

Personal Revelation
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Answers to prayers.....	1
Assumptions.....	2
How does revelation come?	2
Ways.....	2
Visitations (heavenly messengers).....	2
Dreams, visions.....	2
Sudden enlightenment	2
Voice in our mind	2
Feelings	3
Recognize when we "hear" it	3
Most revelation comes in "common dress" and is constant.....	3
How do you judge if a feeling is of the Spirit?.....	4
Responsibility in Revelation.....	4
Not within the doctrine	4
At odds with the Prophet or outside of the commandments.....	4
Good from God – Evil from Satan.....	5
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
"Did not our heart burn within us..."	6
Heart understands more than our mind.....	6
When we feel like answers don't come	6
Timing.....	6
We are expected to use our own experience & Judgment.....	7
Sometimes we haven't done our part	8
Sometimes no answers for things we think are important.....	9

Answers to prayers

- Prayers are always heard
- Prayers are always answered
- If always heard and answered then
 - Why don't I always just know what to do?
 - Why don't I always get what I want?
 - Why isn't it always clear to me what the answer is?
 - How can I know an answer has come?
- Really asking is how does revelation come and how can I recognize it
- Are there things I can do to receive revelation?

Assumptions

- I'm going to assume two things:
 - Your prayers are sincere
 - You are praying with faith

How does revelation come?

Ways

Visitations (heavenly messengers)

- Angels

Dreams, visions

- Joseph interprets pharaoh's dreams
- Cornelius vision to go see Peter
- Lehi's vision of the tree of life

Sudden enlightenment

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

Voice in our mind

- Experience after ward council
- Experience of sacrament meeting on Temples
- 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

- This I would like to focus on
- 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"

Recognize when we "hear" it

- All revelation doesn't come directly to us
 - Sometimes it may be through someone else
 - Sometimes it is in the scriptures
 - Our responsibility is to recognize it when we "hear" it
 - Usually as a feeling
 - Usually not a "sign"

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
 - You will not receive a revelation for my family
 - 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 one of the ten commandments

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 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 keep the Sabbath day holy
 - Rarely if ever will we be asked to step out of bounds
 - Nephi & Laban example

Good from God – Evil from Satan

- Moroni 7:12-16

How does the Spirit feel?

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

How does the Spirit not feel?

- Words to describe "wrong"
 - Dark
 - 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 letting someone go from work
 - "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?
 - D&C 90:24
"Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good"
 - Sometimes we begin to doubt ourselves

- D&C 6:22 – 23

"... Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?.."

"Did not our heart burn within us..."

- Luke 24:32

"And they said one to another, *Did not our heart burn within us*, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

- As Christ expounded the scriptures they were touched by the Holy Ghost

- Acts 2:37

"Now when they heard this, *they were pricked in their heart*, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

- Their (non-members) hearts were touched by the Holy Ghost as they listened to an Apostle

- Enos 1:3-4

"Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, *sunk deep into my heart.*

And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens."

- His (a "member") heart was touched by the Holy Ghost as he contemplated the words of his father (Jacob, a prophet)

Heart understands more than our mind

Harold B. Lee:

"When we understand more than we know with our minds, when we understand with our hearts, then we know that the Spirit of the Lord is working upon us. "

(Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye in Holy Places, pg 92])

When we feel like answers don't come

Timing

- 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)

- My experience is that we need to trust and not force things and they will come
 - Many experiences as bishop when it seems like things need to be done now but they just don't seem to come together. Later at the right time everything falls into place.
- Alma 32 – the seed

We are expected to use our own experience & Judgment

- 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)
- 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)
- 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." (Agency or Inspiration?" New Era, Jan. 1975, 38)

Sometimes we haven't done our part

- D&C 9:7-8
 " Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right"

- 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." (Agency or Inspiration?" *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38)
- 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." (Agency or Inspiration?" *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38)

Sometimes no answers for things we think are important

- Sometimes we pray when we really don't want the answer – we want our answer
- Sometimes we pray for that which we shouldn't
- Not necessarily a right and a wrong for every question
- Choosing between two alternatives that are equally bad
- Choosing between two alternatives that are equally good
- Seeking guidance on a choice you will never have to make
- Trivial matters