

Listening to & Judging by the Spirit

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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 if 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

1 - Responsibility in Revelation

- If outside of my circle of responsibility then it is clearly not revelation from God
 - D&C 42:11
 - EQP will not receive revelation for another Ward's Elder's quorum
 - You will not receive revelation for another family

2 - Not within the doctrine

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

3 - 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
 - The bishop 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
 - The bishop 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
 - We have leaders that we can consult with if we ever feel that we are receiving guidance to step out of bounds

Moroni 7

- Moroni 7:12-18
 - v12
 - Alma 5:40 (Amulek) – Whatsoever is good...
 - v13
 - 2 Nephi 33:10 (Nephi) – Words of Christ ... teach all men that they should do good
 - v14
 - Isaiah 5:20 (2 Nephi 15:20) Woe unto those....
 - v15
 - v16
 - D&C 84:45-47 Spirit enlighteneth every man
 - D&D 88:7-13 Light of Christ
 - As members we have the gift of the Holy Ghost – a higher endowment of the Spirit
 - v17
 - v18
 - Alma 41:12-15 restoration
- Examples
 - Henry B Eyring

"The warning not to judge what is of God to be evil nor what is from the devil to be good is a helpful caution to those of us who would help the young learn to choose the right. They will see some choices as good, or at least neutral, which we may see at first as evil. Before we begin to force a choice with what authority we may have, it will be wise to apply the test found in Moroni ourselves. More than once I have been restrained and more than once I have been energized to action by those practical rules. What I at first thought was evil became clear to me as being neutral. And what I had thought was neutral was revealed to me as inviting to do evil. And when the teenager knew I would apply the test myself in humility, it was more likely that they would try the test for themselves." (Henry B. Eyring, "A Life Founded in Light and Truth," Ensign, July 2001, 6)

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
 - Elder Holland's story of the fork in the road
 - D&C 6:22 – 23
 - "... Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?.."

Some things to look for to know the Spirit is with you

- John H Groberg

"But how do you know when the Spirit is prompting you? Here is a short list, modified from a Seminary outline, of some ways to know. Of course, all the items won't apply all the time. We each have our ups and downs. But as general guides, you will find the list helpful." ("Investing for Eternity," Ensign, Apr. 1986, 68)

When You Have the Spirit	When You Do Not Have the Spirit
1. You generally feel happy and calm.	You may feel unhappy, depressed, confused, frustrated most of the time.
2. You feel full of light.	You may feel heavy, full of darkness.
3. Your mind is clear.	Your mind may be muddled.
4. You feel love for the Lord and others.	You may feel empty, hollow, cold inside.
5. You feel generous.	You may feel selfish, possessive, self-centered.
6. Nobody can offend you.	You may be offended easily.
7. You are very forgiving and kind.	You may usually be on the defensive.
8. You feel confident in what you do.	You may become discouraged easily.
9. You don't mind others seeing what you are doing.	You may become secretive, evasive.
10. You want to be with those who love you—especially family members.	You may want to be alone most of the time. You avoid others—especially family members.
11. You are glad when others succeed.	You may be envious almost constantly of what others do and what they have.
12. You want to help others be happy, even those opposed to you.	You may want to get even and show others up.
13. You willingly perform Church work.	You may feel hesitant, unworthy, and unwilling to perform Church ordinances.
14. You feel like praying and reading the scriptures.	You may not want to pray or read scriptures.
15. You wish you could keep all the Lord's commandments.	You may find the commandments of God and rules of the family bothersome, restricting, or senseless.
16. You usually control your appetites and emotions. You are calm and control your speech; you feel no anger.	You may be a slave to your appetites. You give way to strong anger and outspokenness.
17. You generally feel a deep desire to help others—usually in a way no one else will know about.	When you help others, your main desire may be to have your actions noticed.
18. You speak and think good about others.	You are critical of others, especially family members and those in authority.
19. You feel sorrow when others have problems and sincerely desire to help them.	You may often question others' motives and secretly delight in others' problems.
20. You realize that your thoughts and your actions are open to God.	You may feel that what you do and think is only your business and no one else knows or cares.

References

- Elect may be deceived
 - Matt 24:24
 - D&C 46:7
- Revelation comes to those who are properly ordained and called and have stewardship
 - D&C 42:11
- Bruce R McConkie

"The light of Christ is neither the Holy Ghost nor the gift of the Holy Ghost; but that member of the Godhead, because he along with the Father and the Son is God, uses the light of Christ for his purposes. Thus spiritual gifts, the gifts of God meaning faith, miracles, prophecy, and all the rest -- come from God by the power of the Holy Ghost. Men prophesy, for instance, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And yet Moroni says: "All these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 10:17), meaning that the Holy Ghost uses the light of Christ to transmit his gifts. But the Spirit of Christ, by which the Holy Ghost operates, is no more the Holy Ghost himself than the light and heat of the sun are the sun itself." (New Witness for Articles of Faith pg. 258)
- Henry B Eyring

" Keeping some commandments has greater power to build your foundation on truth and light. You could think of those as enabling commandments, because they build your power to keep other commandments. Whatever invites the Holy Ghost to be your companion will bring you greater wisdom and greater ability to obey God. For instance, you are promised that if you always remember the Savior, you will have His Spirit to be with you. You are commanded to pray that you may have the Holy Ghost. You are commanded to pray that you might not be overcome by temptation and so be clean and worthy of the Holy Spirit. You are commanded to study the word of God that you may have His Spirit. I would not set one commandment above another, but I might put some earlier in my efforts if they carry with them the promise of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. The Comforter will lead us to truth and light and will help us obey our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son. We will come to love Them and those around us as we serve Them, and thus we will keep the great commandments." (A Life Founded in Light and Truth," Ensign, July 2001, 6)