

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 196)

LESSON 23

“More Than One Witness”

Hook	How do we know what to believe? Who to believe? The answer is far more complicated than any of us can fully appreciate.
Manual Goal	To increase class members’ understanding of the plan of redemption and the power of having more than one witness to testify of gospel truths.
EGD Goal	To encourage class members to maintain soft hearts and develop a healthy relationship to learning and truth.

I. Sunday School

- a. Framing (This story about Amulek joining Alma actually touches on important questions of how we can know anything)
- b. Two Minute Take Home
 - i. How we should share sensitive or spiritual topics (12:9)
 - ii. Do not harden our hearts
 - iii. How do we know what to believe?
 1. Multiple witnesses (science, friendships etc)
 2. Analysis (what makes the best sense of all the evidence and perspectives? We can use each other to triangulate our understandings of reality)
- c. Scripture Commentary
- d. Lesson
 - i. What we learn from each character in this story
 1. Alma (courage, openness)
 2. Amulek (teachability, humility, openness to changing, acknowledging his mistakes)
 3. Zeezrom
 - ii. What causes a hard heart? (The theme of hard hearts is brought up 14 times in this reading) fear, anger, but also certainty, whatever closes off our hearts to feeling and learning and being influenced.
 - iii. Sharing sacred things (12:9) (carefully, and then little by little as trust is earned)
 - iv. How do we know what to believe?
 1. Why science works (“More than one witness” DIRECTLY applies)
 2. Analysis (look for biases, relationships, CONTEXT, see where people are coming from, put together a proposed narrative that takes into account all evidence)

3. By their fruits you shall know them
 4. The role of faith (acting on working knowledge. Faith is powerful, but still provisional)
 5. The role of humility (always being open to being wrong and open to correction, because as humans we will never be 100% right)
 - v. The human need to be right, at almost all costs
 1. Human limitations
 - a. We avoid discomfort (this is why we crave the feeling of certainty and assurance that we are in the right, even when that confidence is not merited)
 - b. Reality is impossible to understand fully (joke about my mom saying I “overcomplicate things”) We simplify things to survive and function. Plus we don’t have any other option, since we are limited as humans.
 - c. We are limited to our perspective (we are literally unable to see beyond our own perspectives, though we can work to stretch our perspectives and use others’ perspectives to inform and correct and expand our own. But it always remains ours
 - d. We all literally experience reality differently
 - e. We don’t really remember what happens... we live in fiction
 - f. Cognitive illusions
 - g. Paradox of choice
 - vi. The good news
 1. We don’t need to be perfect or know everything; that is where the gospel comes in
 2. Humility, truth seeking, repentance, forgiveness, nurturing relationships
- II. No other sections, but look at the links on the site about fallacies and human nature

How do we know things? What is a witness?

The MAIN point of this lesson: Our need for multiple witnesses in our lives. We MUST check in with the lived realities of those we interact with given our limitations. We have to be humble and open and doubt and check and double check... and the “natural human” resists this powerfully.

Check in with each other’s truths. We will never get it right, never completely understand someone, so we need to embrace an approach of constant correction. Repentance, forgiveness, and change.