

233.1: Scripture Stories (D&C Gospel Doctrine Lesson 10, Updated)

[“This Is My Voice unto All”](#)

Manual Goal: To help class members learn to apply in their own lives the instructions the Lord has revealed to other individuals in the scriptures.

EGD Goal: To help class members appreciate scripture and those in them in responsible, nuanced ways.

Outline

- I. Framing
- II. Discussion of new resources
- III. Appreciating Emma
 - a. Discussing complex humans (we have a tendency to sort into heroes and villains when the reality is far more complex)
 - b. Ask class what they appreciate about Emma
- IV. Studying the Scriptures
- V. Sunday School goals (ask class what approaches to scripture they are going to use, what appreciation for Emma Smith they have gained, how they will apply these insights to their scripture reading)
- VI. Conclusion

[Lesson 10: “This Is My Voice unto All”](#)

- [“Thou Art an Elect Lady”](#): This article gives context for the revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 25. *Mixed. I wish this focused more directly on Emma herself.*
- [Relief Society minutes for March 17, 1842](#): In these original minutes of the first Relief Society meeting, Joseph Smith explains that Emma’s calling to lead the Relief Society fulfilled the 1830 revelation to her and that “not she alone, but others, may attain to the same blessings” mentioned in the revelation. *Valuable and well-organized resource. Important historical details about women in the early church and founding of the relief society.*
- [“Emma’s Susquehanna: Growing Up in the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale Home”](#): This article gives background information on Emma Smith’s early life. *This is my favorite resource in this episode. It focuses squarely on Emma’s own story and background. I really appreciated the window into Emma’s life that increased the poignancy of her sacrifices.*
- [“Sally Phelps’s Hymnal”](#): This article discusses the 1835 hymnal that was compiled according to instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 25. *Another good resource. Good image of the first hymnal, helpful emphasis on the importance of music and the history of our hymns.*

<http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Smith, Emma Hale>

Informative and somewhat nuanced.

The following year, Emma became the first woman to receive the Endowment, an ordinance that would later be administered to all worthy members in the temple then under construction in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith had earlier introduced these ordinances to some of his closest associates, and before his death as many as sixty-five men and women would receive them, with Emma officiating for the women.

After Joseph's martyrdom in June 1844, Emma unfortunately became a symbol of the dissension within the Church. Unable to condone continuation of the practice of plural marriage or the leadership of Brigham Young, who supported it, and ambivalent about the proper line of succession to her husband, Emma made her first priority after her husband's death the preservation of an inheritance for her five living children. Distinguishing Joseph's personal property from that of the Church defied easy solution, however, and involved Brigham Young and Emma Smith in a series of complex and often bitter legal entanglements. Brigham Young, as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and steward of the Church, claimed all that he felt rightfully belonged to its members. Emma Smith, as guardian of Joseph's children, just as vigorously claimed their share, to which she had contributed throughout her marriage to Joseph. Unable to reach an amicable solution and unwilling to accept plural marriage even in principle, Emma elected to remain in Nauvoo with her family while Brigham Young led the majority of Church members to the Rocky Mountains in 1846. On December 23, 1847, Emma Smith married Lewis Bidamon, a non-Mormon, further estranging her from the Church, to which she had once been known as the Elect Lady. Bidamon assisted Emma in raising her five children and remained her companion until her death in 1879 in Nauvoo.

In 1860, Emma's eldest son, Joseph Smith III, after four years of refusal, accepted the invitation to serve as prophet and first president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It was offered by a group of men who formerly had been members of the Church, many of whom had left to follow James J. Strang for a time. As a group they chose not to go west with the body of the Church. Emma, who had heretofore rejected connection with any of the splinter Mormon groups, was admitted into membership in 1860. In his acceptance speech, Joseph III firmly rejected polygamy as a practice of the new church, and Emma denied that her husband had participated in the practice.

Still devoted to her mother-in-law, Emma cared for her until Lucy died in 1856. The Prophet's mother had always admired Emma. "I have never seen a woman in my life, who would endure every species of fatigue and hardship, from month to month, and from year to year," she wrote, "with that unflinching courage, zeal, and patience, which she has ever done" (Smith, pp. 190-91).

Emma Smith Bidamon's final years in Nauvoo were family-focused and private. She shared the Nauvoo House, her final home, with relatives and friends and basked in the love and care of her children and grandchildren. She continued to live her life with genteel qualities, meeting adversity and difficulty with grace and equanimity. She was polite to the "Utah Mormons" who occasionally visited, but was firm in her decision to remain apart from them.

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/emma-hale-smith>

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1992/08/my-great-great-grandmother-emma-hale-smith?lang=eng>

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/09/the-elect-lady-emma-hale-smith?lang=eng>

Emma's first act of support for Joseph Smith was marrying him in spite of her father's firm opposition. Joseph, who had just turned twenty-one loved Emma Hale; her willingness to marry him under difficult circumstances affirmed her belief in his spiritual experiences. She was twenty-two, a school teacher, and her clear soprano voice was heard in the religious services that the Hale family attended in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Tall and slim, with dark hair

and dark eyes, and a clear olive complexion, Emma had a ready wit—a natural ease with other people. She became a valuable asset to Joseph as the events of his life demanded frequent social occasions...

Safe in Quincy, Illinois, Emma wrote of her ordeal to Joseph who was still confined in the Liberty Jail:

“Was it not for ... the direct interposition of divine mercy, I am very sure I never should have been able to have endured the scenes of suffering that I have passed through ... but I still live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind Heaven, that I should for your sake. ... No one but God, knows the reflections of my mind and the feelings of my heart when I left our house and home, and almost all of everything that we possessed excepting our little children, and took my journey out of the State of Missouri, leaving you shut up in that lonesome prison.

Scripture Study

I feel these scripture study steps hold up well: Literary, Personal, Theological, Historical, Critical

1. *Literary*: What do the words mean? Seems like an obvious step but hey, sometimes it is harder than others to figure out. How does the passage in question relate to those around it, its immediate literary context?
2. *Personal*: What personal meaning and value can you draw out of the passage you are reading?
3. *Theological*: What insights about theology/doctrine or the gospel does the passage contain?
4. *Historical*: What is the historical context of the passage? Are there any historical references, allusions, or presuppositions in the passage?
5. *Critical/Ethical*: This is the chance to engage with the scriptures, to “challenge and be challenged by.” Is there anything in the passage that makes you rethink your views, that

grants insights or shifts in perspective? Is there anything in the passage that is disturbing or problematic?