

My Heart Pondereth Them Continually

By Devin G. Durrant

First Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency



I sincerely pray you will choose to ponder God's words in an extended and deeper manner.

By profession, I am an investor. By faith, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.¹ In my business practices, I embrace sound financial principles. As I live my faith, I strive to follow spiritual principles that will help me become more like the Savior.

Invitations Bring Blessings

Many of the personal rewards I have received in life have come as a result of someone inviting me to do a difficult task. In that spirit, I would like to extend to each of you two invitations. The first has financial implications. With the second invitation, the implications are spiritual. Both invitations, if accepted, will require a disciplined effort over an extended period of time to reap the rewards.

The First Invitation

The first invitation is simple: I invite you to save money each week. The amount you save is not particularly significant; that is up to you. As you develop a habit of saving, you will benefit personally. And you may also have opportunities to assist others financially as a result of your diligence. Imagine the positive outcome of saving money weekly for six months, a year, 10 years, or more. Small efforts sustained over time can produce significant results.²

The Second Invitation

My second invitation is quite different from and much more important than the first. It is this: I invite you to “ponderize”³ one verse of scripture each week. The word *ponderize* is not found in the dictionary, but it has found a place in my heart. So what does it mean to ponderize? I like to say it's a combination of 80 percent extended pondering and 20 percent memorization.

There are two simple steps:

First, choose a verse of scripture each week and place it where you will see it every day.

Second, read or think of the verse several times each day and ponder the meaning of its words and key phrases throughout the week.

Imagine the uplifting results of doing this weekly for six months, a year, 10 years, or more.

As you make this effort, you will feel an increase in spirituality. You will also be able to teach and lift those you love in more meaningful ways.



If you choose to ponderize weekly, you may feel a bit like a person who has enjoyed snorkeling in the past but has now decided to try scuba diving. With that decision, a deeper understanding of gospel principles will be yours and new spiritual perspectives will bless your life.



As you reflect on your selected verse each week, words and phrases will be written on your heart.⁴ Words and phrases will also be written on your mind. In other words, memorization will take place easily and naturally. But the primary goal of ponderizing is to provide an uplifting place for your thoughts to go—a place that keeps you close to the Spirit of the Lord.

The Savior said, “Treasure up in your minds *continually* the words of life.”⁵ Ponderizing is a simple and edifying way to do just that.

I believe Nephi was a ponderizer. He said, “My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them [*continually*], and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.”⁶ He was mindful of his children as he pondered and wrote the scriptures. How might your family benefit as you *continually* strive to fill your mind with God’s words?

My Verse

Recently I ponderized Alma 5:16. It reads, “I say unto you, can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day: Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth?”

At the end of the week, this is what ended up being written on my mind: Imagine hearing the voice of the Lord saying, “Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness” (Alma 5:16).

As you can see, I didn’t memorize the entire verse word for word. However, I pondered time and time again the key elements of the verse and where to find it. But the best part of the process was I had a higher place for my thoughts to go. Throughout the week I pictured the Savior saying encouraging words to me. That image touched my heart and served to inspire me to want to do “works of righteousness.” That is what can happen when we “look unto [Christ] in every thought.”⁷

We Must Fight Back

You might ask, “Why should I do this?” I would answer that we are living in a time of ever-spreading evil. We cannot just accept the status quo and be fed ugly words and sinful visuals almost everywhere we turn and do nothing in response. We must fight back. When our minds are filled with uplifting thoughts and images, when we “always remember him,”⁸ there is no room left for filth and trash.

In the Book of Mormon, Jesus Christ invites all to “ponder upon the things which [He has] said.”⁹ Look at ponderizing as an add-on to your personal and family scripture study, but never let it be a replacement. Ponderizing is somewhat like adding a new time-release vitamin to your current spiritual diet.

It’s Too Hard

You might say, “Ponderizing sounds too hard for me.” Don’t be deterred. Hard can be good.

Christ invites us to do many hard things because He knows we will be blessed as a result of our efforts.¹⁰



A young neighbor of ours found a simple way to ponderize. He puts his weekly scripture on the home screen of his phone. Another idea you might try is sharing your verse with a sibling, a child, or a friend. My wife, Julie, and I help each other. We choose our verses each Sunday. She puts hers on our fridge. I place mine in my truck. We then share thoughts about our verses throughout the week. We also like to discuss our verses with our children. As we do, it seems to make it more comfortable for them to share their thoughts with us about the word of God.





Julie and I are also part of an online group in which family members, friends, and missionaries can share their scripture each week and occasionally include a related thought or testimony. Being part of a group makes it easier to be consistent. My high school daughter and a group of her friends use social media and text messaging to share scriptures with each other.



Please don't hesitate to include people of other faiths in your groups. They are also looking for ways to elevate their thoughts and to feel closer to God.

What Are the Benefits?



So, what are the benefits? Julie and I have been ponderizing a verse a week for more than three years now. Initially, we set a 20-year goal. She told me recently: “When you first invited me to ponderize a scripture every week for 20 years, I wondered if I could do it for a month. I don’t have those doubts anymore. I can’t believe how fun it has been to put a scripture on the fridge each week, and just by ponderizing it each time I see it, it lifts my spirit.”

After ponderizing for six weeks, a sister from Texas, USA, said: “My testimony has been strengthened, ... and I have felt closer to my Heavenly Father. ... I love how the word of God is changing me for the better.”

A teenage friend wrote: “I’ve really enjoyed being able to [ponderize] because it has helped me to focus on things that are actually important.”

One of our missionaries shared this: “I have been ponderizing a verse every week since June 2014, and I love it. ... These scriptures have become like friends that I can rely on in times of need.”

In my case, I feel the Spirit more fully as I ponderize weekly. My love of the scriptures has also increased as a result of striving to “let virtue garnish [my] thoughts *unceasingly*.”¹¹

Consider this invitation and supreme blessing shared by Nephi: “If ye shall press forward, *feasting* upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”¹² In the spirit of “feasting upon the word of Christ,” ponderizing is like taking a bite of delicious food and then chewing very, very slowly in order to enjoy it to its fullest.



What's Your Verse?

Will you ponderize a verse of scripture each week for the rest of this month? for the rest of this year? Longer maybe? Julie and I invited all our valiant Texas Dallas missionaries to ponderize with us for 20 years. We'll cross the finish line together in 17 short years. Then we'll set a new goal to elevate our thoughts and bring us closer to Christ.

You can check on us by asking, "What's your verse?" But if you do, be prepared to share your scripture in return. Each of us will be uplifted as a result of our exchange.

Can you imagine how your life and your family's life will be changed if you write a new verse of scripture on your heart and mind every week for the next few months or few years or longer?

Jesus Christ Is Our Example

Jesus Christ must have developed a love for the scriptures at an early age. He must have been reading and pondering the scriptures as a young child in order to have meaningful discussions with the wise doctors in the temple at age 12.¹³ He began his mission at age 30,¹⁴ and He referenced the scriptures early and often throughout His ministry.¹⁵ Can we not safely say that Jesus spent at least 20 years studying and pondering the scriptures as part of His mission preparation? Is there something you need to be doing today to prepare yourself spiritually for future opportunities to teach and bless your family and others?

Exercise Your Faith and Do It

In review, I hope you will decide to save money each week. Exercise your faith, discipline yourself, and do it. I also sincerely pray you will choose to ponder God's words in an extended and deeper manner on a weekly basis. Exercise your faith, discipline yourself, and do it.

Unlike my first *money-saving* invitation, all the benefits of my second *soul-saving*

invitation will be yours to keep forever—free from the moths and rust of this world.¹⁶

Elder D. Todd Christofferson offered this clear counsel and promise: “Study the scriptures carefully, deliberately. Ponder and pray over them. Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation.”¹⁷

Conclusion

I promise you will not regret writing a verse of scripture on your mind and heart each week. You will experience a feeling of perpetual spiritual purpose, protection, and power.

Remember the words of Jesus Christ when He said, “Do the things which ye have seen me do.”¹⁸ May we *fully* apply His words in our lives, I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. See 3 Nephi 5:13.
2. See Alma 37:6; Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.
3. I use *meditizar* in Spanish, which is a combination of *meditar* (to ponder) and *memorizar* (to memorize).
4. See 2 Corinthians 3:3.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 84:85; emphasis added.
6. 2 Nephi 4:15; see also Deuteronomy 6:7; 2 Nephi 4:16.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.

9. 3 Nephi 17:3; see also Moroni 10:3.

10. See Matthew 16:25; 1 Nephi 2:20; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

11. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45; emphasis added.

12. 2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added.

13. See Luke 2:42, 46–47.

14. See Luke 3:23.

15. See Matthew 4:3–4; see also Matthew 21:13. Several other verses use the phrase “It is written” and similar expressions demonstrating familiarity with the scriptures.

16. See Matthew 6:19–20.

17. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Blessing of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 35.

18. 2 Nephi 31:12; see also 3 Nephi 27:21.