

Lesson Highlights

- *Alma shares his testimony and gives the records to his son Helaman.*
- *Alma praises and encourages his son Shiblon.*
- *Alma admonishes his son Corianton to repent.*

A study of this lesson will teach us Alma's counsel for remaining faithful in the gospel and help parents understand how to teach and counsel both righteous and unrighteous children.

Next Week:

Lesson 30:

"The Great Plan of Happiness",

Alma 40-42

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Introduction

What is the best advice or counsel your parents ever gave you? Why was this advice or counsel so valuable? The chapters discussed in this lesson consist of Alma's words of counsel to his sons Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton. These words of counsel are applicable to us as well.

Alma shared his testimony and gave the records to his son Helaman.

Alma 36 contains Alma's testimony as expressed to his son Helaman (see especially verses Alma 36:3-5 and Alma 36:26-28). Think about why it is important for children to hear their parents bear their testimonies and further, consider the ways your parents' testimonies influenced your life.

Alma 36:6-24; Alma 38:7-9 As part of his testimony to each of them, Alma told Helaman and Shiblon of his conversion. Consider why Alma shared his conversion story with his sons and apply that to yourself by considering the benefit you received from hearing about how other people have become converted.

Alma repeatedly encouraged Helaman to follow his example.

- a) "Ye should do as I have done" (Alma 36:2).
- b) "I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me" (Alma 36:3).
- c) "Ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done" (Alma 36:29).
- d) "Ye ought to know as I do know" (Alma 36:30).

Alma 37:1-2, 6-12 Alma emphasized to Helaman the importance of keeping the records by commanding him to keep them properly and bearing testimony of the value of sacred recordkeeping.

Alma 37:6-7 Keeping the records was a "small and simple thing" that would bring about "great things" through the power of God.

Alma 37:8-10 Here we are reminded of the "great things" the scriptures will do for us if we study them diligently--great things like bringing about our salvation, bringing us to a knowledge of God, and helping multitudes of others to accept the Savior.

Alma praised and encouraged his son Shiblon.

Alma 38:6-9 Alma also bore his testimony to his son Shiblon and told Shiblon of his conversion.

Alma 38:2-4 Qualities of steadiness, faithfulness, diligence, patience, and long-suffering in Shiblon brought great joy to his father. Alma teaches us that it is important for parents to recognize and praise their children for their good qualities and righteous living.

Alma 38:5 Alma encouraged Shiblon to continue to put his trust in God so that he could be helped in times of trial or affliction.

Alma 37:32-34 Alma told Helaman to teach the people to abhor sin, to repent, to have faith in Christ, to practice humility and lowliness of heart, to be obedient to the commandments and withstand temptation, and to diligently do good works in meekness.

Alma 37:35 Alma counseled his son to "learn wisdom in thy youth". Think about how we try to help young members accomplish this through Church programs.

Alma 37:36-37 Alma counseled his son to make the Lord and His influence a major part of his life through frequent prayer and constant devotion to the Lord. Consider how your life has been affected as you have endeavored to follow this counsel.

Alma 37:38-45 Alma compared the word of God and the Liahona to illustrate his point that being obedient and seeking the Lord's guidance is essential to getting where you should be in your life's journey.

Alma 37:46; see also Numbers 21:5-9; 1 Nephi 17:41 Alma counseled Helaman, "Do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way". Ponder what Alma meant in implying that the way to eternal life is easy.

Consider why the easiness of the way is a stumbling block to some people. It is true that we need to have a simple, saving faith in Christ, but how does one maintain a proper focus on that simple faith? Consider how we "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

Alma 38:10-15 Even though Shiblon was faithful, Alma concluded his words to his son with an admonition to continue teaching the gospel, avoid pride and boastfulness, exercise self-control, be loving to others, work hard, retain humility, and be sober. Alma thought it was important for even the righteous to receive counsel and warning.

Alma 38:10, 12 Alma counseled Shiblon to continue teaching the word of God, being "diligent and temperate, ...using ...boldness, but not overbearance". We need to follow this counsel as we share our beliefs with others.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: *"Whereas the natural man vents his anger, the men and women of Christ are 'not easily provoked' (1 Corinthians 13:5). Whereas the natural man is filled with greed, the men and women of Christ 'seeketh not [their] own' (1 Corinthians 13:5). Whereas the natural man seldom denies himself worldly pleasures, the men and women of Christ seek to bridle all their passions (see Alma 38:12)." (Men and Women of Christ, p14)*

Alma taught Corianton how to repent and return to faithfulness, and he gave counsel to Helaman and Shiblon on how to remain faithful. We are encouraged to follow Alma's example in teaching and counseling our children.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings of Alma to his sons.

- What principle can you more fully engage in your life? How will you do it?

Alma 38:11 Alma warned Shiblon not to boast of his own wisdom or strength because he knew that pride in our own wisdom or strength often leads to greater sins.

Alma 38:13-14 Humility is the antidote that allows us to overcome pride. We should follow the counsel to *"acknowledge [our] unworthiness before God at all times."*

Alma admonished his son Corianton to repent.

Alma's counsel to his son Corianton was somewhat different from his counsel to his other sons. Helaman and Shiblon had been living righteously, but Corianton had committed serious sins.

Alma 39:2-3 Sins Corianton had committed included refusing counsel, giving into pride, and fornication. Alma reminded his erring son that sexual immorality is a grievous sin.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: *"There was provided in our bodies...and this is sacred...a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul born into this life. This power is good. It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. The power of creation...or may we say procreation...is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it. Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan. Much of the happiness that may come to you in this life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation. If [Satan] can entice you to use this power prematurely, to use it too soon, or to misuse it in any way, you may well lose your opportunities for eternal progression. Protect and guard your gift. Your actual happiness is at stake. Eternal family life ...can be achieved because our Heavenly Father has bestowed this choicest gift of all upon you...this power of creation. It is the very key to happiness" (Ensign, July 1972, 111-13).*

Alma 39:7-8, 12-13 Alma felt it necessary to discuss Corianton's sin with him to encourage personal repentance and to have him encourage others to join in repentance. Parents can learn from Alma about how to counsel children who have made mistakes or committed sin:

- Alma reminded Corianton of what led to Corianton's sin (**Alma 39:2-4**).
- He explained the consequences of Corianton's sin (**Alma 39:7-9, 11**).
- He taught Corianton how to repent and avoid the sin in the future (**Alma 39:9-14**).
- He taught Corianton about God's love and forgiveness (**Alma 39:15-19**).

Alma 38:12 Alma counseled Shiblon to "bridle all [his] passions". To bridle our passions means that we must control and direct ourselves in the proper manner. Alma also teaches that we must bridle our passions in order to "be filled with love".

Alma 39:2-3 Refusal to accept counsel, personal pride and stubbornness were actions or attitudes in Corianton that led to his sin.

Alma 39:4, 13; D&C 121:45 Here, we find counsel on what we can do to strengthen ourselves against Satan's enticements to be immoral.

Alma 39:11, 13 records the sad fact that Corianton's sinfulness influenced others. We find that Corianton's actions had more influence on the Zoramites than Alma's words did. Thus we see that it is important for Church members to set good examples.

Alma 39:9-14 Alma gave counsel to Corianton on how to repent of his sin and avoid such sins in the future:

- "Go no more after the lusts of your eyes" (Alma 39:9).* The things we choose to look at or pay attention to influence our determination to stay morally clean.
- "Take it upon you to counsel with your elder brothers" (Alma 39:10).* Counseling with righteous family members or friends helps strengthen our resistance to temptation.
- "Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing" (Alma 39:11).* Consider some vain or foolish things that Satan uses to try to lead us away.
- "Turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength" (Alma 39:13).* Ponder how you can turn to the Lord for help when you face temptation.
- "Acknowledge your faults and that wrong which ye have done" (Alma 39:13).* Acknowledging that you have done wrong is an essential part of repentance. Without accepting personal responsibility, you cannot repent.
- "Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world" (Alma 39:14).* Seeking riches or *"the vain things of this world"* tempts us to sin because those things are not typically achieved while focusing on serving others.

Alma 39:15-19 records what Alma taught Corianton about Christ--that He would bring salvation and teach the way of salvation and redemption; that all souls are precious in His sight; and that we are called to teach of His coming.