



Instructor:  
Peter Brooks

# Avoiding a Faith Crisis

How to turn a faith crisis on any church topic into a faith-building opportunity when you have questions, concerns, or doubts about church history, doctrines, or policies

## LESSON #1 Desiring to Believe—a Healthy Starting Point

*Possible concern:* Why can't you prove to me the Church is true using intellectually-based methods and reasoning? "... except ye show me a sign, I will not believe" (Alma 30:48).

*Key principle:* Spiritual things can be proved using the Lord's "scientific method" found in Alma 32. Will you "exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you?" (Alma 32:27).

## LESSON #2 Distinguishing Between Questions or Doubts

*Possible concern:* How can I remain faithful in The Church of Jesus Christ when I have troubling, legitimate, sincere, and specific questions, concerns, and doubts?

*Key principle:* Questions are good! If you are not asking questions, you are not growing in the gospel (2 Nephi 28:30). Will you "doubt not, but be believing?" (Mormon 9:27)

## LESSON #3 Making Jesus Christ Your Primary Foundation

*Possible concern:* Don't all religions lead back to God? Why should I believe that Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior? How does the Atonement apply to me?

*Key principle:* You can avoid any faith crisis, but only if your conversion is built on Jesus Christ (Helaman 5:12). Will you build your foundation on Christ and make Him your bedrock?

## LESSON #4 Accepting Joseph Smith as the Lord's Chosen Prophet

*Possible concern:* How can Joseph Smith be the Lord's prophet when he had faults and imperfections? (D&C 1:17) How do I know he restored Christ's church?

*Key principle:* Despite his defects or faults, Joseph has done more for your salvation "save Jesus only" (D&C 135:3). Will you accept him at the Lord's chosen prophet—flaws and all?

## LESSON #5 Holding Fast to the Book of Mormon

*Possible concern:* How do I know the Book of Mormon is the word of God and not some work of fiction written by someone who had ulterior motives?

*Key principle:* The Book of Mormon is your most reliable and tangible source of truth. If the Book of Mormon falls, the Church falls (1 Nephi 15:24; Book of Mormon Introduction). Will you discover its truths again and again (Moroni 10:4–5)?

## LESSON #6 Tasting the Fruits of the Plan of Happiness

*Possible concern:* Where did I come from? Why am I here on earth? Where am I going? Don't other religions preach a similar heaven and hell? How do I even know if there is a God?

*Key principle:* The gospel fruits taste sweetest when you see the big picture. When you have doubts or concerns, will you ask questions and accept answers from an eternal view?

## **LESSON #7** **Finding Answers by Study**

*Possible concern:* I need evidence. How can I base my entire belief in the Church of Jesus Christ—or any church, for that matter—unless someone can produce hard, tangible proof?

*Key principle:* Becoming spiritually and intellectually self-reliant is a never-ending process. Will you “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118)?

## **LESSON #8** **Researching Using Reliable Resources**

*Possible concern:* How can I believe in the Church when Internet sources—many of these references come from current or former members of the Church and scholars—have found facts disproving the validity of the church?

*Key principle:* When searching for truth, beware of the lies and falsehoods you run across from sources trying to tear down the Church or distort the facts. Will you keep things in context and refuse to reduce the doctrines and principles of the gospel to one-line memes from questionable sources?

## **LESSON #9** **Receiving Undeniable Answers by the Spirit**

*Possible concern:* How is it possible to receive answers to my gospel questions by feeling the Spirit? I would prefer evidence I can see. To me, seeing is believing.

*Key principle:* You will not know all eternal truths using the senses—taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight. Will you use your “sixth sense” (Light of Christ) which is more convincing than the other five senses? (D&C 88:118)

## **LESSON #10** **Obedying the Commandments Brings Joy and Safety**

*Possible concern:* Aren't the commandments outdated? Examples: why should I pay tithing to a church that has billions of dollars in investments? Why can't I make Sunday my day? When will the Church see that the Word of Wisdom is flawed? What is wrong with premarital sexual relations?

*Key principle:* “...Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence” (2 Ne. 1:20). Will you obey and “pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious” (Alma 32:27–43)?

## **LESSON #11** **Welcoming Changing Church Policies**

*Possible concern:* I disagree on the Church's stance on past and current issues. Examples: How can I support a Church that banned blacks from the priesthood until 1978? Or will not allow the LGBTQIA+ to get married in the temple? Or will not give women the priesthood? Or practiced polygamy? Or encourages a temple marriage instead of a civil marriage?

*Key principle:* Church policies and procedures will change—when the Lord sees fit and on the Lord's timetable. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 55:8). Will you hold fast to primary truths (Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith) while accepting changes to secondary things (policies and procedures)?

## **LESSON #12** **Putting Church History in the Proper Light**

*Possible concern:* How can I accept the history of the Church that has inconsistencies and disturbing events in its past?

*Key principle:* Even though the history of the Church has its sketchy, dark spots, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is still the Lord's Church on the earth (D&C 1:30). When studying Church history, will you give each event a 360° look?

## **LESSON #13** **Forgiving Members and Leaders**

*Possible concern:* How is it possible for the Lord's church to be led by unworthy leaders or people who eventually left the Church, including past General Authorities? And why would I want to be a part of an organization where some members incorrectly judge me and do not always act like Christians?

*Key principle:* We are commanded to come unto Christ, not the people or leaders in His Church (D&C 1:37–38). Will you forgive members and leaders for their short comings?

## **LESSON #14** **Committing to Daily Habits**

*Possible concern:* Why should I pray, read my scriptures, and stay active in the Church? Why can't I commune with God without going to Church and being an active member? And, as a returned missionary, didn't I have enough spiritual experiences to last a lifetime?

*Key principle:* Treat your testimony like manna. Hold fast to the rod of iron (1 Nephi 8:24) or you will eventually spiritually die—no matter your church calling, or how long you have been a member, or how many spiritual experiences you have had in your life. Will you connect with Deity continually?

## **LESSON #15** **Remembering Your Covenant Path**

*Possible concern:* How do I know the spiritual experiences I had in the past are from God? Couldn't they have been just coincidences or me wanting something so badly? Why am I not having more spiritual experiences now? What is the covenant path, and what is the big deal about staying on this covenant path?

*Key principle:* Remember! Remember the blessings you have already received. Remember what you already know to be true. Remember when the Lord spoke “peace to your mind concerning the matter” (D&C 6:23). Will you keep a journal and continue on the covenant path, remembering the Lord's hand in your life as you exercise faith and endure to the end?