

Lesson Highlights

- *Jacob magnifies his calling from the Lord.*
- *Jacob warns against the love of riches, pride, and unchastity.*
- *Jacob testifies of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.*

A study of this lesson will help us feel a greater desire to magnify our callings, be chaste, and invite others to come unto Christ.

Next Week:

Lesson 13:

The Allegory of the Olive Trees

Jacob 5-7

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Introduction

Think of a magnifying glass. What does a magnifying glass do? The word "*magnify*" means to enlarge, to increase in significance, to cause to be held in greater esteem or respect. What does it mean to "*magnify*" a calling in the Church? Read **Jacob 1:17-19** and identify phrases that describe how Jacob magnified his calling from the Lord. You could include the following:

- Obtained his errand from the Lord (Jacob 1:17).
- Had been consecrated, or set apart (Jacob 1:18).
- Took responsibility (Jacob 1:19)
- Taught the word of God with all diligence (Jacob 1:19)
- Labored with his might (Jacob 1:19).

When Nephi neared the end of his mortal life, he gave his younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Nephites. Jacob felt the weight of his calling and sorrowed over the growing pride that led his people to be greedy and unchaste. He strongly exhorted them to repent...to be reconciled to God through the Atonement. Think about your own callings in the Church and how you might better magnify those callings.



Jacob magnified his calling from the Lord.

Jacob was a son of Lehi and Sariah and was born in the wilderness. He saw the Savior in his youth, and he was ordained to the priesthood (2 Nephi 2:4; 2 Nephi 6:2; 2 Nephi 11:3). He became custodian of the small plates and succeeded Nephi in the ministry.

Jacob 1:1-4 When Nephi gave the small plates to Jacob, he also gave Jacob specific instructions. Nephi instructed Jacob to record precious things--sacred preaching, great revelations, and prophecies on these plates.

Jacob 1:5-8 It was important to record and preserve this information to persuade their people to come unto Christ, partake of the goodness of God, enter into God's rest, and believe in Christ unto salvation. These verses remind us that we should be recording sacred events, faith-promoting experiences, and the personal inspiration we receive in our lives.

Jacob 1:10 Jacob wrote that his "people...loved Nephi exceedingly". They had this great love for Nephi because he had protected them and labored diligently to serve them. Think about how you have felt toward those who have labored to serve you.

Jacob warned against the love of riches, pride, and unchastity.

Jacob 2:3 As he began to preach to the people of Nephi, Jacob said that he was "*weighed down with much more desire and anxiety*" than he had been before.

Jacob 2:5-9; see also Jacob 1:15-16 Jacob's soul was "*burdened*" because he had received a strict commandment from God to admonish the people because of their sins. Ponder Jacob's choice of words as he described sin as "*labor*" (Jacob 2:5).

Jacob 1:17-18 Jacob said that he "first obtained [his] errand from the Lord" before he taught the people. We obtain our errand from the Lord by being called and set apart. We find out what the Lord wants us to do in our callings by fasting, praying, and following the counsel and direction of our priesthood leaders.

Jacob 1:19 Jacob said that if he and Joseph did not teach the people diligently, their sins would be upon his head and he would not be blameless in the judgment. It is important that we magnify our callings so that we are not responsible for leaving others in ignorance of the Lord's commandments and direction. Ponder your experience to remember some good examples you have seen of people magnifying their callings.

D&C 58:26-28 teaches us how we can better magnify our callings by going the extra mile to do more than is required to meet the minimum responsibilities of our calling. Think about times in the past when you have been blessed as you have done your best to fulfill your callings.

Jacob 2:12-16 The search for material wealth became a stumbling block to the Nephites of Jacob's day as they found precious metals, gained riches, and began to swell up with pride and then persecute their brethren. Obtaining an abundance of material wealth can lead to pride if the wealth is used to differentiate yourself from others as you become "special".

Jacob 2:17-21 Jacob counseled them in proper ways to use wealth and encouraged them to avoid the misuse of wealth by seeking first the kingdom of God and using wealth to assist others with their needs.

President Hugh B. Brown: "President John Taylor said on one occasion... 'If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those you might have saved, had you done your duty.' This is a challenging statement. If by reason of sins of commission or omission lose what I might have had in the hereafter, I myself must suffer and doubtless, my loved ones with me. But...if any of us fail to teach, lead, direct, and help to save those under our direction..., then the Lord will hold us responsible if they are lost as a result of our failure." (The Abundant Life, p37)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings of Jacob as recorded in this lesson.

- What principles do you need to improve on? How can you do that?

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: *"The possession of riches does not necessarily constitute sin. But sin may arise in the acquisition and use of wealth. ... 'For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.'* (1 Tim. 6:10-11. [1 Timothy 6:10-11). *Book of Mormon history eloquently reveals the corrosive effect of the passion for wealth. ...Had the people used their wealth for good purposes they could have enjoyed a continuing prosperity. But they seemed unable for a sustained period to be simultaneously wealthy and righteous"* (The Miracle of Forgiveness [1969], 47-48).

Jacob 2:23-24 After warning the people about pride and the love of riches, Jacob called them to repentance for their immoral behavior. The Nephites were rationalizing their immoral behavior by pointing to the actions of David and Solomon. Many people today try to excuse unchastity with a variety of excuses--none of which really justify their evil behavior.

Jacob 2:27-29; see also **Exodus 20:14**; **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** It is important to be morally clean because God delights in chastity.

Jacob 2:31-35; **Jacob 3:10** Sexual immorality can affect the sinner's family and friends and all members of society by causing the hearts of their wives to be broken and their children and associates to lose confidence in them because they cannot be trusted to keep sacred vows.

Jacob testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

After calling his people to repentance, Jacob ended his sermon by testifying of the hope of forgiveness through the Atonement.

Jacob 4:4-6 The scriptures and the prophets help us gain a testimony of the Atonement and help us develop our faith because of their affirming witness of the reality of the Atonement.

Jacob 4:10-12 We obtain the hope in Christ that Jacob spoke of by following His teachings as recorded in the scriptures and as spoken by the prophets.

Conclusion

Jacob's teachings help us understand the importance of magnifying our callings and avoiding pride and immorality. By emphasizing the Atonement at the conclusion of his sermon, Jacob taught that we must rely on the Savior.

Jacob 3:1-2 Jacob gave counsel and comfort to those who had been hurt by the immorality of others, telling them to look to God with firmness and to pray for comfort.

What must a person do to be forgiven of immorality? **President Ezra Taft Benson** suggested five steps to be forgiven of unchastity ("The Law of Chastity," in Brigham Young University 1987-88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches [1988], 53-54):

"1. Flee immediately from any situation you are in that is either causing you to sin or that may cause you to sin."

"2. Plead with the Lord for the power to overcome."

"3. Let your priesthood leaders help you resolve the transgression and come back into full fellowship with the Lord."

"4. Drink from the divine fountain [the scriptures and words of the prophets] and fill your lives with positive sources of power."

"5. Remember that through proper repentance you can become clean again."

Jacob 3:5-7 According to Jacob, the Lamanites would be blessed for being chaste--they would be preserved and would one day become a blessed people. Consider what the Lord promises as the blessings of being morally clean.

Jacob 4:14 When we see it recorded that the Jews looked "beyond the mark", it means that the Jews delighted in expounding the difficult texts of scripture, but without faith and the help of the Holy Ghost they could not understand them. They despised the "words of plainness" in the scriptures and looked for salvation in some other way than through Jesus Christ.

Mosiah 3:17 Do you sometimes "look beyond the mark" in your daily living? Ponder how you can be more diligent in applying this scripture and remembering the importance of the Savior in your life.