

Confidence in Personal Revelation Outline – Mike Baird

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Introduction

- The topic is "Confidence in Personal Revelation" and applies to
 - Callings
 - Parents, Spouses
 - Personal choices
- Expect to learn from each other's experiences
- Relate an experience that provides a framework for what I would like us to discuss

Paralyzing the bishopric

- First bishopric meeting I looked around and realized 2 things:
 - I'm the oldest person here! I was used to having someone older and more experienced to defer to
 - Everybody was looking at me!
- Over the next couple of meetings I
 - Was afraid to make a mistake – stakes seemed enormous, "we are effecting people's lives"
 - I was paralyzed and couldn't make any decisions
 - Once I had made a decision I worried – "what if that was the wrong decision"
- Slowly but inevitably the business of the bishopric ground to a halt – I had paralyzed the bishopric because of my lack of trust

Anybody else been paralyzed in trying to make a decision?

- Calling?
 - Personal decisions?
 - With children?
- Three "Trust" lessons to be learned from this experience for us to discuss

#1 "Trust your feelings"

- President Steven Dalton
"Trust your feelings bishop, almost all revelations will come to you as feelings"
(Personal conversation, Nov 2002)

Why would he say that?

- 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"
- 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.... I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound." (A Watchman on the Tower , pg 279)

What can get in the way of trusting our feelings?

- Fear – we are afraid to make mistakes
- Uncertainty – is this a feeling of the Spirit?
- Doubt – Will I really receive guidance? Does the Lord really care about this?
- Inexperience

Using our own experience & Judgment

Do we receive revelation for every single thing?

- 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
 - 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)
 - Bruce R McConkie
"You go to work, and you use the agency and power and ability that God has given you. You use every faculty, you get all the judgment that you can centered on the problem, you make up your own mind, and then, to be sure that you don't err, you counsel with the Lord. You talk it over. You say, "This is what I think; what do you think?" And if you get the calm, sweet surety that comes only from the Holy Spirit, you know you've reached the right conclusion; but if there's anxiety and uncertainty in your heart, then you'd better start over, because the Lord's hand is not in it, and you're not getting the ratifying seal that, as a member of the Church who has the gift of the Holy Ghost, you are entitled to receive." (Bruce R. McConkie, "Agency or Inspiration?" New Era, Jan. 1975, 38)

If we don't receive revelation for everything how do we know what we are doing is right?

Form of Guidance - Confirmation

- A form of guidance we receive from the Spirit is really that of confirmation when we deal with matters we are experienced with
 - In these cases we move forward based on our experience, knowledge and understanding
 - We will feel settled in the Spirit in what we do
 - The Spirit will let us know if it should do otherwise and if so we will feel uncomfortable and not settled
 - President Steven D Dalton
"Sometimes, a set of facts will be presented to you, and based upon your experience, as you mention, you feel a confirmation as you move forward with what your experiences have taught. It seems reasonable, it feels right, and it IS right.
AND THEN, a set of facts present themselves, and they are exactly the same as the first. However, doing what seemed so reasonable and right as in the first instance, now seems WRONG. Logically and reasonably, the same fact situation should result in the same course of action, but the spirit says differently, and the spirit is always right." (Personal Correspondence 11/21/2008)

#2 Trust that the Lord will uphold us

- In paralyzing the bishopric I was not trusting the Lord
 - I was called and set apart, given priesthood Keys
 - I was on his errand
 - Similar to the message in the book "Believing Christ"
 - We believe *in* Christ vs We believe *what* He says

Anybody else felt this way before in a calling or as a parent?

- We need to learn to trust that we will receive promised guidance
 - In callings
 - As parents
- D&C 100:5-8
 - "5)Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men;
 - 6)For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment,

what ye shall say.

7) But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things.

8) And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say."

- "Learn to trust in the Lord that he will uphold us"
 - As a parent
 - In our callings

#3 Trust our decisions

- Paralyzing the bishopric
 - Once a decision was made I worried it was wrong and begin second guessing

Anybody here ever been in that situation?

What causes us to second guess?

- Often we second guess because things did not turn out as we expect
 - In particular it may cause us to second guess huge decisions
 - We waste enormous amounts of energy and time worrying about things that are in the past that we can not change
- Sometimes events take an unexpected turn
 - Things don't turn out the way we expected
 - We forget the words of the scripture: "All things shall work together for your good (D&C 90:24)

How do we learn to trust decisions and not second guess and cause ourselves and other needless anguish?

- D&C 6:22-23

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.
Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?"

- Michael Baird:
"If it was right then – it is *still* right then"

Your confidence shall wax strong

- D&C 6:36
"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not"
- D&C 121:41-42, 45-46
"...then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.
The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion..."
 - As we exercise these principles we will have confidence in making decisions by the Spirit

Extra Quotes

You can not 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)