

The Holy Ghost

Revelation and Inspiration

Outline and compilation by Mike Baird

- Speak as member of the High Council today.
- Stake theme is 1 Nephi 4:6 where he is led by the Spirit - Holy Ghost for 2000
- I will focus today on the Holy Ghost as the source of our Personal Revelation and inspiration.
- My intent is to answer the following questions:
 - What is the principal and nature of revelation
 - What do we need to do to receive revelation and inspiration ie how to seek revelation/inspiration?
 - How does it come?
 - How do I recognize it, that is how do I discern revelation
- While I realize many of us here know somewhat or quite a bit about revelation, my prayer in doing so is that some portion of what I say today may help every one of us.

Dual Beings – dual learning

- In our understanding of revelation we must first remember there are two parts to our nature – physical and spiritual.
- Physical
 - We can learn things through many different ways. We learn through experiences, our senses and by reason. These ways are using our physical side. This is good and we should learn. Through our intellect we learn most of what we know about the world in which we live. The problem is when we learn this way there is the possibility we may be deceived or led astray.
 - Digital Camera
 - Show picture and discuss.
 - Boyd K Packer

“If you learn by reason only you will never understand the Spirit and how it works, regardless of how much you learn about other thing.” “Your Spirit learns in a different way than does your intellect.” (Oct 94 conference. Ensign, Nov 94, pg 59)

- Spiritual
 - The Apostle Paul said: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (1 Cor 2: 4,5,11)
 - Joseph Fielding Smith:
 - “The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings. Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fiber and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten.” (Doctrines of Salvation Vol. 1, pg. 47-8)
 - Through the process of **Spirit speaking to spirit** there is never any deception or uncertainty. “by the power of the Holy Ghost [we] may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).
 - The spirit of revelation turns the key which opens the mind and spirit of man to an understanding of the gospel.
 - So if I want to figure out which photo has been doctored I have to gather the knowledge of man.
 - Spiritual prepare with spiritual

Preparation for Revelation

- Receiving personal revelation is not a passive process. As we seek such revelations, we must prepare for these sacred experiences.
 - President Spencer W. Kimball “God reveals himself to [people] who are prepared for such manifestations.” (Apr 64 conference. Ensign, May 64, pg 97)
- So, how do I prepare?
 - To properly prepare to receive personal revelation, we must repent, ask through prayer, be obedient, search the scriptures, fast, think pure thoughts, and develop a spirit of reverence. Let me talk about these.
 - First note that revelation is not just a plea when we need help. We do need to prepare.

Repent and obey - worthiness

- We need to clear our receptors through repentance and obedience to receive revelation.
 - Boyd K Packer: “The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer.” (Reverence Invites Revelation, Ensign, Nov 91)
 - Desert Storm and Communications
 - Satan tries to jam our communicatiions
- Mormon: “And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost” (Moro. 8:26).
- Because “the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Hel. 4:24), we must be obedient and pure if we are to receive the personal revelation promised us.
- “To get this revelation,” explained Brigham Young, “it is necessary that the people live so that their spirits are as pure and clean as a piece of blank paper that lies on the desk ... ready to receive any mark the writer may make upon it.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 41.)

-- Skip if needed for time --

- Joseph Fielding Smith:
“We have a great many members of this Church who have never received a manifestation through the Holy Ghost. Why? Because they have not made their lives conform to the truth. And the Holy Ghost will not dwell in unclean tabernacles or disobedient tabernacles. The Holy Ghost will not dwell with that person who is unwilling to obey and keep the commandments of God or who violates those commandments willfully. In such a soul the spirit of the Holy Ghost cannot enter. That great gift comes to us only through humility and faith and obedience.” “When we are disobedient, when our minds are set upon the things of this world rather than on the things of the kingdom of God, we cannot have the manifestations of the Holy Ghost.” (We Are Here to be Tried, Tested, Proved, BYU Speeches of the Year [Provo, 25 Oct 1961], pg. 4)
- We can study about the Holy Ghost and the mechanics of personal revelation, but until we conform my life to eternal truths and thus become worthy of the presence of the Holy Spirit, we cannot comprehend the peace of that sacred guidance and companionship.

Prayer

- Boyd K Packer

“Inspiration does not – perhaps cannot- flow *unless* you ask for it, or someone asks for you.” “Prayer is so essential a part of revelation that without it the veil may remain closed to you.” (Oct 94 conference. Ensign, Nov 94, pg 59)

- Prayer is our personal key to heaven.
- ***---**Relate:** My testimony based on revelation received by prayer about the Book of Mormon.

Study

- Prayer is not all. Remember the revelation the Lord gave through the Prophet Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery, who thought that revelation would flow without any effort. The Lord said:

7) 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.

8) 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. (D&C 9:7-8)

- We need to study the words of the prophets in scriptures, conference talks etc. as well as to study out our problems and such to receive revelation.
- ***---**Relate:** My testimony based on study about the Book of Mormon too

Fast

- At times we need to fast so that we can receive personal revelation. Alma had a great desire to know the truthfulness of the doctrines. To know with a surety, he prepared himself through fasting and prayer:
 - “Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have *fasted* and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me” (Alma 5:46)

Think pure thoughts

- If we are to have the channels of communication open, we must clear our minds of worldly and impure thoughts.
- We cannot have our minds cluttered with this and that of the world
- We must follow this counsel of the Savior:

“Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; 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” (D&C 121:45)

Reverence

- Boyd K Packer: Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings. Such words as quiet, still, peaceable, Comforter abound in the scriptures: “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46:10) And the promise, “You shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom.” (D&C 36:2)
- *****---Relate:** “Learn to be Still” and Shellie
- Boyd K Packer: “Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit,” and “Reverence invites revelation.” (Reverence Invites Revelation, Ensign, Nov 91)
- Irreverence not only shows disrespect to Deity but also makes it hard for the Spirit to teach us the things we need to know.
 - The Savior said: “And your minds in times past have been darkened because ... you have treated lightly the things you have received” (D&C 84:54). He counseled, “Trifle not with sacred things” (D&C 6:12).
- The process of receiving revelation is sacred. It is a divine discussion with Deity and must be revered if it is to work.

Summarize

To properly prepare to receive personal revelation, we must repent, be obedient, ask through prayer, search the scriptures, fast, think pure thoughts, and develop a spirit of reverence.

Receiving Revelation

- If we do these things, how is it we receive revelation? Here is a list of some of the ways:
 - Spoken Word
 - Visitation of Angels
 - Dreams
 - Visions
 - Impelling impulses
 - Scriptures
 - Flashes of ideas
 - enlightenment
 - Still small voice - thoughts and words
- Of these methods some are more common than others.
- An important point to remember in looking for revelation is in the economy of heaven the Lord never uses a floodlight when a flashlight is sufficient—and so it is in receiving personal revelation.
- More often we hear the still small voice than the thunder of voice.
- It is interesting to note that this principle is true even with revelation that comes to prophets.
 - President Kimball once said: “The great volume of revelation ... come[s] to today’s prophets in the less spectacular way—that of deep impressions, but without spectacle or glamour or dramatic events accompanying.” (Instructor, Aug. 1960, pg 257)
- We should be satisfied with and cultivate the less spectacular then.
- I will discuss some methods that I personally have more experience with and I believe are more likely to be your common to the rest of us here.

Enlightenment

- Enlightenment comes as an increase in light, knowledge, and understanding. The Savior instructed Oliver Cowdery, “I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth” (D&C 6:15).
- Joseph Smith

A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, ... And thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Pg 151)
- ***---**Relate:** Stake YM/YW meeting and medallion (stroke of idea)
- ***---**Relate:** Preparation for this talk (thoughts)
- ***---**Relate:** Unfolding of scriptures or principal - Sanctification

Scriptures

- Many times the guidance we need will come right out of the scriptures. Nephi exhorted us to “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.” (2 Ne. 32:3.)

- If we are searching the scriptures, we have the assurance that the Holy Ghost will recall pertinent passages to our minds at the very moment we need them. (See John 14:26; D&C 84:85.)

Still Small Voice – feeling The Spirit

- The Holy Ghost speaks with a voice that we feel more than we hear.
- It is described as a “still small voice” (D&C 85:6)
- 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.” (Watchman on the tower, Pg 279)
- Notice the words Nephi uses in speaking to his older brothers:

Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past *feeling*, that ye could not *feel* his words; (1 Nephi 17:45)
- We must beware however, that “there are many spirits which are false spirits” (D&C 50:2-3)
- As long as we live, in one way or the other, Satan will try to lead us astray.
- Joseph Smith

“nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Pg 205)
- How do we tell? How do we know we feel the Holy Ghost? Most of us I think understand the “burning in our bosom feeling” But what about thoughts, promptings etc. You may have wondered – Is this revelation? Is this the Spirit? Is it just me? Is it Satan?
- This is a difficult thing to express.
- *****---Relate having “felt” the voice:**
 - *****---Relate:** Learned to hear by feeling as a Missionary

Testing spiritual promptings

Moroni chapter 7 tells us how to test spiritual promptings.

- Recommend study if this is something you wonder about.
- To summarize:
 - If we receive a prompting to do something that makes us feel uneasy, something we know in our mind to be wrong and contrary to the principles of righteousness we should not respond to it.
 - That which “entices to do good”, that gives us a harmony and peace, is in accordance to principles of righteousness, that prompting we should respond to.
- In this like many things we learn by trial and error.
 - Boyd K Packer
" As an Apostle I listen now to the same inspiration, coming from the same source, in the same way, I listened to as a boy. The signal is much clearer now." (Oct 94 conference. Ensign, Nov 94, pg 59)
 - What changed? It was President Packer that changed not the signal. We too must learn and change.

--Skip if time needed --

- Another issue related to discerning revelation is that revelation comes in an orderly way in the Church.
 - We are entitled to personal revelation. However, unless we are set apart to some presiding office, we will not receive revelations concerning what others should do.
 - Revelation in the Church comes to those who have been properly called, sustained, ordained, or set apart. Bishop Dalton for instance, will not receive any revelation concerning Beacon Hill ward, because that is out of his jurisdiction.
 - Occasionally someone will claim to have received authority to teach and bless without having been called and set apart. Less than a year after the Church was organized (February 1831), a revelation was received which the Prophet specified “embrac[ed] the law of the church.” It contains this verse:
“It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church”. (D&C 42:11)
 - That is why the process of sustaining those called to office is so carefully protected in the Church—that we all might know who has authority to teach and to bless.

- Heard(felt) many times as an adult and parent
 - ***---**Relate:** Scott and “knowing” more than once the only reason I could give him was because of feelings.
 - ***---**Relate:** Things “feel” or don’t “feel” right.
 - ***---**Relate:** Learned to “be still” and search my feelings.
 - Boyd K Packer
"This burning in the bosom is not purely a physical sensation. It is more like a warm light shining within your being" (Oct 94 conference. Ensign, Nov 94, pg 59)

Still Small Voice – Hearing The Spirit

In Enos we read:

And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again (Enos 1:10)

- 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)
- ***---**Relate:** have “heard” words or thoughts, which are accompanied by the feelings described.

Revelations don’t need to be spectacular.

- 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)

Revelation cannot be compelled

- The Spirit cannot be compelled. The Spirit is sensitive and cannot be subjected to constraint, control, and compulsion. It is independent and responds only to invitations and not to impositions.
 - Elder Packer explained, “While we may invite this communication, it can never be forced! If we try to force it, we may be deceived.” (Ensign, Nov. 1991, pg 21)
 - Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872-1952), a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, counseled, “Revelation always comes; it is not imposed upon a person; it must be drawn to us by faith, seeking and working.” (Temple Worship,” The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Apr. 1921, pg 63)

Frequency of revelation.

- Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy: “It is a misconception to believe that we should consult Heavenly Father on every matter in life. He expects us to solve a portion of our problems without petitioning Him for potential solutions. It is through this process that we grow, develop, and become more perfect. He is not always concerned about mundane matters unless they are not in keeping with sacred principles.” (Personal Revelation,” Ensign, Sept. 1999, pg 7)
- We should daily petition for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. With this presence of the Spirit, we will feel the promptings without petitioning Heavenly Father on every personal matter.
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “We are often left to work out problems, without the dictation or specific direction of the Spirit. That is part of the experience we must have in mortality. Fortunately, we are never out of our Savior’s sight, and if our judgment leads us to actions beyond the limits of what is permissible and if we are listening to the still small voice, the Lord will restrain us by the promptings of His Spirit.” (Teaching by the Spirit (address delivered at new mission presidents’ seminar, 22 June 1994)

I hope that this has helped you.

The signal to me, as I have gotten older has become clearer. I want it to get clearer still.

My hope is you have a greater desire to “hear” the voice of the spirit. That you will clear the channels of revelation, pray and seek his spirit.

Testimony

REFERENCES:

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick Of the Seventy "Personal Revelation," Ensign, Sept. 1999, pg 7

Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," Ensign, Nov. 1994, 59

Boyd K. Packer, "Revelation in a Changing World," Ensign, Nov. 1989, 14