

Book of Mormon Class Summary

2 Ne 1-10

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Living “After the Manner of Happiness”

What does “the manner of happiness” mean to you?

“Happiness”--what does it mean to you? What does happiness look like in your life? How easy is it to find that happiness? What are the keys to happiness? These questions open up our exploration of living after the manner of happiness—the theme for these chapters of the Book of Mormon.

Are you a naturally “happy person?” Some of us are more naturally inclined toward feeling happy, while others (like me) really have to work at it. In fact, research shows that only 50% of happiness is accounted for by genetics. The other 50% is purely up to us! We must *decide* to work toward happiness, and yes, it can involve a lot of work.

Is there a difference between happiness & joy? I believe there is, though they may go hand in hand. “Joy is deeper and more lasting. It’s not simply an emotion. ‘Joy...unlike happiness, is a state of *being*. We can be faced with challenges, situations, and life stress and still be joyful. Even when we don’t *feel* happy, we can *be* full of joy’ (*This is How We Grow*, p. 335).” (From “[Beyond Happiness: 10 Ways to Increase Joy](#)”)

The gospel is focused on “the plan of salvation,” which is also called “the plan of happiness.” As we focus more on the gospel truths, on following this plan, we not only *feel* happier, we *become* more full of joy.

Our goal in this week’s lesson is to, first, discover “the manner of happiness” through these chapters, and second, to apply this “manner of happiness” and live after it in our own lives. Throughout this summary, I have included personal questions, in italics and sometimes as headings, to prompt you to ponder how these words relate to your life. I encourage you to take the time to reflect upon these questions, and even to write about them in your journal.

“Arise and be men!” (2 Ne 1: 21)

The people of Nephi have finally reached “the promised land,” “notwithstanding our afflictions,” as it says in verse 5. We will all have afflictions, yet the Lord will lead us toward our promised land, IF we obey his commandments, have faith, and *let* him lead us (see 1 Ne 17:13). *Do our “promised lands” bring happiness to our lives?* They should; that is their purpose.

In this chapter and those to follow, Lehi shares his final sermons. He shares incredible things that he has learned and pleads with his family to listen and to obey. Read 2 Ne 1: 14-16. In these verses, Lehi glories in his Lord, yet has great anxiety for his family. *Can you relate to Lehi’s feelings? How so?* In verse 21, he lays it all on the line, telling his

sons to “arise from the dust...and be men”! *Do we ever need a call to remind us to “arise from the dust?” To “step it up” and “be men” or “women”?*

Both the men and women of the gospel have an inspired and foreordained work to do, and we must heed the call and rise to the challenge if we are to do it. President Nelson recently said to the women of the church:

“...these stalwart women have shown the strength and courage that covenant-keeping women always demonstrate.² It would be impossible to measure the influence that such women have, not only on families but also on the Lord’s Church, as wives, mothers, and grandmothers; as sisters and aunts; as teachers and leaders; and especially as exemplars and devout defenders of the faith.³ This has been true in every gospel dispensation since the days of Adam and Eve. Yet the women of this dispensation are distinct from the women of any other because this dispensation is distinct from any other.⁴ This distinction brings both privileges and responsibilities...My dear sisters, whatever your calling, whatever your circumstances, we need your impressions, your insights, and your inspiration. We need you to speak up and speak out in ward and stake councils. We need each married sister to speak as “a *contributing* and *full* partner”¹⁰ as you unite with your husband in governing your family. Married or single, you sisters possess distinctive capabilities and special intuition you have received as gifts from God. We brethren cannot duplicate your unique influence. We know that the culminating act of all creation was the creation of woman!¹¹ We need your strength!... *My dear sisters, nothing is more crucial to your eternal life than your own conversion.* It is converted, covenant-keeping women...whose righteous lives will increasingly stand out in a deteriorating world and who will thus be seen as different and distinct in the *happiest* of ways. So today I plead with my sisters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to step forward! Take your rightful and needful place in your home, in your community, and in the kingdom of God—more than you ever have before. I plead with you to fulfill President Kimball’s prophecy. And I promise you in the name of Jesus Christ that as you do so, the Holy Ghost will magnify your influence in an unprecedented way!” (“A Plea to My Sisters,” Gen. Conf. Oct 2015)

How do you feel when you read this? What does it tell you about your own divine purpose, calling and mission here on earth? What does it whisper about your part in the “great plan of happiness” and bringing salvation to the world? Will we stand up and “be men” and “women” of Christ?

“Do I find happiness in ‘The Plan of Happiness?’” (2 Ne 2)

2 Nephi chapter 2 teaches us about The Creation, The Fall, and The Atonement. These three elements constitute the “plan of redemption,” or the “plan of happiness.” As Elder Russell M. Nelson said, “The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement were planned long before the actual work of the Creation began” (Ensign, May 2000, 84). Yes, these three components have ALWAYS been the plan.

CREATION: Read 2 Nephi 2:11-14. *What are the purposes of the Creation expressed in these verses?* (Some answers might include agency, opposition, to know happiness, life, death, knowledge, purpose, the eternal purposes of God!) Verse 16 reiterates that agency, and specifically opposition, are central to the creation! Without opposition, the plan would not work. Likewise, learning, evolution, and growth are all part of the Creation. *Do we remember this when faced with opposition, trials, and our own weaknesses or mistakes? Do we remember that it's an essential part of the plan of happiness?*

FALL: Read 2 Nephi 22-25. *What conditions existed before and after the fall? Why was the Fall necessary for our happiness?* (Read Moses 5:11-12 for more on this.)

Before the Fall	After the Fall
Adam and Eve would not have had children.	They had children.
Adam and Eve would not have known joy or misery.	They could experience both joy and misery.
They would not have done good or evil.	They could do good, and they could also sin.
They would have remained in the Garden of Eden forever.	They were cast out of the Lord's presence and out of the Garden of Eden. They became fallen and mortal—subject to physical death (see also Moses 6:48). <i>(Book of Mormon Teacher Manual)</i>

The Fall was another essential element of the plan of happiness. Without “falling,” we could not bear children and would not, consequently, know misery (v. 23—this always makes me laugh!). But also, we would not have known joy without children. We would not have known work or personal growth or salvation. In essence, we not only become subject to the natural laws that bring death to our bodies, but the Fall also allowed the Savior to fulfill His divine mission—to fulfill the Atonement.

Though many believe the Fall of Adam and Eve was a terrible mistake, we know better. As Elder Bruce C. Hafen said:

“The Fall was not a disaster. It wasn’t a mistake or an accident. It was a deliberate part of the plan of salvation. We are God’s spirit ‘offspring,’ sent to earth ‘innocent’ of Adam’s transgression. Yet our Father’s plan subjects us to temptation and misery in this fallen world as the price to comprehend authentic joy. Without tasting the bitter, we actually *cannot* understand the sweet. We require mortality’s discipline and refinement as the ‘next step in [our] development’ toward becoming like our Father. But growth means growing pains. It also means learning from our mistakes in a continual process made possible by the Savior’s grace, which He extends both during and ‘*after all we can do*’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 100; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 97; in this statement, Elder Hafen quotes the following sources: [Acts 17:28](#); [D&C 93:38](#); Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 207; [2 Nephi 25:23](#) with italics added).

Challenge: Memorize 2 Nephi 2:25. I memorized this in seminary as a youth, and it's a fabulous scripture to keep in our mental repertoire, to remind us of the importance of the Fall, and the point of the Fall—that we “might have joy.” *Will you take the challenge?*

ATONEMENT: Read 2 Nephi 2:10 and 26-28. *Why was the atonement necessary?* (Some ideas include the need for intercession, repentance, compensation for all we lack, judgment, and salvation!) *According to 2 Nephi 2:7, what must we do to fully take advantage of the sacrifice Jesus Christ offered for us?* (broken heart and a contrite spirit)

What does it mean to have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit?” I find it intriguing that even the Old Testament teaches this truth (see Psalm 51:17)! This isn't new doctrine. It's been part of the plan all along.

Elder Bruce D. Porter explains how we can develop a broken heart and a contrite spirit: “The Savior’s perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Christ’s example teaches us that a broken heart is an eternal attribute of godliness. When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master.” (“A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit,” Gen Conf, Oct 2007) Link:

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2007/10/a-broken-heart-and-a-contrite-spirit?lang=eng>

Ask yourself, “*Do I currently possess a ‘broken heart and a contrite spirit?’ Am I ‘malleable clay in the hands...of the Master?’ If not, what stands in my way.*” Ask yourself, “*Do I find joy and happiness in understanding the plan of happiness?’ If not, why not?*”

2 Ne 3—the 4 Josephs! The restoration and gospel fulfilled! Do we rejoice in this knowledge?

Who are the 4 Josephs mentioned in 2 Nephi chapter 3? Lehi speaks to his son, Joseph, about Joseph of Egypt, who prophesied of Joseph Smith (who would be called after his father, Joseph). Joseph of Egypt saw the restoration of the gospel and knew the one to lead it would be called Joseph, too.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles tells us more:

“The Lord foreordained ... Joseph Smith, Sr., who is spoken of in the holy scriptures, to be one of the earthly parents of the Prophet. Joseph of Egypt prophesied that the latter-day seer whom God would raise up to do his work would be ‘called Joseph’ ([Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:33](#)), and his name would ‘be after the name of his father’ ([2 Nephi 3:15](#)). The heavenly messenger Moroni admonished young Joseph to go to his father following a glorious night of

sacred instruction. In Joseph’s words, this messenger ‘commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received. I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger’ (Joseph Smith—History 1:49–50)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 5–6).

How does understanding this impact your testimony of the restoration? Do you rejoice and find happiness in the restoration?

“Does my soul ‘delight in the scriptures?’” (2 Ne 4:15-16)

Read 2 Nephi 4: 15-16 and ask yourself the following questions (from the Student Manual)

- *What did Nephi treasure? How can you tell that he treasured these things?*
- *What can we do to treasure the scriptures and the things of the Lord?*
- *How do you think Nephi’s love of the scriptures influenced his trust in God?*
- *In what ways has your love of the scriptures influenced your trust in God?*

These verses teach us of Nephi’s love of the scriptures and “the things of the Lord.” He tells us he not only read the scriptures, but he *delighted* in them, pondered them continually, and wrote them for his children. *Do we look forward to reading the scriptures? Do we study and ponder them? Do we “feast upon” and “delight” in them?*

Sister Cheryl C. Lant offers *three suggestions* to help us gain more from the scriptures—delighting in the scriptures, pondering the scriptures, and writing the scriptures into our lives. “First, my soul delighteth...I find that what I take away from the scriptures is determined by what I bring. Each time I read them, I am, in a sense, bringing a new person with new eyes to the experience. Where I am in my life, the experiences I am having, and my attitude all affect how much I will gain...”

“Second, ‘my heart pondereth them,’” Sister Lant says. A few years ago, in General Conference we were given the challenge to “ponderize” the scriptures. *Did we take that challenge? Are we actively working on it each day?*

Sister Lant concludes, “[Third] I, of course, do not write scriptures as did Nephi, but when I read the scriptures and live the principles I learn, those scriptures become written in my life.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 76-77). *Are we writing the scriptures into our lives?*

The Psalm of Nephi & our own “Psalms” (2 Nephi 4)

This beautiful, heartfelt chapter is written like poetry. There is incredible power in these

words, especially when we read them out loud. Reading these verses, and especially verse 28, we are overcome by Nephi's love of the Lord and also his despair for his own weakness and sins.

We may wonder how Nephi, this righteous, remarkable man, could feel so down on himself, so disappointed and grieved over his "sins," which to us would seem small and insignificant. The Prophet Joseph Smith explains: "the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin" (*History of the Church*, 2:8). Perhaps Nephi felt burdened by what we might consider trivial weaknesses to the point where they caused him sorrow, and he sought to be free from any vestige of sin." (BOM Student Manual, chapter 8)

Do you ever feel like Nephi felt—"Awake, my soul, no longer droop in sin!"? How so? What do you do about it? How does it feel to see your weaknesses? What helps you understand and strengthen your weaknesses?

Weakness is given to us from the Lord (Ether 12:27) and is a part of the plan of happiness (remember, above "opposition in all things" and agency?). Do you believe your weaknesses are a gift? They are! In fact, the Lord commands us to "watch ourselves," which will help us see our weaknesses. Mosiah 4:30 tells us to "Watch yourself, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds..." As we monitor ourselves, we can see our weaknesses, and then the Lord can do incredible things with them. Ether 12:27 tells us, "...if men come unto me I will *show* unto them their weakness..." The Lord shows us our weakness, not to bring us to despair, but to grow us into something better. "...I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."

Yes, like Nephi, we can take our sins and weaknesses to the Lord. We can turn to the Lord and He will show us our weaknesses. This allows us to grow in humility, and then we can really rely upon his grace—the enabling power of the atonement—to help us improve. He promises He will make our weaknesses become our strengths! *Have you ever experienced this? In what way? Do you continually turn to the Lord, asking Him to show you your weaknesses?*

Seeing and improving our weaknesses also brings us greater happiness!

"Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that, regardless of a person's susceptibility or tendency, we have an obligation to exercise our agency to overcome our personal weaknesses: '... We are all responsible for the exercise of our free agency... Most of us are born with thorns in the flesh, some more visible, some more serious than others. We all seem to have susceptibilities to one disorder or another, but whatever our susceptibilities, we have the will and the power to control our thoughts and our actions. This must be so. God has said that he holds us accountable for what we do and what we think, so our thoughts and actions must be controllable by our

agency. Once we have reached the age or condition of accountability, the claim ‘I was born that way’ does not excuse actions or thoughts that fail to conform to the commandments of God. We need to learn how to live so that a weakness that is mortal will not prevent us from achieving the goal that is eternal. God has promised that he will consecrate our afflictions for our gain (see [2 Nephi 2:2](#)). The efforts we expend in overcoming any inherited weakness build a spiritual strength that will serve us throughout eternity. Thus, when Paul prayed thrice that his ‘thorn in the flesh’ would depart from him, the Lord replied, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ [[2 Corinthians 12:9](#)]” (“Free Agency and Freedom,” in Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., ed., *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure* [1989], 13–14).” (BOM Student Manual, Chapter 8)

How can we learn to see and to overcome our weaknesses? Our “thorns in the flesh?” Look at 2 Ne 4:15-35 for answers.

“Do I separate myself from wickedness, as Nephi did?” (2 Ne 5:5-9)

Are there things in your life from which you need to “flee” (entertainment, friends, work, media, etc)? How can we live “in the world but not of the world?” Read 2 Ne 5:1-7 and look for details about Nephi’s departure. How do these things apply to us?

Elder Richard G. Scott said:

“Avoid worldly wickedness. Know that God is in control. In time, Satan will completely fail and be punished for his perverse evil. God has a specific plan for your life. He will reveal parts of that plan to you as you look for it with faith and consistent obedience. His Son has made you free—not from the consequences of your acts, but free to make choices. God’s eternal purpose is for you to be successful in this mortal life. No matter how wicked the world becomes, you can earn that blessing. Seek and be attentive to the personal guidance given to you through the Holy Spirit. Continue to be worthy to receive it. Reach out to others who stumble and are perplexed, not certain of what path to follow” (Elder Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 103–4, 106; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 100, 102).” (BOM Student Manual, Chapter 8)

“Do I live ‘after the manner of happiness?’ 2 Ne 5:10-18, 26-27

What does this mean to you? How can we live after the manner of happiness?

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that there *is* a path that leads to happiness: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God” (*History of the Church*, 134–35).

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught similarly about happiness: “The Lord wants us to be

happy. Nephi said a great thing: ‘And ... we lived after the manner of happiness.’ (2 Ne. 5:27.) What a wonderful thing. I want my children to be happy. I want them to do well. I want them to live well and live rightly, properly; and, in the same way, except that my Father in Heaven’s love reaches beyond any power of love that I have. I think He wants His sons and daughters to be happy. Happiness comes of righteousness. ‘Wickedness never was happiness.’ (Alma 41:10.) Sin never was happiness. Selfishness never was happiness. Greed never was happiness. Happiness lies in living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (“Fast-Paced Schedule for the Prophet,” *Church News*, Apr. 20, 1996, 3).

Ponder President Hinckley’s advice: “Keep balance in your lives. Beware of obsession. Beware of narrowness. Let your interests range over many good fields while working with growing strength in the field of your own profession.” (“Four Imperatives for Religious Educators, Sept 15, 1978.) Then, read 2 Ne 5: 10-18, 26-27 looking for principles to help you make a greater contribution, in your unique and predestined way, to the world.

Jacob teaches from Isaiah (2 Ne 6-9)

“In 2 Nephi 6–8, Jacob teaches from the writings of Isaiah. He includes bookends for these teachings, helping us understand what he wants us to learn. Jacob’s introductory bookend can be found in 2 Nephi 6:4–5. What periods of time did Jacob say he would teach about? According to Jacob, why were the teachings of Isaiah important for the people? Jacob’s summary bookend is in 2 Nephi 9:1–3. Read these verses, searching for reasons why Jacob shared the writings of Isaiah.

“How might an understanding of these bookends help us as we read 2 Nephi 6–8? On the board, write *Jewish History and Destiny* and *Principles of the Gathering of Israel*. Jacob’s teachings can be organized into these two categories: 1) Jewish history, and 2) the principles of the Gathering of Israel. 2 Nephi 7 contains Isaiah’s prophecy about the mortal ministry and Atonement of Jesus Christ.” (Book of Mormon Teacher Manual, Chapter 8)

As you read these chapters prayerfully, how do you feel? Can you feel the spirit of Christ as you read Isaiah’s words? How do his words impact your testimony of the Savior?

“Do I ‘walk in the light of my own fire?’” 2 Ne 7:10-11

Do we ever do things *our* way instead of the Lord’s way? What prevents us from letting the Lord lead us? What, specifically, do you need to do to let the Lord be your “light in the wilderness,” instead of walking “in the light of your own fire?”

Do I ‘At-one’ with Christ? 2 Nephi Chapter 9

Chapter 9 is one of the most descriptive of all chapters in the Book of Mormon, about the Atonement. The word atonement literally means “at-one-ment.” We are literally “at-oneing” with something at all times. Is it the Savior? If not, then what is it?

Chapter 9, verse 3 reads “Behold, my beloved brethren, I speak unto you these things that ye may rejoice, and lift up your heads forever, because of the blessings which the Lord God shall bestow upon your children.” *Do you “rejoice” in the Gospel? Do you rejoice in the incredible blessings of the Lord?* The greatest of His gifts is the Atonement.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland states:

“Jacob’s testimony was that ‘the Mighty God’ will always deliver ‘his covenant people,’ and that the Mighty God is, by his own divine declaration, the Lord Jesus Christ, the ‘Savior and . . . Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.’

“Jacob reflected on such teachings—especially those contained in the writings of Isaiah—so that his current audience and future readers ‘might know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel,’ giving the parents of every generation cause to ‘rejoice’ and to ‘lift up [their] heads forever, because of the blessings which the Lord God shall bestow upon [their] children.’ “At the heart of that covenant and the reason for such rejoicing is the atoning sacrifice of that ‘Mighty God’ who is the Savior and Redeemer of the world” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 66–67).

Read Alma 42:23, 27. “Whosoever *will* come *may* come and partake of the waters of life freely...” Will you come to Christ? *Will you partake of this unspeakable gift He offers and choose to “live after the manner of happiness?”*

Elder James E. Faust said:

“Our salvation depends on believing in and accepting the Atonement. Such acceptance requires a continual effort to understand it more fully. The Atonement advances our mortal course of learning by making it possible for our natures to become perfect. . . .

‘. . . Any increase in our understanding of His atoning sacrifice draws us closer to Him. Literally, the Atonement means to be ‘at one’ with Him. The nature of the Atonement and its effects is so infinite, so unfathomable, and so profound that it lies beyond the knowledge and comprehension of mortal man. . . .

‘We long for the ultimate blessing of the Atonement—to become one with Him, to be in His divine presence, to be called individually by name as He warmly welcomes us home with a radiant smile, beckoning us with open arms to be enfolded in His boundless love. How gloriously sublime this experience will be if we can feel worthy enough to be in His presence! The free gift of His great atoning sacrifice for each of us is the only way we can be exalted enough to stand before Him and see Him face-to-face. The overwhelming message of the Atonement is the perfect love the Savior has for each and all of us. It is a love which is full of mercy, patience, grace, equity, long-suffering, and, above all, forgiving” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 19, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 18, 20).

Truly, this is living “after the manner of happiness. I desire to know His boundless love, to be in His presence one day and see him, face-to-face. I desire to partake of the marvelous gift of the Atonement by seeking to “at-one” with him each day, in each moment. This is the greatest desire of my heart, and my testimony.

How do you feel when you read Elder Faust’s words? Do you “long” to “become one with Him?” If not, what is standing in your way?

Things to Ponder...

Go back to all of the questions (in italics) and select a few that speak most deeply to you. Write about them in your journal. Then, ponder each day how you can improve.

Next Week’s Reading:

2 Ne 17-30; Student Manual chapters 11-13. Yes, we're studying Isaiah! Come prepared with your questions, thoughts, and testimony of these remarkable chapters. If you did not receive a copy of the "10 Keys to Understanding Isaiah" in class but would like one, you can grab a copy next time, or just email me and I'll get one to you.

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