

All Glory Praise and Honor Be to Our King and Redeemer

The Lord Jesus Christ

The following statement, written by Steve VanLeer, with contributions and edits from many, concerning the development of a Guide & Standard, was first shared with a group of individuals on Saturday October 7, 2017. Prior to the meeting, many of the individuals in attendance had held differing and opposing perspectives on the process for arriving at a mutually acceptable Guide & Standard. However, during the course of the meeting, those in attendance came to agree that what was presented were inspired principles around which all could unite and come to a unity of heart, and serve as the common ground from which a Guide & Standard could be developed. After a lengthy discussion, these principles, described below, were unanimously adopted by the group.

In an attempt to bring to the center of our work, our focus, and our attention, specifically, and exclusively, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and King, we offer a polite suggestion from Him in answer to earnest prayer to know His part.

He has shown how easy, and light a thing, it can be for us to mutually agree on principles to guide us. For this purpose I, and all those undersigned, ask every brother and sister of the covenant to carefully consider what the Lord has shown.

The Lord revealed these thoughts and instruction first to one, then to a group of seven, then to a larger group who gathered to reason together in an effort to apply what the Lord has given us. All in the group were from a very diverse cross-section of covenant holders, mutually agreed with one heart, that these things given by God represent a way forward to unity and mutual agreement among the covenant people as to a "statement" of guiding principles.

"Those who have God's word know how to proceed in all things. Those who do not are always uncertain what they should do and what their standing is before Him." (Denver Snuffer, The Power of God's Word, blog post)

The Lord's Way

On the road to Emmaus two disciples were approached by the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Their eyes were holden so that they could not recognize who He was (Luke 24:16). The Lord Jesus had just recently triumphed over death and hell and the grave by resurrecting from the dead. The two disciples invited questions that resulted in the Lord's response. Rather than resort to freelance answers and His own readily available firsthand description of the events that had transpired in His own life, ministry, capture, trial, and crucifixion, the Lord instead "expounded to them in all the scriptures" the things that had transpired with Him in Jerusalem.

When ministering among the Nephites after His resurrection, the Master reviewed the Nephite records. He instructed the inclusion of a sacred Nephite account that had been omitted. Then, He instructed that some writings of Malachi be included in the record. We should ask, why didn't the Lord simply put into Nephi's mind, and have Nephi write, the principles and prophecy included in Malachi's record? It was enough for the Lord that a record existed, He deferred to the use of existing scripture. He could have given into Nephi's mind, Malachi's revelation and expanded it for understanding a hundred-fold. He did not.

In an air force barracks in New England a young future servant of the Lord struggled with questions and insecurities about God and spiritual things. After two and a half hours of questions and answers coming to his mind from the scriptures, the young man recognized for perhaps the first time that God had taught him from the scriptures. God did not freelance, or improvise, and speak a whole bunch of stuff other than what was needed and pertinent from the existing word of God.

Joseph Smith was taught repeatedly one September evening in 1823. The heavenly messenger taught Joseph from the existing writings of Isaiah, Peter, Joel, and Malachi. There was no freelancing and diversions into anything other than what could be found in the existing words of God.

That same servant who as a young man was taught by God from the scriptures in a military barracks, would later write: *"I am nothing. I am keenly aware of my own limitations. But I am also keenly aware of our Lord. When I have had discussions with Him, they have invariably involved parsing through the scriptures and Him explaining things to me. When I have inquired and gotten answers, it is because there are things in the scriptures I did not understand."* (Denver Snuffer, *Ephraim Talk*, p. 75)

The Lord teaches, guides, expands knowledge, answers questions, and makes known to His children His desires, by showing and reminding them what He has already given in His word. This is an undeniable pattern by which the Lord works.

A question for all to ponder: Is it possible that many of us, as a people, have misunderstood the desires and instruction of our Lord from the beginning of the now seven and a half month engagement in which we have struggled and have yet to produce a final "statement" of guiding principles upon which the covenant people can mutually agree?

I too have parsed through the scriptures with the Lord over the last many weeks and have been shown some things that I could not heretofore see clearly, but now both see, and understand.

To lay out what was taught, we need to begin with an understanding of something that is common among all of us who entered into the Lord's covenant in September in Boise. We all answered "Yes" (if we are of the covenant) to four questions, including these two:

Covenant Promises:

“First: *Do you **believe all the words of the Lord which have been read to you this day, and know them to be true and from the Lord Jesus Christ who has condescended to provide them to you, and do you covenant with Him to cease to do evil and to seek to continually do good?***”

“Second: *Do you have faith in these things and **receive the scriptures approved by the Lord as a standard to govern you in your daily walk** in life?*”

From the above promises, it would appear that we have all, of the covenant, already *mutually agreed to “receive the scriptures approved by the Lord as a standard to govern you in your daily walk.”* We have confessed by our collective vote of “yes” that we “**believe all the words of the Lord which have been read to you this day, and know them to be true and from the Lord Jesus Christ who has condescended to provide them to you.**”

The Lord instructed the servant: “*Read first to the people these words I now speak, and then read the words of the covenant, and the people **who will receive and do my words and my covenant** shall then stand and say, Yes.*” Carefully notice the language used, “*My words and my covenant.*”

“*Then **by my law and my word they will be mine** and I will be with and lead my people onward through the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Record of Heaven, the peaceable things of immortal glory, even the Holy Ghost which will abide with them, and you will be children of the Most High God, fellow servants and numbered with the congregation of the just. Therefore rejoice! And the angels are given charge to watch over and protect my people.*”

It is to be “**by my law and my word they will be mine and I will be with and lead my people onward**”. Again, notice the language used, “*my law and my word.*”

One evening as I was reading in the *Testimony of St. John* a passage blasted from the page like a bolt into my mind: “*How can you ever gain light and truth when you use one another as the final authority on truth, and ignore the light sent by the Most High God?*” (p. 9, paragraph 6).

I recognize these words are a description of us over the last seven and a half months.

A sequential walk through the *Answer & Covenant* revelation lays out what may have been overlooked in the words of the Lord to us all regarding guiding principles. It is important to consider sequentially in the revelation, what the Lord has revealed and what He has instructed.

Covenant page 6: “*I have given to you my doctrine, and have also revealed teachings, commandments, precepts, and principles to guide you and it is not meet that I command you in all things—reason*”

together and apply WHAT I HAVE GIVEN YOU and it will be enough."

(Answer & Covenant, p. 6, paragraph 3)¹

From the foregoing, we learn that He has given us "**principles to guide you**", but perhaps we have instead used "*one another as the final authority on truth*" to distill these principles, rather than glean them from his words to us through His servant and the scriptures. Instead, perhaps we should simply have sought to "**reason together and apply what I have given you and it will be enough.**"

Is there something in this instruction that we cannot, or will not, believe? He has given us "*principles to guide you.*" In fact, we have all (of the covenant) covenanted already to: "**receive the scriptures approved by the Lord as a standard to govern you in your daily walk.**" We have all *mutually agreed* to this. Mutual agreement between us on a "statement" of some of these principles is all but done and assured if the criteria applied to each principle included in our "statement" is, "*do you believe these words to be the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he condescended to give them to you?*" If that question, which we have already covenanted to affirmatively, is the criteria by which we measure principles to guide us, it could very well be a light thing indeed to write a "statement" comprised of such. If our process to develop a statement of principles is guided by the words of the covenant, we will have already eliminated the opinions, demands, and inventions of men.

If it was each of us on the road to Emmaus, would the given word of God have been enough fodder for a discussion and teaching after the great triumph of that day, as it was for our King and Redeemer? It ought to be enough, and more than enough, for each of us each day and for every purpose.

Let us go to the words He has given us, and draw out the principles He has given us, "*to guide you*" and "**apply what I have given you and it will be enough.**" A "statement" of what He has given us in His words would then indeed be a "light thing". Which one of us can improve on His words or make any one of His words better in any way?

The undersigned believe these words. We ask, do you also mutually agree that they are His words? Do you mutually agree that He condescended to give these words to us? Do you agree that if we, "**apply what I have given you and it will be enough?**"

What Would He Teach Us?

Covenant page 8: "*You are not excused from writing a statement of principles that I have required at your hands. I forbade my servant David from participating, and again forbid him. But I require a statement of principles to be adopted by the mutual agreement of my people, for **if you cannot do so you will be unable to accomplish other works that I will require at your hands.** When you have an agreed statement of principles I require it to also be added as a guide and standard for my people to follow. Remember there are others who know nothing, as yet, of my work now underway, and therefore the*

guide and standard is to bless, benefit and inform them—so I command you to be wise in word and kind in deed as you write what I require of you.” (Answer & Covenant, p. 8)

I ask you people of the covenant - if we will be “unable to accomplish other future works that He will require at our hands,” in the case we are unable to provide a statement of principles to be adopted by the mutual agreement of my people; By that, is The Lord talking about our need to be able to cobble together a document that we can all agree upon? Is that what the Lord needs us to take away from this entire experience so that we will be able to do His future work effectively? Is being able to produce such a document by our common intellect and various connections with heaven the thing the Lord really needs, or wants, from His people right now in our development? Certainly this has been an exercise by which the Lord has tried to teach us to have patience, respect, and love, for one another. And for Him to point out weaknesses between and among us. And we absolutely must learn to love, and respect, and be kind, with one another.

But, what if the main test and the central intended learning in all of the past seven and a half months is primarily instead, for us people of the covenant to be able to hear, recognize, accept, understand, and live according to the great King’s own words? What if it took seven and a half months for us to learn: “How can you ever gain light and truth when you use one another as the final authority on truth, and ignore the light sent by the Most High God?” (Testimony of St. John, p. 9 paragraph 6)

Even after He has told us, “I have given to you...principles to guide you...reason together and apply WHAT I HAVE GIVEN YOU and it will be enough,” we have instead used one another as the final authority on truth. Mutual agreement, as we have continued to try to achieve it, may not be attainable by the means we have repeatedly attempted to use in the process to this point. Mutual agreement upon guiding principles He has already given us may already have been achieved through the covenant. But, there remains much to do to prepare a “statement”.

“Do you have faith in these things and receive the scriptures approved by the Lord as a standard to govern you in your daily walk in life?”

Now, we simply need to, “apply what He has given us,” put together a “statement” of those principles we choose to include from what He has given us, and present them respectfully to the Lord who gave them to us. It is time our disrespect for Him, and His words, comes to a quick end. We must listen, and heed, and obey, both now, and always, in His Kingdom.

Perhaps hearing, knowing, accepting, and living by every word that the Lord has condescended to give us, is the greatest of all the laws of a future kingdom where the King has no other objective than proving the loyalty of those who might be future citizens of His Kingdom forever?

“Zion necessarily means wanting and receiving commandments and revelations. It means setting aside our pride and covetousness to receive the fullness of the scriptures, in order for us to have any chance to succeed.” (Denver Snuffer, Things to Keep Us Awake at Night, p. 7, St. George)

“Zion will include people who are willing to receive revelations from God and obey commandments. God does this to bless His people. “Blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed my Gospel; for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the Earth and it shall bring forth in its strength. And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few and with revelations in their time – they that are faithful and diligent before me.” (D&C 59:3-4) In other words, if we are privileged to stand upon the land of Zion, God will speak to us. He speaks two things to benefit us. First, “commandments,” and those will be “not a few” because we need a great deal of direction if we are going to be His people. Second, “revelations in their time” because we are ignorant of many mysteries He expects us to one day comprehend. Therefore, one of the characteristics of these people will be their willingness, even alacrity, to receive commandments and revelations. (Denver Snuffer, Things to Keep Us Awake At Night, p. 7, St. George)

We the undersigned ask all covenant holders to prayerfully consider what the Lord has shown. Mutual agreement on a “statement” of the principles the Lord has said He has given us in very fact a light thing. We have already mutually agreed to them all in the covenant. *“Apply what I have given you and it will be enough.”* A “statement” of those, or some portion of those principles that will most benefit future generations and those who know little of the covenant and the kingdom, will be delightful and plain, a light thing. Something we have already all agreed to. In this way, we pray the Lord will draw nearer to us as a body because we have a window whereby we can draw together, closer to Him.

Summary Statement

1. The Lord has taught us, in His words, the true principles of His gospel. His personal ministry always revolves around teaching from scripture.
2. All of those who took the covenant have already mutually agreed to the principles embodied within the covenant itself. Therefore, we already have mutual agreement on a set of principles.
3. We propose that the *Guide & Standard* consist of principles included or referenced in the *Answer & Covenant*, and further explained and developed using the words of Christ as given through His current servant and other scriptures, which we have covenanted to use as a standard to govern ourselves.
4. Because we already have agreed upon these things, this will be the “light thing” the Lord has promised.
5. In addition to the individuals signed below who are currently working on this proposal, input is being gleaned from others in the movement, in order to create a scripturally-derived, God-sanctioned method in which individuals from among the body of covenant holders, will be chosen to write the *Guide & Standard* according to the parameters outlined above. More details will be provided as they become available.
6. If you would like to add your name to this statement or discuss it further, please contact Steve VanLeer at vanleer7@gmail.com.

Steve VanLeer

We, the undersigned, endorse and agree with what is presented above.

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