

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (**Episode 221**)

### LESSON 47: MORONI 1-6

*“To Keep Them in the Right Way”*

Hook	In some of the final pages of his record Moroni talks about Church. Why does religion and church involvement matter? Why might it not be enough to be, as so many are these days, “spiritual but not religious”? And if religion has value, are we doing it right?
Goal	
Overview	<p>1: Moroni is shocked he is still alive</p> <p>2: Gift of the Holy Ghost</p> <p>3: Ordination of priests and teachers</p> <p>4-5: Sacrament prayers</p> <p>6: Baptism and Church order, and fellowshipping</p>
Main Points	<p>Straightforward, brief chapters but lots to dig into so will just work through them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on Moroni</li> <li>• Gift of the Holy Ghost (in a sense, it is overcoming spiritual death because we are restored to the presence of God the Holy Ghost); Discuss John 14:18 where the Greek is powerful “I will not leave you orphans” and 16:7; the Greek means “helper”. Discuss the idea of being alive to goodness and health</li> <li>• Ordination. Note that there is both charismatic (2:2) and ordination (3:2-3) authority in these chapters.</li> <li>• Close reading of sacrament prayers. Talk about the power of symbolism. This would be a good time to have class members discuss how sacrament has been meaningful for them.</li> <li>• Close reading of 6, discuss the quotes below</li> </ul>
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Moroni 1:2 mean (put Nephites to death) if all Nephites were wiped out per Mormon 8:7?</li> <li>• For a discussion of wine to water see:  <a href="https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFLibrary/1.1ArringtonEconomic-a695f00e-5fae-4ed7-ac54-3ead16f8964a.pdf">https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFLibrary/1.1ArringtonEconomic-a695f00e-5fae-4ed7-ac54-3ead16f8964a.pdf</a> and  <a href="https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14No3_80.pdf">https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14No3_80.pdf</a> “Wine was used in the sacrament of the church as late as 1897.” And “In keeping with the change in emphasis, the First Presidency and twelve substituted water for wine in the sacrament in their temple meetings, apparently beginning July 5, 1906.”</li> </ul>
Concluding	

Points	
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## Women and access to God

Great quotes here: <http://www.wheatandtares.org/2011/03/14/mormon-women-giving-blessings/>

Joseph Smith: “someone apparently reported to Joseph that the women were laying their hands on the sick and blessing them. His reply to the question of the propriety of such acts was simple. He told the women in the next meeting “there could be no evil in it, if God gave his sanction by healing., there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water.” He also indicated that there were sisters who were ordained to heal the sick and it was their privilege to do so. “If the sisters should have faith to heal,” he said, “let all hold their tongues.”

John Taylor: It is the privilege of all faithful women and lay members of the Church, who believe in Christ, to administer to all the sick or afflicted in their respective families, either by the laying on of hands, or by the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord: but they should administer in these sacred ordinances, not by virtue and authority of the priesthood, but by virtue of their faith in Christ, and the promises made to believers: and thus they should do in all their ministrations

“Men have no greater claim than women upon the blessings that issue from the Priesthood and accompany its possession. ... “The man holds the Priesthood, performs the priestly duties of the Church, but his wife enjoys with him every other privilege derived from the possession of the Priesthood. This is made clear, as an example, in the Temple service of the Church. The ordinances of the Temple are distinctly of Priesthood character, yet women have access to all of them, and the highest blessings of the Temple are conferred only upon a man and his wife jointly” John A. Widtsoe

<http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?locale=0&sourceId=8b817befabc20110VgnVCM100000176f620a&vgnnextoid=88021b08f338c010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD>

Joseph F. Smith: "The sisters have the privilege of laying their hands on the head of the person for whom they are officiating, and confirming and anointing in the spirit of invocation. The Lord has heard and answered the prayers of sisters in these administrations many times. It should, however, always be remembered that the command of the Lord is to call in the elders to administer to the sick, and when they can be called in, they should be asked to anoint the sick or seal the anointing." Messages of the First Presidency, Vol. 4 (314ff)

Worth discussing that women used to perform blessings, there are many beautiful stories. You can read more:

“A Gift Given, A Gift Taken: Washing, Anointing, and Blessing the Sick among Mormon women” in Sunstone <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/115-6-30-43.pdf>, also Carol Lynn Pearson’s The Flight and the Nest

## Value of Religion

Why isn't "spiritual but not religious" enough?

"Religion is more about meaning and purpose than facts and events. Through religion, we experience the mundane as miraculous and the normal as numinous. Religion teaches us that our lives have inherent worth and that the world is shot-through with value...More than any other institution, religion deserves our appreciation and respect because it has persistently encouraged people to care deeply—for the self, for neighbors, for humanity, and for the natural world—and to strive for the highest ideals humans are able to envision" (Bruce Sheiman, *An Atheist Defends Religion*, pp. ix-x).

He divides his discussion into the following categories: finding meaning, caring for each other in a community setting; unifying with God; the contributions of religion to mental health, happiness, and longevity; and religion as a force for human rights, science, and ethics.

"Religious Americans are, in fact, more generous neighbors and more conscientious citizens than their secular counterparts. On the other hand, they are also less tolerant of dissent than secular Americans...Nevertheless, for the most part, the evidence...suggests that religiously observant "Americans are more civic and in some respects simply 'nicer'...theology is not the core explanation for what we shall call the 'religious edge' in good citizenship and neighborliness. Rather, communities of faith seem more important than faith itself...Religiously based social networks that...convey partisan cues also turn out to be crucial in transmitting civic norms and habits." (Robert Putnam and David Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, p. 444).

"Religious faith seems to operate largely invisibly, taken for granted and in the background of [teenagers'] lived experiences. Faith seems to help teens to feel good and maybe to behave better...differences between more religious and less religious teenagers in the United States are actually significant and consistent across every outcome measure examined: risk behaviors, quality of family and adult relationships, moral reasoning and behavior, community participation, media consumption, sexual activity, and emotional well-being...there is definitely something about religious belief and practice that shapes adolescents' lives in positive directions" Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, p. 218-219.

An excellent documentary on happiness also talked about three things we need to be happy:  
<http://www.thehappy movie.com/>

1. Activities that bring intrinsic well-being and trigger dopamine, especially physical activity but also things like music that grant a feeling of control and success.
2. Close family and friend relationships.
3. The sense of being part of and giving back to something bigger than ourselves.

(discuss how religion ties into these elements)

## Church Worship

I have said before, and I repeat it, that each of you as a convert needs three things:

1. A friend in the Church to whom you can constantly turn, who will walk beside you, who will answer your questions, who will understand your problems. You also have home teachers, visiting teachers, and other members who will help you on your marvelous journey of faith.
2. An assignment. Activity is the genius of this Church. It is the process by which we grow. Faith and love for the Lord are like the muscles of my arm. If I use them, they grow stronger. If I put them in a sling, they become weaker. Each of you deserves a responsibility.

In handling that responsibility you may make some mistakes. So what? We all make mistakes. The important thing is the growth that will come of activity. Your leaders can help you find ways to be involved. Be willing to accept new challenges, and trust that the Lord will help you be equal to them. If you get discouraged, ask for help. But don't give up. As you keep trying you will find that your abilities increase.

3. You need to be constantly "nourished by the good word of God" ([Moroni 6:4](#)). You will be affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, the Sunday School, or the Primary. Come to sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, to renew the covenants you made at the time of your baptism. Read from the scriptures every day. Pray every morning and every evening, that you may stay close to the Lord.

You know and we know that there are many good people in other churches. There is much of good in them. Your family and your prior religious traditions may have taught you many good things and established many good habits. As the Apostle Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" ([1 Thessalonians 5:21](#)). Bring the good things with you, keep them, and use them in the Lord's service.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 2006:

<http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,2043-1-3745-1,00.html>

About the nature of our worship services, this piece by Jana Reiss is very much worth discussing! <http://blog.beliefnet.com/flunkingsainthood/2010/07/five-reasons-why-mormon-church-meetings-are-the-dullest-youll-find-anywhere.html/>

“LDS leaders often wonder why retention is low among new converts, and identify valid reasons for attrition: converts don’t have enough of a social network in the ward, or they find it tricky to live the standards of the gospel, or they have logistical difficulties getting to church. All of these are true in my experience, but the elephant in the room is that what passes for worship in the Mormon Church is not feeding these new converts, not at all. And that’s a tragedy, because great worship is exactly the transformative missing ingredient that could help them find their place,

give them the strength to rise to new behavioral standards, and want to attend church more often.

We need to stop giving them—and ourselves—stone for bread.”

A poetic lament on a Mormon Matters episode about the experience of single adults in the Church:

For years now I've found God in a variety of other religious traditions, in poetry, painting, and classical music, not to mention loving relationships and service. I have to ask myself why I sit in sacrament meeting every week holding my spiritual bowl and hoping for crumbs of spiritual nourishment, when there is such florabundance outside. But at the same time, I love what Mormonism theoretically has to offer. The opportunities to serve, the sense of community, and the astonishing beauty of it's largely undiscussed doctrine. My heritage is in the church, and I know if I left it, I'd never really leave many of its teachings. The Church seems to me, at times, to be an irrelevant corporation standing like an eclipse in front of the light of it's Gospel. I feel like the church has so much to offer us, but settles for easily digestible platitudes.

<http://mormonmatters.org/2011/05/25/33-the-lds-church-and-its-single-young-adults-part-2/>