

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 202.1 and 202.2)

### LESSON 28: ALMA 32-35

#### *The Word is in Christ unto Salvation*

Manual Goal: To help class members understand that the word of God will lead them to Jesus Christ and to encourage them to “nourish the word” in their hearts ([Alma 32:40](#)).

Engaging Gospel Doctrine Goal: To help class members understand the distinctions between knowledge, belief, and faith, and to make the most of this precious life.

1. Two minute take home (I highly recommend listening to the entire episode, one of the better ones)
  - a. Experimenting upon the word (can't overemphasize how important this is)

Alma 32:27: But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

- b. The gifts of belief, doubt, and knowledge (but even our knowledge is tentative). Think about the difference between an idea being \*good\* vs. an idea being \*true\*. This experiment determines whether the seed is GOOD. Which is more useful.

29 Now behold, would not this increase your faith? I say unto you, Yea; nevertheless it hath not grown up to a perfect knowledge.

30 But behold, as the seed swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then you must needs say that the seed is good; for behold it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow. And now, behold, will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith: for ye will say I know that this is a good seed; for behold it sprouteth and beginneth to grow.

c. Testing the fruit:

28 Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

d. The gift and power of faith (Faith is what motivates us to put our beliefs into action is most important)

38 But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

39 Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

e. The importance of this life. Now is the time. Heaven on earth. Life before death.

34:31 Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you.

32 For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

Goal	Class members should gain an increased appreciation for individual implications of Alma's teachings about faith, apply lessons about effective prayer, and better understand the role of this life in eternity.
Hook	In an important way, this lesson is about living well—what subject is more important? The centerpiece of this lesson is the “experiment upon the word” in Alma 32 and we will be focusing there, as well as highlighting Amulek’s teachings on prayer, the atonement, and the importance of this life.
Overview	32:1-6: Narrative introduction to Alma’s discourse to the Zoramite poor 32:7-20: Alma on humility and belief 32:21-43: “Experiment upon the word” sermon 33: Alma quotes Zenos on prayer, then speaks of the testimonies of Christ by Zenos, Zenock, and Moses 34: Amulek teaches about atonement, prayer, and the role of this life
Main Points	<p><u>Lesson on Faith</u> Close reading of 32 Define faith. Hebrew emoonah, Greek pistis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 32:27: Mention specifically when the faith doesn’t come despite “desiring to believe”; this is important to acknowledge (we all have different spiritual gifts; we should not blame people when faith doesn’t come according to this model. We probably all know people like this)</li> </ul> <p>Lesson on Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33: Notice repetition, focus on mercy</li> <li>• Close reading of 34:18-29 (including the central point that if you don’t LIVE your prayer, if you are not the answer to your own prayer, the angel of God’s mercy, you have failed and your prayer pointless)</li> </ul> <p>Lesson on Atonement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33:22: Notice how doctrinally dense this is</li> <li>• 34:15: beautiful imagery</li> </ul> <p>Lesson on importance of this life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Alma 34:32-6, but through the lens that we are part of eternity, that this life is where the focus should be. We should be saved here, working towards a heaven on earth (contrasting examples of too much focus on afterlife, suicide bombers, or those who remain in harmful environments with the hope of heaven)</li> </ul>
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 32:2 Success among the poor (cf. Cragun MS interview about demographics); also personal application of looking down on those who seem poor, not as fine clothing etc.</li> <li>• 32:14-16: Is Alma thinking of himself and his father? The descriptions certainly fit</li> <li>• 32:23: nice representative gem, mentioning divine ministrations to women and children as well as men</li> <li>• Zenos is mentioned 12 times in Book of Mormon, Zenock 5</li> <li>• 33:7; 34:26. I got hung up on “closet”. So I looked up the Hebrew and Greek. “Closet” only appears once in the KJV OT and refers to a bridal chamber. In Matt 6:6, the parallel to these Book of Mormon passages, the word means an inner room or storeroom. So now you know to pray in your pantries 😊</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34:14 Gently bring up the point that the details of the Book of Mormon suggest that not only are words and phrases in Joseph Smith’s language and worldview, but even concepts were shaped by his understanding. The way Jews and the Jewish Law are described is one of these (what Amulek describes was believed by the Jewish Christians)</li> <li>• 34:34: “same spirit” cf. Mormon 9:4; D&amp;C 88:28-31</li> <li>• 34:36: “go no more out”, see Rev. 3:12</li> <li>• 34:37 “work out your salvation with fear” Philippians 2:12</li> <li>• 35:9: Contrasting behavior, Zoramites vs. Ammonites.</li> </ul>
<p>Concluding Points</p>	<p>Pull all the points together—this life is part of eternity, we can know good through experimenting and removing barriers within ourselves, and our prayers should include both spiritual/emotional and physical effort.</p>