



The Gospel Doctrine Class



Doctrine & Covenants - Lesson 7

First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

“And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.” (D&C 14:7)

A study of this lesson will help us understand and seek the blessings that come from the first principles and ordinances of the gospel: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and confirmation.

Stephen R. Covey: "Let us never stray from forcefully, clearly, explicitly declaring our faith in Jesus Christ as the first principle of the gospel, as the foundation principle, as the principle from which all other gospel principles derive their power and efficacy, as the integrating, organizing, unifying, harmonizing principle. . . . He is the head of our church. It bears his name. We belong to his kingdom. He is the Truth, the Way, the Life, the Light. He is our advocate and mediator, our Savior and Redeemer. We have taken upon ourselves his name. Through the gospel and the spiritual rebirth we become his children, his sons and his daughters. He is the driving force." (The Divine Center, p84)

Brigham Young: "If mankind could know the object God has in their creation, and what they might obtain by doing right and by applying to the source and fountain of wisdom for information, how quickly they would turn away from every ungodly action and custom." (Journal of Discourses, 10:208)

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr: "As I think about faith, this principle of power, I am obliged to believe that it is an intelligent force. Of what kind, I do not know. But it is superior to and overrules all other forces of which we know. It is the principle, the force, by which the dead are restored to life." (Conference Report, Apr 1960, p21)

President Ezra Taft Benson: "Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior. . . . True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. True repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change of behavior (see Alma 5:13)." (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p71)

President Marion G. Romney: "One having forsaken his sins and, by proper confession, cleared his conduct with the Lord, with the people he has offended, and with the Church of Jesus Christ, where necessary, may with full confidence seek the Lord's forgiveness and go forth in newness of life, relying upon the merits of Christ. . . ." (Conference Report, Oct 1955)

Elder Orson F. Whitney: "Repentance is not that superficial

sorrow felt by the wrongdoer when 'caught in the act'—a sorrow not for sin, but for sin's detection. Chagrin is not repentance. Mortification and shame alone bring no change of heart toward right feeling and right living. Even remorse is not all there is to repentance. In highest meaning and fullest measure, repentance is equivalent to reformation; the beginning of the reformatory process being a resolve to 'sin no more.' . . . by this ye may know that a man repenteth of his sins: Behold he will confess them and forsake them'." (Saturday Night Thoughts, 1931, p239)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "Repentance is a rescuing, not a dour doctrine. It is available to the gross sinner as well as to the already good individual striving for incremental improvement." (Ensign, Nov 1991, p30)

"The subject of Christian baptism was much discussed among the rival sects in the early decades of the 19th century. The purpose of it; the proper subjects to receive it; the effects of it; the manner in which it should be administered; by whom it could be administered, by any Christian who understood its significance, or only by ordained ministers? By pouring, or sprinkling, or by immersion only? All these questions were subjects of intense controversy in the period named.

"When, therefore, in the course of translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery came to a passage making reference to 'baptism for the remission of sins,' it is not surprising that they held divergent views upon the subject; but instead of resorting to argument on the matter they agreed to inquire of the Lord, through prayer, for the knowledge essential to a right understanding of the subject." (Comprehensive History of the Church, 1:177-178)

Joseph Smith: "Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without . . . the baptism of the Holy Ghost." (Teachings, p314)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "To endure means not only to last but also to bear up under stress, to 'hold fast,' even 'valiantly,' while maintaining the correct course set by God." (If Thou Endure It Well, p1)

Next Week's Reading Assignment
D&C 13; 20:38–67; 27:12–13; 84:6–30; 107:1–20;
110:11–16; Joseph Smith—History 1:66–73