

# Washing Your Hands—and Memorizing Scripture!



How many times a day do you wash your hands? It might surprise you when you tally it up. I kept track one day and from getting up in the morning to going down at bedtime I washed my hands about 16 times with soap. And that doesn't count the times I just used hand sanitizer. Now, lest you think I have a bladder problem or worse, most of these times I wash are not bodily-functions related, but rather washing before every meal or before touching food. After touching different objects around work and home, I just wash, and periodically after so long, I wash.

## What do you mentally do while washing your hands?

Remember, it is recommended we wash for 20-30 seconds to do the job right. Are you thinking about work? Singing the alphabet song? Counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand and so on until you get to twenty?

Being an efficiency type of guy I thought during my last "wash," what a waste of time this is. If you just take my 16 washes and multiply them by 30 seconds (the 20 second wash and the 10 seconds leading up to washing and then drying hands after) that is 8 minutes a day. Take that and times it by 365 days and you get a whopping 49 HOURS in a year just washing your hands!

## Memorize Scriptures!

I decided to make that time productive—mentally. I decided I would memorize a scripture and repeat it when I washed my hands. I found scriptures that could be said in about 20-30 seconds. I printed the scripture and its verse on a sticky note and put it on my mirror. I also printed it on a 3x5 card to put in my shirt pocket to use when I was away from home. Keep doing this, one scripture each time you wash until you have it memorized. Sometimes do it mentally (silently), and other times whisper it, and other times say it out loud. Of course you will pick the right times to do it each way or you may get some interesting stares in public.

You are exercising your mental spiritual mind; planting spiritual thoughts for the Holy Ghost to help you recall later when you need it.

## Elder Richard G. Scott's admonition to memorize scriptures

Remember what Elder Richard G. Scott said in his October 2011 General Conference talk about scripture memorization and what it can do to help us in our lives:

*"Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.*

*The scriptures provide the strength of authority to our declarations when they are cited correctly. They can become stalwart friends that are not limited by geography or calendar. They are always available when needed. Their use provides a foundation of truth that can be awakened by the Holy Ghost. Learning, pondering, searching, and memorizing scriptures is like filling a filing cabinet with friends, values, and truths that can be called upon anytime, anywhere in the world.*

*Great power can come from memorizing scriptures. To memorize a scripture is to forge a new friendship. It is like discovering a new individual who can help in time of need, give inspiration and comfort, and be a source of motivation for needed change. For example, committing to memory this psalm has been for me a source of power and understanding:*

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.  
For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.  
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?  
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.  
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:1–5).*

*Pondering a scripture like that gives great direction to life. The scriptures can form a foundation of support. They can provide an incredibly large resource of willing friends who can help us. A memorized scripture becomes an enduring friend that is not weakened with the passage of time.*

*Pondering a passage of scripture can be a key to unlock revelation and the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Scriptures can calm an agitated soul, giving peace, hope, and a restoration of confidence in one’s ability to overcome the challenges of life. They have potent power to heal emotional challenges when there is faith in the Savior. They can accelerate physical healing.*

*Scriptures can communicate different meanings at different times in our life, according to our needs. A scripture that we may have read many times can take on nuances of meaning that are refreshing and insightful when we face a new challenge in life.”*

(Elder Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scriptures,” October 2011 General Conference)

If you take just one week to memorize a scripture, then in one year you will have 52 scripture verses memorized. Add year after year and you will see what you will be able to recall with the help of the Holy Ghost. This works no matter how old you are.

### **An Advanced Memorization Tip**

Now for an advanced tip. Would you like to review your memorized scriptures from time to time? First, make a list of the scriptures you are memorizing. Add to it as you go. Date the list as to when you started. In time you will start to feel good about the number of scriptures you have memorized. The list could look like this:

**I started April 15, 2013 (memorizing these scriptures - Notice the date? A most memorable one! 😊)**

1. Psalms 24:1-5
2. DC 122:7
3. 1 Nephi 3:7
4. add next one, etc.



Now for the tip. I want you to think and imagine and picture in your mind something tangible and big which has a lot of different elements to it. For example, I think of standing across the road in front of my house and looking at the house. (That's not my house above, but isn't it nice? ☺) I see the chimney, the color of the roof, the 4 vents on the roof, the TV antennae on top of the chimney, the 8 spokes on the antennae, the front door, the 3 parts of the glass window on the door, the door knob, the deadbolt above the doorknob, the big bush on the left, the 4 windows on the left front of the house with the 6 partitions in the windows, the 2 shutters on each window, the garage door, the 4 panels in the garage door, the 5 windows in the top of the garage door, etc. You get the idea. See how particular I am? That is important.

You must remember the details of the house you want to remember. And you must have 52 "details." That represents one year of memorization. Now, assign each scripture verse to one detail of the house. One thing you could do would be to use all the windows and divisions in the windows to represent the DC verses. The doors and parts of doors for the NT. You get the idea.

You could also use the interior of your home, or a bedroom you are very familiar with.

Another mental object "image" you could use to assign scripture verses to are members of your family. I think of them standing on my deck at the back of my home. I am standing down on the lawn. From left to right, I start with my grandparents, then my parents, my siblings, my immediate family; then my wife's mom and dad and her siblings and then key relatives like an uncle, aunt, cousin, then my key friends. And now assign a scripture verse, key word(s) or key phrase from that scripture. You can then go from left to right and think of the person and the verse you have assigned to them.

### **Memorize by actual scripture verse, or by key words, or mental pictures**

Now in assigning a scripture verse you can do it with just the basic reference like 1 Nephi 3:7. But if you want you can vary it by using key words in the scripture verse, like "go and do" for 1 Nephi 3:7. Or a key phrase in the verse like "prepare a way for them that they may accomplish." Or picture something or someone associated with that phrase. Like Nephi looking at himself in the mirror saying out loud "I will go and do...."

Picturing a mental object is how I was able to memorize many key legal principles for taking my bar exam after law school. I would draw the image and write the words associated with key parts in that image and then I could refer back to that when I was solving a case problem in the test.

### **Pick your first scripture and get started!**

Why not make your first scripture the one Elder Scott quoted from Psalms, after all it even mentions "clean hands!" After that scripture verse, you could choose one from the 100 Scripture Mastery Scriptures. You can see the list by [clicking here](#). Or you can choose scripture verses which are relevant and applicable to this time in your life.

I chose DC 122:7 for that reason. Not an easy one and we usually remember it for its last few words, "**all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.**" But the first part of the verse is what is relevant in my life now. It is basically saying when you have been given a setback and are beset with a lot of problems, there is a reason for it all. These words are "**And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.**"

You can also choose scripture stories to memorize.

### **Tips on remembering a story and its details**

If you choose to memorize a story, you can **remember it by thinking of 3 things: Who, What, Where.** Who was in the story? People, animals, things. What was the story about?—the interaction of the people with each other, other things and what they said, etc. And Where did the story take place? In answering “where” you also include “when.”

A simple way to remember the 3 “W’s” for a story is to think of an owl with its eyes closed flying just above the ground and smacking into a wood hut and dropping dead to the ground. Here’s why you won’t forget this memory tip. It is weird and has action and is strange and dramatic.

So how does this owl story help you remember the 3 W’s? The first W is Who. What does an owl say? Whoo, or hooo. That is similar to “who.” The second hook to remember is that the owl is flying in the AIR. What sounds similar to “air?”—Where! And the 3<sup>rd</sup> hook or connection to the 3<sup>rd</sup> word to remember with a story is the “hut” the owl hits. What sounds like hut?—What! So you have the connection to the 3 words, Who, Where, and What by remembering one visual mental image of an owl flying in the air with its eyes closed and hitting a hut and dropping dead to the ground.

Now that techniques goes to remembering the details of a story, but how can you remember a story before you remember the details? **Pick a key element of the story:** person, place, or thing. You can do this with stories and scripture verses. I remember my verse (DC 122:76) by keying on the words “fierce winds” and picturing me outside in one of the infamous east winds we get once a year, trying to secure my garbage cans from blowing away. The memory is physical, current, and vivid. My verse is actually part of a story, the story of Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail.

I also assign a scripture verse to each garbage can and garbage can lid as part of my “house” memory tip.

### **Another tip on maximizing your time is to find other “30 second time slots” in your life:**

- When you rinse your mouth with mouthwash for 30 seconds.
- When you are at a certain stoplight in town you know lasts for 30 seconds.
- Waiting in the waiting room at the dentist, doctor, or even lawyer’s office (forget that last one, you are too stressed out to remember anything then. ☺)

Email me about other “30 seconds of time you feel are wasted” in your life which you feel others could use to memorize a scripture verse/story.

The point of this article is to suggest another way to do what we have been told to do and should do in our lives to accomplish our objective to be more Christ-like and move upward on our spiritual ladder to perfection. We can do it. We can liken scripture stories and verses to our own lives. (1 Nephi 19:24) Where much is given, and truly we have been given much, much then is expected. (Luke 12:48)

~Bruce Barton  
April 15, 2013

### **Scriptures about the importance of the scriptures and their “words” for our benefit:**

- John 5:39 “Search the scriptures; for ...they are they which testify of me.”
- 1 Nephi 15:23-24 “...hearken unto the word of God...”
- DC 84:85 The scriptures are called “the words of life”
- 2 Nephi 4:15-16 “For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.
- 2 Timothy 3:14 “...the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”
- Jacob 2:8 “...the word which healeth the wounded soul.”
- JS-M 1:37 “And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived.”

- Psalms 19:105 “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
- 2 Nephi 32:3 feasting upon the words of Christ “will tell you all things what ye should do.”
- Alma 31:5 “the word [has] a great tendency to lead people to do that which [is] just—yea, it [has] more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which [has] happened unto them.”
- Alma 31:5 “It [is] expedient that [you] should try the virtues of the word of God.”
- James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
- 3 Nephi 23:1-5 “...search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently...give heed to my words...”
- DC 84:52 “Whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me.”

### **Three warnings from modern day prophets:**

▶ “I am convinced that each of us, at least some time in our lives, must discover the scriptures for ourselves—and not just discover them once, but rediscover them again and again...The Lord is not trifling with us when he gives us these things...Access to these things means responsibility for them. We must study the scriptures according to the Lord’s commandment and we must let them govern our lives and the lives of our children...So I ask all to begin now to study the scriptures in earnest, if you have not already done so.”  
(President Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, September 1976, pp. 4-5)

▶ “I say that we need to teach our people to find their answers in the scriptures...But the unfortunate thing is that so many of us are not reading the scriptures. We do not know what is in them, and therefore we speculate about things that we ought to have found in the scriptures themselves. I think that therein is one of our biggest dangers of today.”  
(President Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, December 1972, p.3)

▶ “However diligent we may be in other areas, certain blessings are to be found only in the scriptures, only in coming to the word of the Lord and holding fast to it as we make our way through the mists of darkness to the tree of life. And if we ignore what the Lord has given us, we may lose the very power and blessings which we seek. In a solemn warning to the early Saints, the Lord said this of the Book of Mormon (see DC 84:54-57). ...let us not treat lightly the great things we have received from the hand of the Lord! His word is one of the most valuable gifts He has given us. I urge you to recommit yourselves to a study of the scriptures. Immerse yourselves in them daily so you will have the power of the Spirit to attend you in your callings...love and treasure them.  
(President Ezra Taft Benson, on April 4, 1986 in General Conference, Priesthood session; “The Power of the Word,” also found in the *Ensign*, May 1986)

“Now, we have not been using the Book of Mormon as we should...Some of the early missionaries, on returning home, were reproved by the Lord in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants because they had treated lightly the Book of Mormon. As a result, their minds had been darkened. The Lord said that this kind of treatment of the Book of Mormon brought the whole Church under condemnation, even all of the children of Zion. And then the Lord said, ‘And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon.’ (See D&C 84:54–57.) Are we still under that condemnation?... And now grave consequences hang on our response to the Book of Mormon...Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book? Yes, either to our blessing or to our condemnation.

Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise, he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life.”  
(President Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon is the Word of God,” *Ensign*, January 1988)

“If the early Saints were rebuked for treating the Book of Mormon lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same? The Lord Himself bears testimony that it is of eternal significance. Can a small number of us bring the whole Church under condemnation because we trifle with sacred things? What will we say at the Judgment when we stand before Him and meet His probing gaze if we are among those described as forgetting

the new covenant?"...“Let us not remain under condemnation, with its scourge and judgment, by treating lightly this great and marvelous gift the Lord has given to us.”

(President Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of our Religion,” Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4–5).

### **Three uplifting promises from modern day prophets:**

▷ “When individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow.”

(President Ezra Taft Benson, on April 4, 1986 in General Conference, Priesthood session; “The Power of the Word,” also found in the *Ensign*, May 1986)

▷ “Without reservation I promise you that if you will prayerfully read the Book of Mormon, regardless of how many times you previously have read it, there will come into your hearts an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord. There will come a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to his commandments, and there will come a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God.”

(President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, June 1988)

▷ “I promise you...that if you will study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased.”

(President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Your Best Self,” April 2009 General Conference)