

Prayer & Revelation

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How does revelation come?	1
Ways.....	1
Visitations (heavenly messengers).....	1
Dreams, visions.....	1
Sudden enlightenment	2
Voice in our mind	2
Feelings	2
Most revelation comes in "common dress" and is constant.....	2
How do you judge if a feeling is of the Spirit?.....	3
Responsibility in Revelation.....	3
Not within the doctrine	3
At odds with the Prophet or outside of the commandments.....	3
Moroni 7.....	4
We are expected to use our own experience & Judgment.....	4
How does the Spirit feel?.....	5
How does the Spirit not feel?	5
Sometimes it seems hard to know	5
Sometimes things don't turn out like we expect	5
When Revelation doesn't come.....	5
Must understand our prayers are heard.....	5
Responsibility in Revelation.....	6
When we seek revelation but it doesn't come.....	6
Time	6
Sometimes we are left to our own judgment	7
Sometimes we haven't done our part.....	7
Sometimes no answer for things we think are important.....	8
Sometimes we pray for that which we shouldn't or not expedient for us	8
Sometimes we pray when we really don't want the answer – we want our answer	8
Trivial matters.....	8

How does revelation come?

Ways

Visitations (heavenly messengers)

- Angel Moroni's visitation to Joseph Smith

Dreams, visions

- Lehi's vision of the tree of life

Sudden enlightenment

- Oliver Cowdery
 - D&C 6:14-15
 - "Behold thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind"

Voice in our mind

- Enos 1:10
 - "And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again"
 - President Marion G Romney (speaking of Enos)
 - "This is a very common means of revelation. It comes into one's mind in words and sentences. With this medium of revelation I am personally well acquainted." (April 1964 Conference Report, pg 124)

Feelings

- Boyd K Packer
 - "We do not have the words (even the scriptures do not have words) which perfectly describe the Spirit. The scriptures usually use the word voice, which does not exactly fit. These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears.... It is a voice that one feels more than one hears...." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
- 1 Nephi 17:45
 - "... he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past *feeling*, that ye could not *feel* his words"

Most revelation comes in "common dress" and is constant

- Boyd K Packer
 - "I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
- President Spencer W Kimball
 - "Some have no ear for spiritual messages...when they come in common dress...Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the *constant* flow of revealed communication "(Teachings of Spencer W Kimball, p. 457)

- My personal observation:
 - I have noticed that revelation is there if I but look
 - Feelings are the "common dress" method of revelation
 - President Dalton when I was made Bishop – "trust your feelings"
 - We need to learn how to recognize revelation

How do you judge if a feeling is of the Spirit?

- 3 easy tests to eliminate if not from God
- "plain as dark and light" way to judge of from God or Satan
- Then there are harder situations
 - Choices between multiple "good"
 - Choices where there is no clear good or evil
 - Choices where we are expected to use our own judgment

Responsibility in Revelation

- If outside of my circle of responsibility then it is clearly not revelation from God
 - D&C 42:11
 - Bishop Baird will not receive revelation for the Murray Hill Ward

Not within the doctrine

- If at odds with established church doctrine then it is not from God
 - Bishop Baird will not receive revelation to change tithing for Cooper Mt Ward members to mean 10% of what's left in your bank account at the end of the month

At odds with the Prophet or outside of the commandments

- If it is at odds with the guidance of the Prophet is not from God
 - Bishop Baird is not going to receive revelation that it is OK to have tattoos or to take illegal drugs
 - There are no "exception clauses" for teenagers
- If it is against a commandment of God then not from God
 - Bishop Baird is not going to receive revelation that I don't need to pay tithing or that the law of chastity doesn't matter.
 - Rarely if ever will we be asked to step out of bounds
 - Nephi & Laban example

Moroni 7

- Moroni 7:12-18

We are expected to use our own experience & Judgment

- Trivial matters – Use our own experience & judgment
 - Dallin H Oaks

" Similarly, the Spirit of the Lord is not likely to give us revelations on matters that are trivial. I once heard a young woman in testimony meeting praise the spirituality of her husband, indicating that he submitted every question to the Lord. She told how he accompanied her shopping and would not even choose between different brands of canned vegetables without making his selection a matter of prayer. That strikes me as improper. I believe the Lord expects us to use the intelligence and experience He has given us to make these kinds of choices." ("Revelation," New Era, Sept. 1982, 38)

 - Many choices we know what to choose
 - Our feelings will let us know
- If it is important the Spirit will guide us
 - We have the gift of the Holy Ghost
 - Our feelings will let us know
 - Boyd K Packer

"We should go about our life in an ordinary, workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.... [These] are valuable protection. Should we stand in need of revealed instruction to alter our course, it will be waiting along the way as we arrive at the point of need." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)
 - Dallin H Oaks

"If the choice is important for reasons unknown to us, such as the ... choice between two cans of vegetables when one contains a hidden poison, the Lord will intervene and give us guidance. Where a choice will make a real difference in our lives—obvious or not—and where we are living in tune with the Spirit and seeking its guidance, we can be sure that we will receive the guidance we need to attain our goal. The Lord will not leave us unassisted when a choice is important to our eternal welfare." ("Revelation," New Era, Sept. 1982, 38)
- **Summary:** We should make choices using our judgment and experience but should be constantly be "listening" for the Spirit to give us guidance

How does the Spirit feel?

- Words to describe "right"
 - Centered
 - Settled (President Dalton)
 - Peace, calm
 - Harmony
 - Resonates with my spirit

How does the Spirit not feel?

- Words to describe "wrong"
 - stirred up (what was Satan always doing to the Lamanites)
 - unsettled
 - anger, strife
 - sensual
 - Off key
 - Dissonance with my spirit

Sometimes it seems hard to know

- How do I separate the natural feelings of anxiety from "stirred up"?
 - Example of buying a house
 - "Trying on shoes test"

Sometimes things don't turn out like we expect

- What about when I feel that I've followed the Spirit and things do not turn out the way I thought?
 - Sometimes we begin to doubt ourselves
 - D&C 6:22 – 23
 - "... Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?.."

When Revelation doesn't come

Must understand our prayers are heard

- Testify
- Why then don't we always receive revelation?

Responsibility in Revelation

- Prophet for Church
- Bishop for the Ward
- Parents for family
- You for you
- Claims outside the proper area
 - Another bishop for Cooper Mt Ward
 - For Brother Barnes family
 - Young Man to Young Women – “You are to be my wife”
- Does the Bishop receive all inspiration for the Ward?
 - Ward council
- Does the Father receive all inspiration for the Family

When we seek revelation but it doesn't come

Time

- Answers come in the Lord's time and in the Lord's way.
 - Not at our time and our way
 - You cannot force the Spirit
 - Boyd K Packer:
”Remember the Lord reveals His will to us in His own due time. We should not put time constraints or demands on the Lord. I feel it would be unwise to tell the Lord "I need an answer by Thursday or I will assume the answer is no."
”It is not wise to wrestle with the revelations with such insistence as to demand immediate answers or blessings to your liking. You cannot force spiritual things. You can no more force the Spirit to respond than you can force a bean to sprout, or an egg to hatch before it's time. You can create a climate to foster growth, nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel: you must await the growth. Do not be impatient to gain great spiritual knowledge. Let it grow, help it grow, but do not force it or you will open the way to be misled.” (Candle of the Lord, Taken from a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 1982)

Sometimes we are left to our own judgment

- Why do you think??
- Purpose is to obtain experience & faith
- God will not direct us in every act, even every important act
- Example as Parent
- Boyd K Packer:
“We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told to do that already in the scriptures; nor should we expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence which we have already received—only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.” (Candle of the Lord, Taken from a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 1982)
- Brother of Jared
 - Built barges – no direct instruction (Ether 2:16)
 - “Touch these stones, O Lord”
 - Bruce R McConkie:
“There’s a fine balance between agency and inspiration. We’re expected to do everything in our power and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we’ve reached the right conclusion; and sometimes, happily, in addition, we get added truths and knowledge that we hadn’t even supposed.” (Bruce R. McConkie, “Agency or Inspiration?” *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38)

Sometimes we haven’t done our part

- Oliver Cowdry “you have not understood”
 - D&C 9:7-9
 - Bruce R McConkie:
”Now, seemingly, that’s all he’d been instructed to do, to ask in faith; but implicit in asking in faith is the precedent requirement that we do everything in our power to accomplish the goal that we seek. We use the agency with which we have been endowed. We use every faculty and capacity and ability that we possess to bring about the eventuality that may be involved. This is translating the Book of Mormon, it’s choosing a wife, it’s choosing employment, it’s doing any one of ten thousand important things that arise in our lives.”(Bruce R. McConkie, “Agency or Inspiration?” *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38)

Sometimes no answer for things we think are important

- Prayers *are* heard
- Then WHY if we are in tune etc??
- One reason or other we should make without guidance of revelation
 1. Not necessarily a right and a wrong for every question
 - some only have 2 wrong or 2 right
 2. Choosing between two alternatives that are equally bad
 - “Which is the best way to get revenge?”
 - “Which R rated movie should I go see?”
 3. Choosing between two alternatives that are equally good
 - Two equal acceptable things
 - Dallin H Oaks:
”No answer is likely to come to a person who seeks guidance in choosing between two alternatives that are equally acceptable to the Lord. Thus, there are times when we can serve productively in two different fields of labor. Either answer is right.” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Revelation,” *New Era*, Sept. 1982, 38)
 4. Seeking guidance on a choice you will never have to make
 - A 3rd alternative may be made clear tomorrow
 - Nancy – Trying to choose a RS counselor
 - 1 month before I was called as Bishop
 - Couldn’t get an answer

Sometimes we pray for that which we shouldn’t or not expedient for us

- Pray for \$1M

Sometimes we pray when we really don’t want the answer – we want our answer

- “That’s not the answer I want - you don’t understand”

Trivial matters

- Dallin H Oaks:
”I once heard a young woman in testimony meeting praise the spirituality of her husband, indicating that he submitted every question to the Lord. She told how he accompanied her shopping and would not even choose between different brands of canned vegetables without making his selection

a matter of prayer.” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Revelation,” *New Era*, Sept. 1982, 38)

- Dallin H Oaks:
”That strikes me as improper. I believe the Lord expects us to use the intelligence and experience He has given us to make these kinds of choices.” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Revelation,” *New Era*, Sept. 1982, 38)
- What is trivial?
 - If it appears trivial we should proceed on our judgment
 - If choice is important for reasons unknown to us, Lord will intervene
 - Poison in vegetables
 - Need to be in tune

If in Tune Lord will guide us (Testify)