- **Be honest with your mission president.** If you need to repent of serious sins you have not dealt with, talk to your mission president openly and honestly. He will help you make these things right.
- **Forgive yourself after repentance.** If you have repented and still feel guilt and shame, remember we all regret past sins and mistakes. Trust that Christ’s Atonement is sufficient, even for you. Remember that repentance is not just the backup plan. Repentance is the plan of happiness for every person. Make sure the things you worry about most are things that really matter (for example, the progress of your investigators), not simply matters of personal pride (like what others think of you).

- **Understand the role of confession.** If you feel a need to confess less serious sins or to confess repeatedly, even after priesthood leaders have assured you that your confession is sufficient, you are probably taking confession too far. Continuing to feel regret and sadness about past sins is normal and does not mean you need to confess again. Distract yourself from such thoughts with other activities, and make the deliberate choice to believe in the Lord's forgiveness. Ignore the temptation to become anxious or ashamed.
- **Talk to your mission president if you continue to struggle.**

C

Learning to Pray Meaningfully

- **Try praying out loud, even if only in a whisper.** Try preparing for prayer by writing your questions or concerns. Visualize the Lord nearby. Ask God what you can do for Him today; then act on ideas that come to mind. On occasion use your prayer only to thank God for the many good things with which He has blessed you.
- **Study "Pray with Faith" in *Preach My Gospel*.** This section, found on pages 93–95, provides suggestions on prayer.

D

Learning to Love the Scriptures

- **Pray specifically for help understanding and enjoying the scriptures.** Use some of your study time to write your feelings and reactions, what you learn, or spiritual impressions you receive.
- **Review "Study Ideas and Suggestions" in *Preach My Gospel*.** This section, found on pages 22–25, gives suggestions for more rewarding scripture study.

*Be still, my soul: Thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as he has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: The waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.*

—Hymns, no. 124

E

Learning to Rely on the Spirit

- **Practice with patience.** Learning to recognize the voice of the Spirit is much like learning a language—it takes practice, patience, humility, and a willingness to learn from mistakes without giving up.
- **Learn from general conferences.** For ideas on how to cultivate personal revelation, study general conference addresses on this topic.
- **Study *Preach My Gospel*.** Pages 96–99 contain additional suggestions and insights on recognizing and relying on the Spirit.

Scripture Resources

Study the passages on the following pages to strengthen your faith that God will provide you with comfort and help. As you remember the Savior, you “may have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:79).

Isaiah 41:10	“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”
John 14:27	“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
2 Timothy 1:7	“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”
1 Nephi 1:20	“The tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”
Jacob 3:1	“He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause.”
Jacob 4:7	“The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.”
Mosiah 4:27	“And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.”
Mosiah 24:13–14	“Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”
Alma 7:12	“He will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”
Alma 26:27	“When our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: ... bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.”
Alma 38:5	“As much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions.”
Ether 12:27	“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”
Doctrine and Covenants 6:32–36	“Even so am I in the midst of you. ... Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. Behold, I do not condemn you. ... Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”
Doctrine and Covenants 58:2–4	“He that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. For after much tribulation come the blessings.”
Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9	“All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. ... Therefore, hold on.”
Bible Dictionary, “Fear”	“The first effect of Adam’s sin was that he was afraid (Genesis 3:10). ... Ever since the Fall, God has been teaching men not to fear, but with penitence to ask forgiveness in full confidence of receiving it.”
Other scripture resources:	