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SEEKING JESUS

Visuals With Points To Ponder
To Help You Find Jesus' Principles

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In this class, we will focus on finding several ways we can live happier lives by more clearly SEEKING JESUS.

Let's start with something that, at least for endowed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is common-place: temple garment, formally known as the "garment of the holy priesthood."

For some of us, the garment could become so commonplace that we forget to LOOK FOR JESUS IN THE GARMENT. But if we look for him, he can easily be found.

FOR EXAMPLE...

Do you remember what happened in the Garden of Eden?

Satan tempted Adam and Eve, they partook of the forbidden fruit, and tried to COVER THEIR NAKEDNESS by making fig-leaf aprons. This can be seen as a symbol of their efforts to hide their sins from God.

In place of these aprons, the Lord made coats of skin for Adam and Eve. These coats of skins, represented by the temple garment, can be seen as a representation of Christ's Atonement, which covers our sins.

The garment reminds us that through Jesus Christ, our sins will be completely covered and atoned for as we repent and are faithful to our covenants...

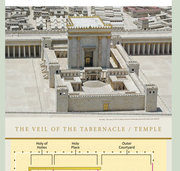


IMAGE: CHURCH NEWSROOM / CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISTz_9QQ4A8

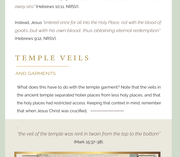
And that's not the only way we can see Christ in the temple garment. To make another connection, let's explore some background on ancient temples.

ANCIENT TEMPLES

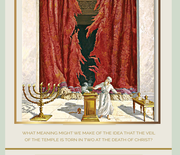
THE TABERNACLE, SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

The Tabernacle, Solomon's temple, and the temple in the time of Christ all had a similar design where there were different zones of increasing holiness. There was the outer courtyard where sacrifices were offered, and then a curtain or veil separating the outer courtyard from the holy place. In the holy place were some sacred items, and only priests were allowed to enter the holy place.

THE VEIL OF THE TABERNACLE / TEMPLE



"The veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy" Exodus 26:33



Another curtain separated the holy place from the most holy place or the HOLY OF HOLIES.

This is where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. It represented the place where God lived. The part of the temple were so sacred that it was only entered once per year, and only by the high priest.

On this day, known as the Day of Atonement, the high priest would sacrifice a goat and sprinkle the goat's blood in the holy of holies to make "an atonement for ... all the congregation of Israel" (Lev. 16:17)

BEHIND THIS CURTAIN

WAS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

THE PLACE WHERE GOD LIVED

Like the temple garment, the high priest's sacrifice represented Jesus Christ. As the author of the book of Hebrews points out,

"the high priest would enter "the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own" (Hebrews 9:25, NRSV). But this these sacrifices *"can never take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:11, NRSV).

Instead, Jesus *"entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption"* (Hebrews 9:12, NRSV).

TEMPLE VEILS

AND GARMENTS

What does this have to do with the temple garment? Note that the veils in the ancient temple separated holier places from less holy places, and that the holy places had restricted access. Keeping that context in mind, remember that when Jesus Christ was crucified,

"the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:37-38).

WHAT MEANING MIGHT WE IMAGE OF THE IDEA THAT THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE IS TORN IN TWO AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST?

Here's how Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained it:

"The Holy of Holies is now open to all. And all, through the atoning blood of the Lamb, can now enter into the highest and holiest of all places, that kingdom where eternal life is found. The ordinances performed through the veil of the ancient temple were in similitude of what Christ was to do, which he now having done, all (people) become eligible to pass through the veil into the presence of the Lord to inherit full exaltation."

DOES THIS IDEA MAKE SENSE?

Before, the veil blocked access to the holy place where God lives, but at the death of Christ, the temple veil was torn in two, and now all have access to the presence of God through Jesus Christ.

LET'S LOOK AT MODERN TEMPLES

Let's go one step further. In modern temples, there's a veil that separates the endowment room from the celestial room. To enter the celestial room, which could represent the place where God lives, those participating in the endowment ceremony go through the veil. That also takes on added meaning when we remember that the author of the Book of Hebrews says:

"Having therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20)

So in Hebrews we see that the veil of the temple can represent the flesh of Jesus Christ. In an endowment ceremony, as we enter the celestial room, there is symbolism showing that it's through the flesh of Jesus Christ we can come into the presence of God.

THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE IS A POWERFUL SYMBOL OF JESUS CHRIST.

Fiona and Kenji Gaans underscore this point, saying:

"The rituals of the temple ... crescendo with palpable crucifixion imagery at the veil, that symbolic, pierced membrane joining heaven and earth. It is through ... the severed flesh of Christ that all find full incorporation into the Heavenly Family."

Let's take this symbolism one step further by noting the similarity between the veil of the temple and the temple garment. This might make more sense to those who have already been endowed, but there are connections between the temple veil and the temple garment

(As Elder Carlos Asay said, *"Several simple marks".*)

The parallels between the temple veil and the temple garment suggest that the garment is connected to the veil, indicating that the garment itself as a powerful symbol of the body of Jesus Christ that he laid down for each of us.

HOW DO WE SEE THE TEMPLE GARMENT

HOW DO WE SEE THE GARMENT?

A piece of clothing that we commonly wear.

A coat of skins representing Christ' Atonement.

The veil of the temple, a symbol of the sacrificed body of Jesus.

When we see the temple garment, we can see a piece of clothing that we commonly wear. Or we can see a coat of skins, representing Christ's Atonement Or we can see the veil of the temple, a symbol of the sacrificed body of Jesus Christ.

When we see **the Savior in our temple garments,** it can change the way that we view and treat them. It can also increase the power we feel from the Lord in our daily lives.

MORE CLEARLY SEEING JESUS

Let's turn to another way we can live happier lives by more clearly seeing Jesus. For a lot of us, when we think of happiness, we think about love. Maybe that's the love between a parent and child, between friends, or romantic love. Ponder this question:

What is the greatest act of love that you personally have witnessed?

One response we received to this question, was that the greatest act of love they had seen wasn't a one-time event, but an ongoing act of love. They worked in a care facility and saw a woman come and visit her husband for several hours each day, even though he did not remember or recognize her. That is a beautiful manifestation of love. For this person, **seeing this act of love made them want to be more loving in her relationships.**

After witnessing that act of love up close, what impact did it have on you personally?

So again, think about the greatest act of love that you have personally seen. And then, having witnessed that act of love up close, what impact has it had on you personally?

THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

TWO MODELS OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

"These two models are not a matter of right and wrong, but a matter of which is our best moral interpretation of Christ's atonement. Through the Gospel we have seen different aspects of the Savior's atonement, including the penal substitution model, meaning that Christ paid the price for our sins and the Christus Victor model (meaning that Christ conquered Satan on the cross).

These models are not in competition with each other, rather they give us different lenses for thinking about different aspects of the Savior's infinite sacrifice.

MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY

CREATES IMMENSE LOVE AND GRATITUDE

HERE IS THE BASIC IDEA OF THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY:

THE GREATEST SACRIFICE HAPPENS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD IS JESUS CHRIST LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US.

When we really understand what Christ did, we feel an immense amount of love and gratitude as result.

Perhaps when you were a child you thought something like: "I have to be good so that God will love me." This is the opposite. It's saying that God loves me and really feel that. So now I want to be good, not so that God will love me but because he loves me.

As 1 John 4:10 says,

"He Love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19)

Let's look at a few verses that highlight the moral influence theory of Christ's Atonement. In 1 John 3:16 we read,

"He laid down Love for this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another" (1 John 3:16)

And 1 John 4:10-11 says,

"This is Love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ loved us so much, we also ought to love one another."
(1 John 4:10-11, NIRV)

MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY

THE LORD REVEALED HIS *heart of love* TO US THROUGH HIS SACRIFICE FOR US.

Mosiah chapter 5 gives us another example in the moral influence theory. King Benjamin had powerfully preached about Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice. As a result, the people said,

"We have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually."

Because they came to deeply KNOW and understand Christ's sacrifice, their hearts were changed.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JESUS

TO FEEL MORE PERSONAL HAPPINESS

more Jesus = more happiness

It's clear that THE MORE we understand THE SAVIOR'S SACRIFICE, THE MORE we love him.

And THE MORE we love him, THE MORE we want to follow him, and the happier we will be.

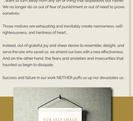
This is one reason to learn EVERYTHING we can about Jesus Christ and his Atonement.

HOW DOES THIS ASPECT OF THE SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT HELP US FIND MORE HAPPINESS?

For one thing, it gives us a better perspective on love. Yes, we can learn a lot about love from different human relationships, and find great joy from them. But if our security is built on human love, we'll eventually be disappointed.

If my happiness is based on my children showing me kindness, my boss giving me a good performance review, my spouse always showing me love on my birthday everybody I will be disappointed.

However, if my hope is completely CENTERED IN CHRIST I will always have the courage to move forward.



Better understanding the Savior's Atonement also helps me put human relationships in their proper perspective as I realize that Christ's love is enough. Author TIMOTHY KELLER wrote:

"If you love anything at all, in this world more than God, you will crush that object under the weight of your expectations and it will eventually break your heart. For example, if you spouse and his or her love is you is more important to you than God's love, then you will get far too angry and despondent when your spouse is failing to give you the support and affirmation you need, and you will be too afraid of your spouse's anger and displeasure to tell the truth. Only God's love is the moral resources thing to you will you have the freedom to love your spouse well." (Prayer, 197-198)

LEARNING MORE ABOUT JESUS'S ATONEMENT CAN CHANGE OUR VIEWS

Learning more about Christ's Atonement can also change our view of ourselves and our motives for following God. Consider another insight from Timothy Keller.

He wrote that when we really understand Christ's Love, we

"…want to turn away from any sin or thing that displeases our Father. We no longer do so out of fear or punishment or out of need to prove ourselves.

Those motives are exhausting and inevitably create narrowness, self-righteousness, and hardness of heart.

Instead, out of grateful joy and sheer desire to resemble, delight, and serve the one who saved us, we present our lives with a new effectiveness. And on the other hand, the fears and anxieties and insecurities that hauntted us begin to dissipate.

Success and failure in our work NEITHER puffs us up nor devastates us.

We are not driven by achievements over our looks, or our status—we are not deflated by criticism as we were before. Our self-image rests in a love we can't lose."
(Encounters with Jesus, 128)

A BIG PICTURE THEME

EXPECTATIONS

Let's note look at a big picture theme that appears throughout scripture. It has to do with expectations. Have you ever had really high expectations and then you have been disappointed?

Expectations taken to either extreme will clearly have negative outcomes. If I have low expectations for myself, then I will likely not achieve my potential. Personal expectations that are too high can lead to paralyzing perfectionism. These are not THE PATHS TO PEACE.

If I set my expectations for others too low, I will not help them when what they could become. However, setting my expectations for others too high can lead to feelings of disappointment on both sides.

INCREASING OUR HAPPINESS

Although in some aspects of life it is helpful to have high expectations, many of us would be happier if we lowered some of our expectations.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

OF GOD

One area in which some of us develop inappropriate expectations relates to what God will do for us. A teacher was giving a talk and shared the principle that those who keep God's commandments will prosper in the land. Afterwards, a woman handed him a note which said in part,

"If the righteous are blessed and first success, how come I have failed in every aspect of my life no matter how hard I've tried and how good I have been?"

The teacher noticed that in his talk he hadn't acknowledged the important reality that keeping the commandments does not necessarily insure that we will prosper in the land today right now in the way that we want. The expectation that things will always work out for the righteous is inaccurate and unhelpful.

> In fact, the apostle Peter said,
>
> *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."*
> (1 Peter 4:12)

EXPECT TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS

SOMETIMES WE FEEL THIS WAY…

Sometimes we feel this way, right? I'm paying my tithing and then my car breaks down and I don't have the money to fix it for at least a month, and I think, "What I paid my tithing! This is so strange! Why would this happen to me? NO NO NO!"

Peter says,

"[Do] not be surprised when you experience fiery trials. But rejoice, inasmuch as you partake of Christ's suffering; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12-13)

SOMETIMES WHEN WE SEE TRIALS

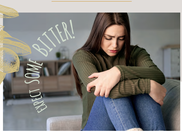
We think we see evidence that God doesn't care. Peter tells us not to be surprised by this. Sometimes we think that because we are righteous and doing what's right does not mean things will always work out well in the short run.

JUST BECAUSE

WE ARE DOING WHAT'S RIGHT DOESN'T MEAN IT WILL BE EASY

Peter tells us not to be surprised by trials—they happen even to the best of people. Just because we're doing what's right does not mean things will always work out well in the short run. There's lots of examples of this principle, including Peter and Paul.

Think about how their lives ended. Peter spent decades proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ, and according to Christian tradition, was crucified upside down in Rome. Paul was also put to death as a Christian martyr.



There are dozens of scriptural examples of good, faithful, amazing people whose lives did not turn out the way they had hoped.

Often we FOCUS JUST ON THE POSITIVE.

We think about Alma the elder who prays for his wayward son, and Alma the younger repents. What a great story. But what about Lehi who continually prayed for Laman and Lemuel, and they never came around?

We celebrate Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who escaped from the fiery furnace, but what about Abinadi, who wasn't so lucky?

Or we might celebrate Rachel who overcame her struggle with infertility, but what about her sister, Leah, who always felt like the second class wife?

Our guess is that for every miracle story we find in the scriptures, there are multiple stories where things didn't work out the way an individual would have hoped.

DURING DIFFICULT

TIMES MORMON DECLARED...

"I HAVE HOPE through the ATONEMENT of CHRIST and the power of his resurrection."
(Moroni 7.41).

He wrote to his son Moroni,

"May Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death.. and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9.25)

Moroni was the same way. As he was completely alone in extreme hardship he wrote, _____

"Seek this Jesus" (Ether 12.41). *"I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ"* (Moroni 1.3). *And "Come unto Christ"* (Moroni 10.30).

SEEK THIS JESUS

GOD WILL WIPE AWAY

ALL MY TEARS...

For reasons known only to God, some very good people face EXTREME TRIALS that are never fully resolved in mortality. Many will suffer immense heartbreak. Many who have gone before us understand bitter trials.

Nephi's wife SHED TEARS during her bitter trials (1 Nephi 18.19). Nephi WATERED HIS PILLOW by night, and you may as well.

When we have unmet expectations, we can ask ourselves, —

What outcome am I expecting that I am not receiving?

How could I alter this expectation to focus on the eternal expectation of a future day when God will wipe away all my tears?"

THE SCRIPTURES TEACH

THAT HOPE ISN'T A LIST OF TEMPORAL THINGS THAT WE WANT. HOPE IS THAT CHRIST IS REAL!

We often talk about things we hope for. We hope for good grades, a good job, a nice house. These are great things to hope for.

But as generally used in scripture, hope isn't a list of the temporal things that we want.

Instead, HOPE IS A BELIEF that CHRIST IS REAL,that the blessings made possible through his Atonement are efficacious, and that we will be resurrected to eternal life.

TRUE HOPE is LESS that we will be able to afford a new house and MORE that Christ has prepared for us heavenly mansions.

TRUE HOPE is LESS that our children will make good choices and MORE that Christ's Atonement is strong enough to reach them —now or in the future.

We should work to convert our worries about these things iinto A HOPE CENTERED IN JESUS CHRIST.

Consider these scriptural words:

- "The Lord will be the hope of his people." (Joel 3.16)
- "Lord . . . my hope is in thee." (Psalm 39.7)
- "Happy is he . . . whose hope is in the Lord." (Psalm 146.5).

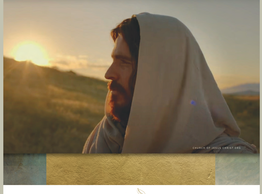
Is our hope focused on Christ?

JESUS IS THE ANSWER!

Sometimes people will say - "Jesus, plus finding my eternal companion, that's the answer." No, that is not what it is. And it's not Jesus, plus a really good job, and it's not Jesus plus my children making good choices.

Many of us may struggle with unmet expectations because we're looking for Jesus, PLUS SOMETHING ELSE to bring us happiness and fulfillment.

The solution comes when we realize deep in our hearts that Jesus Christ alone is the answer. Not Jesus Christ, plus something else. JESUS IS ENOUGH!



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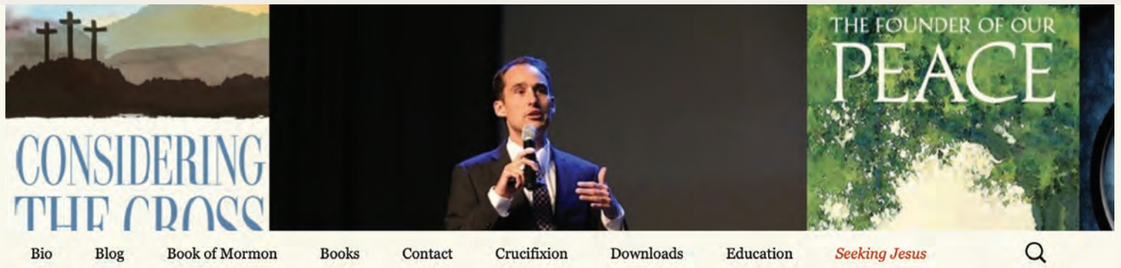

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