

How I Know God Loves Me And You

February 23,2025

The topic I was given to speak on is How I Know God Loves Me And You. Anyone who knows my wife Brooklyn will know my answer to that.

When I think of God's love for me, I think of the outdoors. I grew up doing lots of hiking, camping, fishing, and backpacking in Yellowstone National Park, Teton National Park, and my favorite, Yosemite National Park. I have spent countless hours exploring the landscapes in these incredible parks, and in them, I see the love of a Father who created these incredible landscapes for us to enjoy, and I feel His desire to be close to us. It doesn't take long in these spaces to understand the words of the Italian poet and author Dante Alighieri, "Nature is the art of God."

Outline

- **God shows His Love for us through all that He does**
- **God shows His Love for us by giving us all He has**
- **God shows His Love for us by showing us that He wants us to know Him**

God shows His Love for us through all that He does

John 3:16-17 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

2 Nephi 26:24 - "**He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world**, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation."

Is this all He has done for us? Of course not.

- Dallin H Oaks (April 2021 GC, What Has Our Savior Done for Us?) - "What has Jesus Christ done for me?"
 - Under the plan of our Heavenly Father, He "created the heavens and the earth" (Doctrine and Covenants 14:9) so that each of us could have the mortal experience necessary to seek our divine destiny.
 - As part of the Father's plan, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ overcame death to assure each of us immortality.
 - Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice gives each of us the opportunity to repent of our sins and return clean to our heavenly home.

- His commandments and covenants show us the way, and His priesthood gives the authority to perform the ordinances that are essential to reach that destiny.
- And our Savior willingly experienced all mortal pains and infirmities that He would know how to strengthen us in our afflictions.”

In short, we can see that everything that God does for us is because of His love for us.

God shows His Love for us by giving us all He has

For God so loved the world, He gave his only Begotten Son, and for God so loves us, He asks us to give our lives to Him. For most of us, this does not mean being put to death for Him, but rather giving of our time, talents, and all else with which we are blessed to God. While the burden and pain of our sacrifices are intentionally real, the reality is that He will always return to us more than we give him, and He asks us to give *precisely because of His love for us*.

King Benjamin taught (Mosiah 2:21) - “I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.”

King Benjamin’s words may feel harsh, as if our efforts mean nothing to God. But the key word at the end is unprofitable. I’m no businessman, but I’ve been told by people who ought to know that profit is a measure of gain, the difference between what we have now and what we started with. By calling us unprofitable servants, King Benjamin makes clear that no matter how much we give to God, He will always return more to us than we give Him. His business is that of building us, and He shows his love by giving us the opportunity to discover and learn for ourselves. As Zedd Dong said a few weeks ago, “Becoming like our Heavenly Father is a fundamental aspect of our faith.”

In Ether, the brother of Jared needed light in his barges while his people crossed the ocean. I love this story, because the Lord gives the brother of Jared the opportunity to problem solve and learn, rather than simply giving him the answer. When the brother of Jared comes back to the Lord with rocks, he is able to have an incredible spiritual experience with the Lord, enabled by the faith he showed and grew while acting to solve the problem the Lord left him.

By giving us opportunities to act, He allows us to share in His glory. Satan wanted to take the glory for himself, but when we sacrifice and willingly submit to God, He multiplies and returns our sacrifices and efforts to us. By giving us responsibility, he enables us to earn the very glory that Satan sought to take by force, because as Elder Uchtdorf recently said, “it is the sacrifice that makes it sacred.”

God shows His Love for us by showing us that He wants us to know Him

God describes himself as loving, not only because of His generous mercy and sincere forgiveness, but also because He wants to know us and be known by us.

One way that we can see God's love for us is by studying the Doctrine and Covenants. This year as we focus our Sunday School and at home study on the Doctrine and Covenants, we can come to better understand the kind of relationship God wants to have with us by understanding the relationship that He had with Joseph Smith.

Our study in the D&C begins with Joseph as a 14 year old boy, who had only a "desire to believe"(Alma 32:27) and exercised his simple faith to learn which church was true by asking God in prayer. Joseph goes on to have incredible experiences throughout his life, including seeing angels in his home, receiving the keys and authority of the priesthood from Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland temple, restoring the truths of God's plan of salvation for us, truths about the character of God, and seeing the Lord Himself in the holy temple. **What is the lesson in this?** God wants *us* to know *Him*.

Often we read scripture stories as just that - stories which exemplify faith and inspire us to follow God, such as Lehi leaving Jerusalem, Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, or Peter leaving his nets to follow the Savior. However, the Doctrine and Covenants is unique because it is not an isolated story, it is the record of what happens over a lifetime when one is dedicated to following and knowing God. Many individuals in the scriptures act as "types" of Christ, who show a facet of the character of God through their actions and how He interacts with us, such as the leadership of Moses or the faithfulness of young David. In a way, Joseph Smith can be seen as a "type" of us, an example of how WE can interact with God because of the love He has for us.

In Stake Conference two weeks ago, President Lund said "(God) needed Joseph to get the gospel to you. That's why Joseph was important. Because you are important."

One lesson we can learn from the Doctrine and Covenants is that when we see the D&C through this lens, we understand how much God wants us to know about Him and His character, how much He wants to know us, and that He can and will show us all things, as soon as we are able to bear them. In this way, when we read about the miraculous experiences that Joseph Smith and others had, we can use it as an invitation for the kind of relationship that we can personally have with God, and depth of the relationship which He desires with each of us.

How will we come to know Him? God spoke to Moses in the burning bush while he was at work with the sheep, he spoke to Enos when he was out hunting, he came to Joseph in a grove of familiar trees. Other saints saw angels at the Kirtland temple, and on their handcart journey

across the West to Utah. I have felt Him and received revelation while hiking, taking tests, and while driving to work. In short, He will speak to us where we are and in a way that we can understand, as we sincerely seek to develop our relationship with Him and take Him up on His promises.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, God gives us the following counsel to draw closer to Him:

Doctrine and Covenants 6:36 - "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."

Doctrine and Covenants 8:2-3 - "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost."

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23 - "Learn of me, and listen to my words...(walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me)."

Doctrine and Covenants 46:33 - "...practice virtue and holiness before me continually."

Doctrine and Covenants 84:20-22 - "In the ordinances thereof (such as baptism and temple ordinances), the power of godliness is manifest."

Can you know what Joseph Smith knew? Can you experience what he experienced? The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them."

But he added, perhaps as a warning to any who would seek cheap knowledge, "Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (Lectures on Faith, 6:7). What did it cost Joseph? Everything. What are we willing to give?

As we covenant with God to give Him all that we have, faithfully keep our covenants with Him, and diligently seek Him, He promises that He will answer and we will find Him.

James 1:5 - "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Matthew 7:7 - "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

3 Nephi 9:13-14 - "...will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?

Yea, verily I say unto you, **if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life.** Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, **and whosoever will come, him will I receive;** and blessed are those who come unto me."

I invite you to ponder how **God shows His Love for us through all that He does, by giving us all He has, and by showing us that He wants us to know Him.**

(Testimony of God's love for us)