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Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 35 "Repent and Return unto the Lord" ([Helaman 13-16](#))

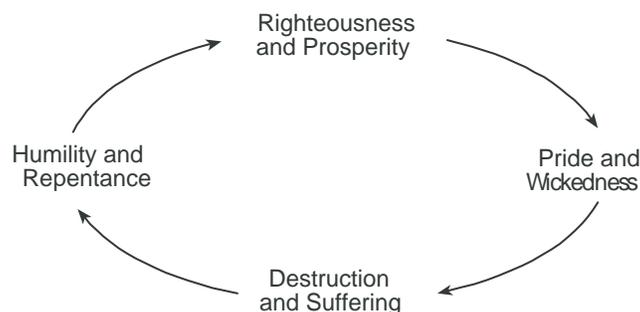
Today's Lesson: Lesson 34 "How Could You Have Forgotten Your God?" ([Helaman 6-12](#))

2, 3, 5, 8, 12

These numbers follow a particular sequence. What will be the next three numbers of the sequence?

In the Book of Mormon there is a pattern that is almost as predictable as this sequence. The pattern is repeated many times. By recognizing this pattern, we can avoid doing what led to the destruction of the Nephites.

This lesson is divided into four sections. Each section deals with one stage of the pride cycle.



1. The people are righteous and are blessed with peace and prosperity. ([Helaman 6:1-14](#))

Nephi and Lehi had been missionaries to the Lamanites and had helped many of them repent and be baptized. The Lamanites soon became more righteous than the Nephites.

A. What characteristics did the Lamanites have that helped them become more righteous than many of the Nephites? (See [Helaman 6:1](#).) How did the converted Lamanites try to help the Nephites? (See [Helaman 6:4-6](#).) What was the result? (See [Helaman 6:7-14](#).)

2. The Nephites become proud and wicked. Nephi calls them to repentance. ([Helaman 6:15-10:1](#))

After the Nephites became prosperous, many of them began to forget God and seek after riches and other worldly things.

- A. Why does prosperity often lead to wickedness? (See [Helaman 6:17](#); [Helaman 7:20–21](#).)
- B. Let's read [Helaman 6:21–24](#) and [Helaman 7:4–5](#) and identify the characteristics of the Gadianton robbers. Which of these elements exist today? How can we appropriately fight evil influences in our communities?
- C. Who was the source of the secret combinations? (See [Helaman 6:25–30](#).) What did the Nephites do as Satan “got great hold upon [their] hearts”? (See [Helaman 6:31](#).)

Let's read [Helaman 6:34–38](#), and look for contrasts between the Nephites and the Lamanites.

NEPHITES	LAMANITES
Dwindled in unbelief (verse 34).	Grew in the knowledge of God (verse 34).
Grew in wickedness and sin (verse 34).	Walked in truth and righteousness before God (verse 34).
Lost the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord (verse 35).	Received the Spirit (verse 36).
Built up and supported the Gadianton robbers (verse 38).	Preached the word of God to the Gadianton robbers (verse 37).

- D. Why did the Spirit “withdraw from the Nephites”? (See [Helaman 6:35](#).) Why did the Lord “pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites”? (See [Helaman 6:36](#).) What can this teach us about how we can receive the influence of the Holy Ghost?

When the Nephites continued in their wickedness, the Lord sent Helaman's son Nephi to call them to repentance. When Nephi saw the wickedness of the people, “his heart was swollen with sorrow” ([Helaman 7:6](#)). He knelt on his garden tower to pray. As he poured out his soul to God, a group of people gathered, curious to know why he mourned for the wickedness of the people ([Helaman 7:11](#)).

- E. How did the people react when Nephi rebuked them for their wickedness? (See [Helaman 8:1–10](#).) Why did so many remain unrepentant?
- F. How did the people react after Seantum confessed to murdering his brother, the chief judge? (See [Helaman 9:39–10:1](#).) After the people debated whether Nephi was a prophet or a god, they left him standing alone. What can keep us from listening to latter-day prophets?

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich. The learned may feel the prophet is only inspired when he agrees with them;

otherwise, the prophet is just giving his opinion—speaking as a man. The rich may feel they have no need to take counsel of a lowly prophet” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 138).



3. The Lord gives Nephi the sealing power. The unrepentant Nephites face warfare and famine. ([Helaman 10:2–19](#); [Helaman 11:1–6](#))

The Nephites forgot the Lord and continued in wickedness. Because of their wickedness, the people experienced devastating destruction and suffering.

- A. The Lord gave Nephi the sealing power, saying that “all things [would] be done according to [Nephi’s] word” ([Helaman 10:5–10](#)). Why did the Lord entrust Nephi with such great power? (See [Helaman 10:4–5](#).)
- B. What happened to the people after they rejected Nephi and disobeyed God? (See [Helaman 10:18–11:2](#).) What did Nephi pray for in order to help the people remember the Lord and repent? (See [Helaman 11:4](#).) Why did Nephi pray for famine instead of war? (See [Helaman 11:4](#).) How was Nephi’s prayer answered? (See [Helaman 11:5–6](#).)

4. The Nephites humble themselves and repent. ([Helaman 11:7–38](#); [Helaman 12](#))

The destruction and suffering of the famine influenced the Nephites to turn to the Lord for relief. They humbled themselves and repented.

- A. What can we learn from the Lord’s answer to Nephi’s prayer to end the famine? (See [Helaman 11:10–17](#).) What did the Lord require of the people before He would end the famine? (See [Helaman 11:14–15](#).)
- B. How were the people once again blessed for their faithfulness? (See [Helaman 11:20–21](#).)
- C. What was the first sign that the short-lived period of humility and righteousness was ending? (See [Helaman 11:22](#).) How did Nephi, Lehi, and their brethren put an end to this contention? (See [Helaman 11:23](#).) In what ways can teaching “true points of doctrine” help us put an end to contention?
- D. Following another period of wickedness and destruction by warfare, what helped the people repent and turn to the Lord? (See [Helaman 11:28–34](#).) As we are surrounded by similar conditions of wickedness, what can we do to always remember the Lord?
- E. Two years later, the Nephites “began again to forget the Lord their God” ([Helaman 11:36](#)). Why do you think people are so quick to forget the Lord? In what ways

might we be forgetting the Lord today?

- F. Mormon said that “the children of men ... are less than the dust of the earth” ([Helaman 12:7](#)). On what basis did he make this statement? (See [Helaman 12:1–6](#), [Helaman 12:8](#).)
- G. We have the freedom to obey or disobey God’s commandments but not to choose the consequences of our actions. What did Mormon say will be the fate of those who disobey? (See [Helaman 12:25–26](#).) What will be the fate of those who repent and obey the Lord? (See [Helaman 12:23–24](#), [Helaman 12:26](#).)
- H. Direct class members’ attention to the cycle on the chalkboard. How can people break away from this cycle? (See [Alma 62:48–51](#); [Helaman 12:23–24](#).)

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “Seek for the real things, not the artificial. Seek for the everlasting truths, not the passing whim. Seek for the eternal things of God, not for that which is here today and gone tomorrow. Look to God and live” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 494).

Let’s read the following statement by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, in which he spoke of the Book of Mormon:

“No other written testament so clearly illustrates the fact that when men and nations walk in the fear of God and in obedience to his commandments, they prosper and grow, but when they disregard him and his word, there comes a decay that, unless arrested by righteousness, leads to impotence and death” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 10; or [Ensign, Nov. 1979, 8](#)).



5. Avoiding the pride cycle

The Nephites continued to make decisions that led them from righteousness to wickedness, resulting in destruction and suffering.

- A. What can we learn from the Nephites to help us avoid making the same mistakes that they made?

6. “They have testified of the coming of Christ” ([Helaman 8:22](#))

Prophets testify of Jesus Christ, as do all things in heaven and on the earth. Let’s read [Helaman 8:11–24](#), and look for the many witnesses of the Savior in these verses.

- A. What did the brazen serpent symbolize? (See [Helaman 8:13–15](#); see also [Numbers 21:6–9](#); [John 3:14–16](#).) How can we increase our faith in Christ? How has your faith in Christ and His Atonement affected your life?