

## **D&C#06 "I Will Tell You in Your Mind and in Your Heart, By the Holy Ghost**

Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Understanding How Holy Ghost Communicates With Us
- III. Cautions About Personal Revelation
- IV. When Revelation is Not Received or Recognized
- V. Conclusions

### **I. Introduction**

Like the elderly lady in our last lesson, who had made the decision to purchase her first home computer, and to pay the extra cost to have it delivered and set up in her home, but skipped the additional charge to have an hour of tutorial, she now sits in front of her computer, not knowing what to do to "make it work." She is motivated by her desire to access the internet so that she can easily, and as the clerk said instantly, communicate with her daughter and her family who live in a distant state. She yearns to be able to see the recent photos of her growing grandchildren and yes, even to do some shopping on-line. But her question remains, "how do you make it work?"

Unfortunately, learning to use a computer, like desiring to receive revelation, also take a combination of knowledge and effort. Someday we may have computers that are voice operated, but today you need a keyboard. Sometimes just as you may feel that you want to throw your computer out the window after you have worked for several hours on a project, only to see it evaporate from your screen, you may also in frustration, give up your desire to obtain personal revelation. Don't do either. If you will persevere and make sure you are done all you can do to "make your computer operate properly" including plugging it in, the revelation you seek will also come.

In our last lesson we learned what revelation is and our need for revelation, including necessary steps to receive revelation. We learned how to prepare to receive personal revelation. However, not unlike purchasing a computer and having it set-up in your home, there is more to do before we can use it and receive the benefits. In Part II, on revelation, we will address how to recognize personal revelation. We will do so by addressing how the Holy Ghost

communicates with us; cautions about receiving personal revelation and also when personal revelation is not received or recognized by the individual. Fortunately, we have the scriptures to provide us with our tutorial as well as the words of our latter-day prophets and leaders to guide us. The most important ingredient in our pursuit is our knowledge that Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, want to communicate with us, even more than we want to hear their voices.

## **II. Understanding How Holy Ghost Communicates With Us**

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Revelation can come in many ways. Some of these include appearances by the Lord or His messengers, voices from the Lord or His messengers, visions, and dreams. Usually, however, revelation comes as the Holy Ghost communicates thoughts to our minds and feelings in our hearts. The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. He is a revelator who teaches, comforts, warns, strengthens, and guides us.

"The Holy Ghost communicates with us in a variety of ways." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 29-30).

Joseph F. Smith states,

"When I was a boy first starting out in the ministry, I would frequently go out and ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until he made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and until doubt and fear had been absolutely purged from me. He did not have to send an angel from heaven to do this, nor did he have to speak with the trump of an archangel. By the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of God, he gave me the testimony I possess. And by this principle and power he will give to all the children of men a knowledge of the truth." (*Gospel Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, [Eighth Edition, 1949], 7).

We are going to explore five common ways the Holy Ghost communicates with us.

**A. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2-3; 85:6. (He uses a still, small voice to communicate to our minds and hearts.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 8:2-3

**2 Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.**

**3 Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground.**

Section 8 was given on behalf of Oliver Cowdery at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April, 1829. As Oliver assisted Joseph Smith through his transcription of the Book of Mormon, he desired to also receive the gift of translation.

Oliver was given the gift of translation, however, as we later learn "behold it was because that you did not continue as you commenced, when you began to translate, that I have taken away the privilege from you" (D&C 9:5). Like the Apostle Peter who walked a brief distance on water before he doubted, Oliver also translated a little before "he feared" (D&C 9:11).

From Oliver's brief experience with translation, we learn that "the manifestation of my Spirit [comes to the individual's] mind and in...[their] heart by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 8:1-2). We learn also that it was by the Spirit of revelation that Moses was able to lead the children of Israel safely during their journey in the wilderness. (see Hyrum M. Smith, and Janne M. Sjodahl. *The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 43).

Doctrine and Covenants 85:6

**6 Yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and often times it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest,...**

Section 85 is unique in that the revelation contains an extract from a letter that Joseph Smith wrote from

Kirtland, Ohio, to W.W. Phelps in Independence, Missouri on November 27, 1832. At the time, Brother Phelps was in Missouri assisting Bishop Edward Partridge, "who was responsible for organizing the saints there and administering the law of consecration on their behalf." (Leaun G. Otten and C. Max Caldwell. *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 2. Springville, Utah: LEMB Inc., 1983, [Second Edition], 80).

Steven C. Harper states,

"Some Saints [had] moved to Missouri before being commanded and without recommends (D&C 78). Some [even] refused to keep the law of consecration... Far away in Ohio, Joseph Smith discerned this question by 'the still small voice' and wrote the revealed answers." (*Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2008, 304).

This revelation came so powerfully to Joseph that he stated, "it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh [itself] manifest" (D&C 85:6). While this experience is unusual, even for a prophet, there are times when the promptings of the Holy Ghost come with great force and power upon the individual. Speaking to his brothers, regarding the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, the Prophet Nephi records,

B/M, 1 Nephi 17:45

**45 Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God. 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; wherefore, he has spoken unto you like unto the voice of thunder, which did cause the earth to shake as if it were to divide asunder.**

The following verse is a description of the effects of the Holy Ghost upon those who had imprisoned Nephi and his brother, Lehi. They were in the same prison that Ammon and his brethren had been cast into by the servants of Limhi. (see Helaman 5:21.).

Helaman 5:30-31

30 And it came to pass when they heard this voice, and beheld that it was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce [them] even to the very soul--

31 And notwithstanding the mildness of the voice, behold the earth shook exceedingly, and the walls of the prison trembled again..

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"Visions do happen. Voices are heard from beyond the veil. I know this. But these experiences are exceptional...Most of the revelation that comes to leaders and members of the Church comes by the still, small voice or by a feeling rather than by a vision or a voice that speaks specific words we can hear. I testify to the reality of that kind of revelation, which I have come to know as familiar, even daily, experience to guide me in the work of the Lord." ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," in *Ensign*, March 1997, 14).

Boyd K. Packer adds,

"These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears. And even though it is described as a voice, it is a voice that one feels more than one hears." (*That All May Be Edified*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982, 335).

\*Why is it important to understand this principle of how the Holy Ghost communicates?

\*What are the dangers of expecting divine communication to come in more dramatic or spectacular ways?

Dallin H. Oaks cautioned:

"Some [people] have looked exclusively for the great manifestations that are recorded in the scriptures and have failed to recognize the still, small voice that is given to them... We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper..

"Not understanding these principles of revelation, some people postpone acknowledging their testimony until they have experienced a miraculous event. They fail to realize that with most people...gaining a testimony is not an event but a process." ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," in *Ensign*, March 1997, 11-12,14).

**B. Doctrine and Covenants 6:15-17; 11:13-14. (He enlightens our minds.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 6:15-17

15 Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that that has been enlightened by the Spirit of truth;

16 Yea, I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart.

17 I tell thee these things as a witness unto thee-- that the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true.

As previously noted, Section 6, was given to Oliver Cowdery in April 1829, at Harmony, Pennsylvania. He had begun his labors as Joseph's scribe in the translation of the Book of Mormon, April 7, 1829. After the Lord had given this revelation to Oliver Cowdery, Oliver shared the following with Joseph Smith. He records,

"After we had received this revelation [Section 6], Oliver Cowdery stated to me that after he had gone to my father's to board [as a school teacher], and after the family had communicated to him concerning my having obtained the plates, that one night after he had retired to bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so, and the Lord manifested to him that they were true, but he had kept the circumstances entirely secret, and had mentioned it to no one; so that after this revelation was given, he knew the work was true, because no being living knew of the thing alluded to in the revelation, but God and himself." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Second Edition Revised, 1969], 35).

Doctrine and Covenants 11:12-14

12 And now, verily, verily, I say unto thee, put your trust in the Spirit which leadeth to do good--yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

13 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

14 And then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith, believing in me that you shall receive.

Section 11 was given through Joseph Smith to his brother, Hyrum Smith, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829.

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"Hyrum Smith, shortly after the visit of his brother Samuel, also called to see how Joseph was faring. From the days of the Prophet's first vision he had manifested faith in the testimony of his younger brother. When he arrived he asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim what the Lord would have him do. The answer is the interesting and profitable revelation known as Section Eleven." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*. Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums for the year 1947. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946, 51).

Sometimes we fail to recognize when we have felt the Spirit of the Lord, and that He has spoken to us. In this revelation, Hyrum learns it is the spirit of the Lord that leads us to seek what is good. He also provides enlightenment to us when we request His guidance as we are trying to make important decisions. It may be because the language of the Spirit is by feeling and impressions to our mind, rather than audible words, that we may miss the message the Lord is giving us.

\*In what ways does the Spirit enlighten our minds?

The Spirit can enlighten our minds with new ideas or insights, flashes of inspiration, and strong feelings or impressions (see, for example, D&C 128:1).

Joseph Smith taught,

"[Revelation may come as] sudden strokes of ideas [that flow into our minds as 'pure intelligence" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 151).

Consider experiences when the Holy Ghost enlightened your mind with new ideas or insights, flashes of inspiration, or strong feelings or impressions.

**C. Doctrine and Covenants 6:22-23. (He brings peace to our minds.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 6:22-23

**22 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.**

**23 Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?**

Oliver had boarded at the Smith Family home as part of his remuneration for teaching school. During his stay, he had been impressed to seek further understanding regarding the plates from Father Smith. He had sought through prayer to know the truthfulness of his words. He had not share with others the confirmation he had received. This revelation provided information that had previously been known only to himself and the Lord. (see *History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Second Edition Revised, 1969], 35.)

\*What did the Lord reveal to Oliver Cowdery about his desire for a "further witness" of the assurance he had received earlier (D&C 6:22).

Share experiences when the Spirit spoke peace to your mind.

\*How can we become more trusting of the peace that the Spirit speaks to our minds?

**D. Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8. (He may cause a burning in the bosom.) See also Luke 24:32.**

Doctrine and Covenants 9:7-8

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.

Luke 24:32

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?

Boyd K. Packer states,

"This burning in the bosom is not purely a physical sensation. It is more like a warm light shining within your being." ("Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," in *Ensign*, November 1994, 60).

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"I have met persons who told me they have never had a witness from the Holy Ghost because they have never felt their bosom 'burn within' them.

"What does a 'burning of the bosom' mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surly, the word 'burning' in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity. This is the witness many receive. That is how revelation works." ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," in *Ensign*, March 1997, 13).

While some have felt what they describe as a "burning of the bosom," it is not a requirement in order to receive communication from the Holy Ghost. Other means may include a spirit of comfort and serenity, peace, or awareness of feelings arising from within.

**E. Doctrine and Covenants 98:12. (He often reveals things "line upon line, precept upon precept," rather than all at once.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 98:11-12

11 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.

12 For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 98 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, August 6, 1833. This revelation came in consequence of the persecution upon the Saints in Missouri. Increased settlement of Church members in Missouri troubled some other settlers, who felt threatened by the Saints' numbers, political and economic influence, and cultural and religious differences. In July 1833, a mob destroyed Church property, tarred and feathered two Church members [Edward Partridge and Charles Allen], and demanded that the Saints leave Jackson County. Although some news of the problems in Missouri had no doubt reached the Prophet in Kirtland (nine hundred miles away), the seriousness of the situation could not have been known to him at this date only by revelation." (Heading: Section 98. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints, 1981, [2013], 189).

The Lord in these two verses teaches three important concepts. The first is that one cannot receive revelation until one has forsaken evil and is obedient to the commandments. The second is that one must continue being obedient, and patient, as the direction may come gradually, rather than all at once. Third, the sincerity of our desire is often demonstrated by our sustained diligence, rather than by half-hearted episodes of righteousness. The Lord's answer often comes in proportion to our continued righteousness and our commitment to act upon his direction. A half-hearted commitment is not sufficient to receive revelation.

Richard G. Scott states,

"When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight."  
("Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayers," in *Ensign*, November 1989, 32).

Others may desire to share experiences of how they receive divine guidance line upon line, or step by step.

### **III. Cautions About Personal Revelation**

The following cautions are provided from the scriptures which are important for us as we seek personal revelation from the Lord.

**A. Doctrine and Covenants 109:44. (We should pray that the Lord's will be done--and be willing to submit our will to His.) See also Matthew 6:10.**

Doctrine and Covenants 109:44

**44 But thy word must be fulfilled. Help thy servants to say, with thy grace assisting them: Thy will be done, O Lord, and not ours.**

Matthew 6:10

**10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**

Recently I read an article in the *Ensign*, September, 2016, about a young man from Australia who was hearing impaired. He wanted to serve a mission for the LDS Church. He applied, "but didn't qualify because of his hearing. However, he prayed and trusted that the Lord's will would be done. Then something unexpected happened: Callan's hearing worsened."

I can imagine that many at this time would be discouraged, and even question the Lord's response to his prayers despite continued righteousness.

He states, "When I was 18, I was completely deaf for six months. I went to church for the feelings, because that is all I got out of it," he explains."

The important thing is that he didn't stop attending his meetings. He persevered despite his hearing set back.

The article continues, "During this time, Callan built his testimony and relied on the Spirit. But what initially seemed to be a larger trial turned out to be the answer to his prayers. Because of the sudden drop in his hearing ability, he qualified for a cochlear implant, which improved his hearing enough to qualify him for a full-time mission. Callan soon left to serve in Perth, Australia." (Ben Robinson. "Building the Kingdom in Australia," in *Ensign*, September 2016, 20).

How often, I wonder, have I missed out on the greater blessings I might have received, had I continued to be faithful and persevered, despite the opposition that I experienced. Whatever our circumstances or temporary setbacks, we must each remember, "Thy will be done, O Lord, not [mine]" (D&C 109:44).

\*Why is it important to submit our will to God's will when we seek personal revelation?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:9-10

**9 But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings [peace, insight, enlightenment], but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.**

**10 Now, if you had known this you could have translated; nevertheless, it is not expedient that you should translate now.**

These verses from Section 9, were given to Oliver Cowdery in response to the difficulty he experienced during the brief period of his translation experience. It would seem to me that Oliver had expected that the translation would flow effortlessly and if it halted, he did not understand it meant that there was an error in his interpretation of the record.

There are those occasions when the answer we receive in our prayers as we seek revelation is "no", or "that is not in your best interest." It is as important, I believe, that we understand the Lord's negation to our request, as it is to understand his confirmation. As noted from Oliver Cowdery's experience, we may not feel right about the feelings we are receiving. These may include negative feelings, confusion, feelings of unrest and uneasiness or even a "stupor of thought" (D&C 9:9), regarding our request. It is important that we then go back and consider other options regarding our request, and then re-submit these for the Lord's confirmation. During these occasions, prayer, scripture reading, fasting, even service to others, should all be elements of our preparation.

\*How should we respond when a sincere prayer about something we desire very much is not answered the way we want?

\*How can such experiences help us?

**B. Doctrine and Covenants 88:68. (We should remember that revelation will come in the Lord's own time and way.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 88:68 [Underline added.]

**68 Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 88 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27 and 28, 1832, and January 3, 1833. The Prophet designated it as the "olive leaf'...plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us.' The revelation was given after high priests at a conference prayed 'separately and vocally to the Lord to reveal his will unto us concerning the upbuilding of Zion." (Heading: Section 88. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 165).

Dan Barker states,

"Just two days prior on December 25, [1832], Joseph Smith received the revelation on war [Section 87]. On December 27, the Prophet received the Lord's revelation on peace. Joseph Smith, in a letter to W.W. Phelps, referred to this revelation as the 'Olive leaf...plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us.' It is fitting for two reasons: first, the olive tree is a symbol of peace, and second, many of the teachings within this revelation are instructions that can give us spiritual peace..." (*Little Known Stories About the Doctrine and Covenants*. Springville, Utah: CFI, An Imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc., 2012, 179).

Unfortunately, there are times when some of us may act toward the Lord as if He were a short-order cook at the local diner and we were giving Him our special order for breakfast. During these occasions we forget, even if it is momentarily, that He is our divine Father and we are His children. At all times, we are to approach Him in humility as we seek His guidance and direction. We then patiently wait for his response. Certainly demands and impatience have no place in our mortal relationships, never mind should they ever be present in our relations with divinity.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"The Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in his own time, and in his own way. Many people do not understand this principle. They believe that when they are ready and when it suits their convenience, they can call upon the Lord and he will immediately respond, even in the precise way they have prescribed. Revelation does not come that way..."

"The principle stated in [D&C 88:68] applies to every communication from our Heavenly Father: 'It shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.' We cannot force spiritual things." ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," in *Ensign*, March 1997, 10-11).

**C. Doctrine and Covenants 28:2, 6-7; 43:2-4. (We receive revelation according to our stewardship and responsibilities).**

Doctrine and Covenants 28: 2, 6-7

**2 But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses.**

**6 And thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church;**

**7 For I have given him the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint them another in his stead.**

These verses serve to confirm the Lord's directive that Joseph Smith is his anointed spokesman upon the earth and that the members of His Church are to follow his revelations.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 28 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Oliver Cowdery, in Fayette, new York, September 1830. Hiram Page, a member of the Church, had a certain stone, and professed to be receiving revelation by its aid concerning the up-building of Zion and the order of the Church. Several members had been deceived by these claims, and even Oliver Cowdery was wrongly influenced thereby. Just prior to an appointed conference, the Prophet inquired earnestly of the Lord concerning the matter, and this revelation followed." (Heading: Section 28. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 47-48).

Susan Easton Black adds further details,

"Before the conference of 26 September 1830, Hiram [Page who had married Catherine Whitmer, daughter of Peter Whitmer] found a stone five-by-three inches in length and one-half inch thick with two holes. He believed the stone possessed qualities than enabled him to be a 'revelator.' He claimed to receive revelations through the stone identifying the location of the 'American New Jerusalem' and the proper governing process of the Church. The Prophet was greatly distressed over Hiram's claim and prayed for an answer...Oliver Cowdery, who had been influenced by Hiram's supposed revelations, was instructed, 'Thou shalt take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell

him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him' (D&C 28:11). It appears that Hiram accepted the rebuke and counsel, for at the September 30 conference he renounced the stone and the spurious revelations." (*Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997, 208).

Doctrine and Covenants 43:2-6

**2 For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.**

**3 And this ye shall know assuredly--that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.**

**4 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for it if be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.**

**5 And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments;**

**6 And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.**

Dan Baker states,

"When the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, the Lord declared through his Prophet that the members of the Church are to 'give heed unto all his words and commandments...For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith' (D&C 21:4-5). In just a few short months, it was necessary for the Prophet to repeat this lesson again during the Hiram Page seer stone incident [Section 28]... One and a half years later, it became imperative for the Lord to repeat a third time to the young Church the role of revelation from the Lord for the Church through his Prophet. This time, the Lord not only stated that Joseph is the only one that can receive revelation for the Church, but he also added, 'receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments...that you may not be deceive,...know they are not of me' (D&C 43:5-6)." (*Little Known Stories About the Doctrine and Covenants*. Springville, Utah: CFI, An Imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc., 2012, 95-96).

George A. Smith states,

"There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of this Church, which prompted the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the Prophet was going wrong." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 11. London: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 1867, [Eighth Reprint, 1974], 7).

This spirit of deception, inspired by Satan, served to foster confusion and doubt among the members, regarding the calling of Joseph Smith as the Lord's prophet. In some places, this familiar spirit is also found today among members of the Church. Its' presence has led some to conclude that some of the authorities of the Church were in error, and, therefore, were at liberty to "pick and choose" the doctrines they will follow, and ignore the rest. As in the past, the author of deception is Satan whose goal is to disrupt the kingdom of God on earth and mislead its members. It is imperative today that each of us keep our eyes and ears fixed on the word of the Lord as revealed through his Prophet and Apostles or we, too, may be found among the elect [members of Christ's Church] who are deceived. (see Matthew 24:24.)

Joseph Smith taught,

"It is contrary to the economy of God for any members of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves; therefore, you will see the impropriety of giving heed to them; but if any person has a vision or a visitation from a heavenly messenger, it must be for his own benefit and instruction; for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, 21).

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"Our Heavenly Father's house is a house of order... Only the President of the Church receives revelation to guide the entire Church...The person who receives revelation for the ward is the bishop...Individuals can receive revelation to guide their own lives. But when one person purports to receive revelation for another person outside his or her own area of responsibility--such as a Church member who

claims to have revelation to guide another person over whom he or she has not presiding authority according to the order of the Church--you can be sure that such revelations are not from the Lord" ("Revelation," in *New Era*, September 1982, 45-46).

\*Why is this principle important for governing the Church?

\*Why is it important to understand our relationship with other people?

It is imperative that we understand that one cannot receive a one-sided revelation from God in regard to another person's free agency. Only as both parties, separately, receive the same confirmation, can you have the assurance that the reply is from the Lord.

John H. Groberg states,

"Those who try to force another's free will into their supposed-revelation mold are doing a great disservice to themselves and to [others]." ("What Are You Doing Here?" in *New Era*, January 1987, 37-38).

**D. Doctrine and Covenants 11:12-14; 50:23-24. (We should discern whether the revelation has come from God.)**

Doctrine and Covenants 11:12-15

12 And now, verily, verily, I say unto thee, put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good--yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

13 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

14 And then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive.

15 Behold, I command you that you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called.

As previously noted, Section 11, was given to Hyrum Smith, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829. Hyrum was anxious to know, through his younger brother, what the Lord would have him do in order to build His kingdom on earth.

These verses informed Hyrum that before he could fulfill the true measure of his abilities, there were ingredients important for him to cultivate. These include: trust in the Spirit, walking humbly, judging righteously. As he refined these qualities, the Lord would "enlighten [his] mind, which shall fill [your] soul with joy...[and] all things... pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me [he] shall receive" (D&C 11:13-14). However, he is to "wait a little longer" to obtain these qualities (D&C 11:16).

It takes more than just a desire to be a faithful missionary or member. We must also have a strong testimony, be familiar with the scriptures, have increased faith and trust in the Lord, and be obedient to His commandments. A missionary, or member, who is spiritual prepared will then find great joy when the call to serve comes.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:23-24

**23 And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.**

**24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.**

Section 50 was given to Joseph Smith, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 9, 1831. "...some of the elders did not understand the manifestations of different spirits abroad on the earth, and this revelation was given in response to his [Joseph's] special inquiry on the matter. So-called spiritual phenomena were not uncommon among the members, some of whom claimed to be receiving visions and revelations." (see Heading: Section 50, *The Doctrine and Covenants*. 1981, [2013], 91.)

George A. Smith states,

"There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of the Church, which prompted the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the Prophet was going wrong. Men who thought they knew all about work, some of them thirty or forty years before the Lord revealed it, tried to 'steady the ark.' The Church was constantly afflicted with such a class of men." (*Journal of*

*Discourses*, Vol. 11. London: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 1867, [Eighth Reprint, 1974], 7).

As we experience the trial and adversity of the latter days, we may also find that there are those who also suppose they know better than our modern-day Prophet and Apostles.

\*How can we discern whether a revelation has come from God?

Revelations from God will be in accordance with scripture and the counsel of the living prophets. They will be edifying. They will not lead us to do something that is contrary to the principles of righteousness.

It is important for us to discern whether a revelation is truly from God. Sometimes what we think is a revelation may be a projection of our own desires. And sometimes false revelations may come from Satan.

The First Presidency [August 2, 1913] cautions,

"When...inspiration conveys something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God, no matter how plausible it may appear... Anything at discord with that which comes from God though the head of the Church is not to be received as authoritative or reliable." ("A Warning Voice," in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. 4. Compiled by James R. Clark. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970, 285).

### **III. When revelation is not received or recognized**

Just as the woman in our story was alarmed when the monitor of her newly purchased computer did not come on, so are we concerned when the heavens seemed to be closed to our sincere petitions. The following are some suggestions to consider when no answer seems to be forthcoming.

- \*a. Be patient and continue to wait faithfully on the Lord (D&C 98:2). He will answer in His time. While most of us want our answers to come immediately, exercising patience can help us to grow spiritually and develop attributes of godliness. It may be surprising to some to learn that even prophets must exercise patience as

they seek divine guidance. (see Official Declaration 2, in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 294-295, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: Dear Brethren).

- \*b. Increase our efforts to be in tune spiritually so we can receive and recognize the whisperings of the Spirit. Attendance at the temple, serving others, daily reading of the scriptures, seeking a priesthood blessing are options to consider.
- \*c. Increase our efforts to study and pray, recognizing that we may not have done this as long, as faithfully, or as honestly as we should. As Martin Harris learned, studying the problem out in your own mind, and then upon coming to a solution, seeking the Lord's confirmation may also help.
- \*d. Be more faithful in obeying the commandments (Isaiah 59:2). One may consider asking the Lord in prayer if there is something that you are not aware of that may be impeding you receiving or recognizing His direction. Remember a stupor of thought [dulled thinking] may infer that while your desire is righteous, now is not the time for you to take action. Continue, like Hyrum Smith, to be patient. Trust that you will know through the Spirit when it is time to take action.
- \*e. Set the matter aside for a while. Flashes of inspiration often come when we least expect them, while our minds are no longer consumed by the matter. Some years ago I was preparing for a talk and needed to locate the necessary material I had accumulated. I prayed, fasted, and even had a dream about where the material was located, without success. The time was drawing near for the talk and still no inspiration. I received a call requesting my assistance to help someone who was moving. I was reluctant to go, but concluded I needed to set the matter aside and go assist this family. As I did so, I felt joy for having gone. Upon returning home, I immediately received a thought that led me directly to the location of the desired materials. I believe my willingness to answer the call to serve and my finally locating the desired material were connected.

- \*f. Recognize that we may be seeking counsel on matters that we should determine for ourselves, using our best judgment based on study and reason. In these cases the Lord may leave us to decide on our own (for example, see D&C 58:25-26; 60:5; 61:22; 62:5). The Lord often allows us to make our own decisions in righteousness. We must never forget that the Lord will not generally give us answers to questions He knows we have the ability to discern correctly for ourselves. Once we proceed, He will often give us a confirming feeling of peace or comfort to indicate His pleasure in our decision.
  
- \*g. Evaluate whether we may have received an answer already but have not accepted it because it was not what we hoped for or expected. If we insist on what we want, we may close off the Spirit's communication with us.

Some years ago, I was in a foreign country and had the opportunity to purchase a tape recorder at a reduced price. I sought the Lord's direction and receive the answer I was not to purchase the recorder. I chose to ignore His prompting and purchased the machine. It was extremely difficult and expensive to get the item to the United States, but finally I succeeded. Once stateside, I learned that during my absence, the technology had greatly improved and my wonderful recorder did not compare with those currently available. My determined action, combined with ignoring the Lord's direction, weighed heavily on my mind. Only then did I fully realize that had I obeyed the Lord's answer to me I would have avoided the misery I now felt. In humility, I sought the Lord's forgiveness for my foolishness. In time, I did feel his forgiveness. I also learned an important lesson: When the Lord says, "No," it is a wise person who obeys.

\*The suggestions identified a-g are found in the *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 32-33).

Boyd K. Packer states,

"Sometimes you may struggle with a problem and not get an answer. What could be wrong? It may be that you are not doing anything wrong. It may be that you have not done the

right things long enough. Remember, you cannot force spiritual things. Sometime we are confused simply because we won't take no for an answer...

"Put difficult questions in the back of your minds and go about your lives. Ponder and pray quietly and persistently about them.

"The answer may not come as a lightning bolt. It may come as little inspiration here and a little there, 'line upon line, precept upon precept' (D&C 98:12).

"Some answers will come from reading the scriptures, some from hearing speakers. And, occasionally, when it is important, some will come by very direct and powerful inspiration. The promptings will be clear and unmistakable." ("Prayers and Answers," in *Ensign*, November 1979, 21).

When the monitor still does not light up, after we have done everything in our power to obtain the Lord's direction, I have found the following counsel to be most helpful.

Richard G. Scott states,

"We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

"Most often what we have chosen to do is right... If, in trust, we begin something which is not right, He will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubling or uneasy feelings." ("Learning to Recognize Answers To Prayer," in *Ensign*, November 1989, 32).

There have been times when my wife and I were trying to resolve an important issue and no response has been forthcoming. We have then determined to go forward with our best decision. There have been times when my wife will say to me, "You know the decision we made. It doesn't feel right to me." I have learned to say, "Ok, let's not proceed. Do you have any other thoughts?" These occasions have then led us to carefully consider other options. We have then presented to the Lord the one we now felt to be best for his confirmation. Making inspired decisions often takes

time, but we thereby avoid the undesirable consequences that acting, without careful consideration, always brings.

## **V. Conclusions**

In Part I, [See D&C#05], we addressed the subject of how to prepare to receive personal revelation. In Part II, we have addressed the important factors regarding how to recognize personal revelation as well as factors to consider when revelation is not received or recognized.

### **How the Holy Ghost communicates with us:**

1. He uses a still, small voice to communicate to our minds and hearts.
2. He enlightens our minds.
3. He brings peace to our minds.
4. He may cause a burning in the bosom.
5. He often reveals things "line upon line, precept upon precept" (D&C 98:12), rather than all at once.

### **What cautions should be considered about personal revelation:**

1. We should pray that the Lord's will be done--and be willing to submit our will to His.
2. We should remember that revelation will come in the Lord's own time and way.
3. We receive revelation according to our stewardship and responsibilities.
4. We should discern whether the revelation has come from God.

### **Factors to consider when revelation is not received or recognized:**

1. Be patient and continue to wait faithfully on the Lord.
2. Increase our efforts to be spiritually in tune so we can receive and recognize the whisperings of the Spirit.

3. Increase our efforts to study and pray, recognizing that we may not have done this as long, as faithfully, or as honestly as we should.
4. Be more faithful in obeying the commandments.
5. Set the matter aside for a while. Flashes of inspiration often come when we least expect them, while our minds are no longer consumed with the matter.
6. Recognize that we may be seeking counsel on matters that we should determine for ourselves, using our best judgment based on study and reason. The Lord often allows us to make our own decisions in righteousness.
7. Evaluate whether we may have received an answer already but have not accepted it because it was not what we hoped for or expected. If we insist on what we want, we may close off the Spirit's communication with us.

Two other suggestions:

1. Act and exercise faith that if you have done all you can and need to proceed, that if you are in error, the Lord will provide you with correcting direction. He will not allow his faithful children to be led down dangerous paths.
2. Speak with your spiritual leader whom you trust and he/she may be able to provide you with some enlightenment.

Don't give up. Some matters are of such importance and the lessons of patience so important, that it is not unusual that the Holy Ghost does not give an immediate answer. If you persist, He will in his own time and in His own way, and, according to his own will, bless His children.

In our next lesson [D&C#07] we will address the First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel and the blessings that come to us through our obedience to these important principles.