

D&C#15 "Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts"

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I. Introduction

We may learn about spiritual gifts from several scriptural sources. Beginning in the New Testament, with the writings of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, we are introduced to the importance of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 7

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Paul lists a number of gifts of the Spirit or Holy Ghost including: word of wisdom; knowledge; faith; healing; miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues; and, the interpretation of tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 13:2, Paul adds a gift which he defines as being the greatest gift for us to obtain. It is the source of all other gifts.

1 Corinthians 13:2, 13 [underline added]

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and

though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Like Paul, in the Book of Mormon, a prophet from ancient America Moroni, also addressed the gifts of the Spirit.

Moroni, in B/M, Moroni 10:8-18, identified each of the gifts by Paul, and added the following: beholding of angels and ministering spirits, and interpretation of languages. Like Paul, he also spoke of the importance of charity.

B/M, Moroni 10:20-21 [underline added]

20 Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

21 And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.

In his letter to his son, Moroni, Mormon addressed the importance of faith, hope, and charity, and their relationship. He provided the following insight regarding charity and clarifies why charity is so important.

B/M, Moroni 7:45-47 [underline added]

45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity; ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.

Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail--

47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

We understand that "Eternal life,...is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7), that He can bestow upon His righteous children. It is, however, through "charity or the pure love of Christ" (B/M, Moroni 7:47) that all gifts are given efficacy. Without charity, the gifts bestowed upon the recipient are without power and meaning. In the words of Paul, without charity, "I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal [noise without music]" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Moroni underlines the source of all spiritual gifts.

B/M, Moroni 10:18

18 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.

If we would obtain these gifts of the Spirit, it is important that we remember that the source of these gifts is Christ.

Following the introduction by Paul, Moroni, and Mormon, to the gifts of the Spirit, we now focus our attention upon the Doctrine and Covenants. Here we will be further taught regarding these gifts and the conditions upon which we might obtain them.

II. All Faithful Members of Church of Jesus Christ Receive Gifts of the Spirit Through the Holy Ghost

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

"The gifts of the Spirit are spiritual blessings or abilities that are given through the Holy Ghost. These gifts were taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy, but God restored them in the early days of this dispensation." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 82).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"When Peter, James, and John restored the authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost upon the newly baptized, the meridian First Presidency also restored the authority

by which special spiritual gifts or talents are given. Following the ordinance of baptism, someone holding the Melchizedek Priesthood must lay hands upon the head of those who have been baptized to both confirm them a member of the Church and convey to them the gift or right to the companionship of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 20:43; 33:15; 39:23; 49:14; 68:25). The companionship of the Holy Ghost is essential not only because of its sanctifying power and because its recipients are entitled to the Spirit of revelation but because each one receiving these promises is also given a special gift from God, known as a spiritual gift. These gifts, as different as the people to whom they are given, assure that every member of the Church is divinely endowed to make a special contribution to the body of the Church. This principle is a marvelous manifestation of the genius of God. It assures that every member has a meaningful contribution to make and that all are benefited by their association with others who are part of the family or community of Saints.

"The knowledge of the role spiritual gifts were to play in the community of believers was lost to the world when the authority by which they are conveyed was lost. With the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood comes the restoration of these gifts and the power to edify and bless that is associated with them. Where faith and the authority of the priesthood are found, these gifts must also be found. Their existence constitutes another evidence that the church established by Christ and his disciples has been restored in its pristine purity and that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet." (*Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, 319-320).

Three experiences from Church History are provided to illustrate manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in the lives of specific individuals.

1. Philo Dibble and Newel Knight.

During the battle near Big Blue River, Philo Dibble was shot three times in the stomach. Newel Knight was called upon to administer to him. In the words of Philo Dibble:

"Brother Newel Knight came to see me, and sat down on the side of my bed...I felt the Spirit resting upon me at the crown of my head before his hand touched me, and I knew

immediately that I was going to be healed...I immediately arose and discharged three quarts of blood or more, with some pieces of clothes that had been driven into my body by the bullets. I then dressed myself and went out doors...From that time not a drop of blood came from me and I never afterwards felt the slightest pain or inconvenience from my wounds, except that I was somewhat weak from the loss of blood." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 42-43).

2. Alma Smith

Alma Smith was the young son of Warren and Amanda Smith. [Amanda's]...husband was killed at the massacre of Haun's Mill and her son, Alma, though yet alive, had his hip blown away by a musket blast.

"With most of the men dead or wounded, Amanda knelt down and pleaded with the Lord for help:

"Oh my Heavenly Father, I cried, what shall I do? Thou seest my poor wounded boy and knowest my inexperience. Oh Heavenly Father direct me what to do!" She said that she 'was directed as by a voice,' instructing her to make lye from the ashes and cleanse the wound. She then prepared a slippery elm poultice and filled the wound with it. The next day she poured the contents of a bottle of balsam into the wound.

Amanda said to her son, 'Alma, my child,...you believe that the Lord made your hip?'

"Yes, mother.'

"Well, the Lord can make something there in the place of your hip, don't you believe he can, Alma?"

"Do you think that the Lord can, mother?" inquired the child in his simplicity.

"Yes, my son," I replied, 'he has shown it all to me in a vision.'

"Then I laid him comfortably on his face, and said: 'Now you lay like that, and don't move, and the Lord will make you another hip.'

"So Alma laid on his face for five weeks, until he was entirely recovered--a flexible gristle having grown in place of the missing joint and socket." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 47-48).

3. Dan Jones and the Prophet Joseph Smith

Dan Jones, a Welsh convert, was among those who joined with the Prophet Joseph Smith when he was incarcerated in the Carthage Jail on the evening of 26 June 1844. He states,

"Joseph heard a gun fire, left the bed, and lay on the floor near Jones. The Prophet whispered, 'Are you afraid to die?' 'Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors,' Jones replied. 'You will yet see Wales and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die,' Joseph prophesied." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 63).

Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus quoting Dan Jones state,

Dan Jones records: "Later that night a large number of men came up the stair and prepared to enter the room where Joseph and others were confined. Joseph cried out, 'Come on, ye assassins. We are ready for you, and would as willing die now as at daylight.' Hearing this they retreated.

"The next morning, 27 June, the Prophet requested of me to descend and interrogate the guard as to the cause of the intrusion upon us in the night. When Jones interrogated the guard, he indicated that 'Old Joe' [would not be allowed] to escape alive. When Joseph and Hyrum heard his response, Joseph directed me to go and speak with Governor Ford who was across at the Hotel. The governor stated, "You are unnecessarily alarmed for your friends' safety, sir. The people are not that cruel."

"I returned to the prison and sought to enter, but the guard would not let me in. I was then handed a letter from Joseph Smith, with a request to take it to Mr. Browning, of Quincy forthwith. The guard being aware of the letter, informed the mob 'that Joe had sent orders to raise the Nauvoo Legion to come and rescue him.' This drew the mob

around me, and they demanded the letter, which I utterly refused to give to them. When some would take it by force, others objected. [When] the mob disagreed among themselves...I took advantage of their disagreement and mounted my horse. No sooner was I in the saddle than both spurs were to work, and a race horse and rider were enveloped in a cloud of dust, with balls whistling by me...That night I heard of the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith." (*They Knew The Prophet*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974, [Second Printing, 1974], 166-187).

As the result of Dan Jones being denied entrance to the jail following his meeting with Governor Ford and being giving a letter from Joseph Smith to take to Mr. Browning, of Quincy, the life of Dan Jones was spared. He would later fulfill a mission to Wales and through his efforts thousands came into the Church.

These three experiences demonstrate the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. These include: power of the priesthood, faith to heal and be healed, receiving revelation, gift of prophecy, and the gift to teach.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 46 lists several gifts.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 46 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 8, 1831. In this early time of the Church, an unified pattern of conducting Church services had not yet developed. However, a custom of admitting only members and earnest investigators to the sacrament meetings and other assemblies of the Church had become somewhat general. This revelation expresses the will of the Lord relative to governing and conducting meetings and His direction on seeking and discerning the gifts of the Spirit." (Heading: Section 46. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 85).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:13-15 lists several gifts. We will identify each of them.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:13

13 To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

"a. Gift of revelation through the Holy Ghost.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Given that all are to have this testimony before being admitted to the Church by baptism, we would understand this expression to mean that some are given this testimony in greater measure than are generally enjoyed by those in the household of faith. These Saints have the special ability and capacity through the bearing of their testimony to raise the spiritual level of a meeting and to touch the hearts of men and women in an unforgettable manner. It is such a testimony that must be taken to the ends of the earth, and so it is naturally associated with the special witness that is to be borne by the Apostles or special witnesses of Christ in all the world (see D&C 107:23)." (*Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, 321).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:14

14 To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.

"b. Belief in other's testimonies of the Savior.

It is the desire of the Lord that all gain an individual testimony of His divinity as the Son of God, the truthfulness of His resurrection, and restoration of His Church in these latter days. The timing, however, for this witness may vary among individuals. For some, their testimony may come early, while others may take some time before the witness born of the Holy Ghost comes to them. It is during this interval that one would be wise to trust and to hold firm to the witness of one who has obtained for themselves this witness. In other words, to exercise the gift of believing their witness, until they have gained their own testimony.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:15

15 And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men.

"c. Knowing of 'the difference of administration.'

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"[This is a gift that is] used in administrating and regulating the church." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985, 278).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:16

16 And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether they be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal.

"d. Discernment 'to know the diversities of operations, whether they be of God.'

This gift helps us discern whether a teaching or influence comes from God or from some other source.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:17-18

17 And again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom.

18 To another is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge.

"e. Wisdom and knowledge.

This gift enables the receiver to be able to grasp and understand the inner workings of the doctrines of the gospel.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:19

19 And again to some it is given to have faith to be healed;

"f. Faith to be healed.

While all healings are dependent upon the presence of faith, the recipient of this gift manifests their simple faith and childlike trust in the power of the priesthood when enables them to be healed.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:20

20 And to others it is given to have faith to heal.

"g. Faith to heal.

The priesthood holder manifests an increased degree of faith that enables them to clearly discern the will of the Father regarding the healing of the sick.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:21

21 And again, to some is given the working of miracles.

"h. The working of miracles.

Through the power of the priesthood, the individual is able to harness the powers of heaven in order to manifest the power of the Lord in an extraordinary manner.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:22

22 And to others it is given to prophesy;

"i. Prophecy.

The gift of prophecy bestowed upon the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator is different from the spiritual gift of prophecy.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"The Apostle Paul states that, "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Thus, in the sense used in speaking of spiritual gift, a prophet is one who testifies of Jesus Christ, teaches God's word, and exhorts God's people. In its scriptural sense, the gift of prophecy means

much more that to predict the future." ("Spiritual Gifts," in *Ensign*, September 1986, 71).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:23

23 And to others the discerning of spirits.

"j. Discerning of Spirits.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The gift of discernment functions in two ways. First, the presiding officer, the one holding the keys, uses the gift to discern how to most effectively utilize the gifts of those who labor under his direction. Second, those holding this gift are granted a special ability to discern when gifts are being used improperly and to detect those instances in which counterfeit gifts or false spirits are being used to manipulate or deceive the Saints." (*Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, 323).

Doctrine and Covenants 46:24-25

24 And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues;

25 And to another is given the interpretation of tongues.

"k. Speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues.

These gifts have frequently been subjected to abuse by those through the power of Satan who seek to deceive the believer. The communication is thus suspect unless there is another, who holding the priesthood of God, also has the gift of the interpretation of tongues. By this means, the message can be interpreted and confirmed as a manifestation of God. The speaking in tongues without another qualified to provide divine confirmation and interpretation is to be suspect.

*The gifts [a-k] identified by quotation marks are from the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual, 82. The additional clarification are either from the referenced authors or myself.

*Who can receive gifts of the Spirit?

Doctrine and Covenants 46:8, 11

8 Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

11 For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

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

"God gives at least one of these gifts to every faithful member of the Church who has received the gift of the Holy Ghost...[It is important to note] that people who have not received the gift of the Holy Ghost may still be blessed with unique abilities to lift and strengthen others."

(*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 82).

III. God Gives Gifts of the Spirit for the Benefit of His Children

*What are some of the purposes of the gifts of the Spirit, as revealed in D&C 46?

"a. To strengthen and bless us individually

Doctrine and Covenants 46:9

9 For verily I say unto you, they [gifts] are given for the benefit for those who love me and keep my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"[The gifts of the Spirit] can lead us to God. They can shield us from the power of the adversary. They can

compensate for our inadequacies and repair our imperfections." ("Spiritual Gifts," in *Ensign*, September 1986, 72).

"b. To help us serve others

Doctrine and Covenants 46: 11-12, 26

11 For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

12 To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby.

26 And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God.

Orson Pratt states,

"Spiritual gifts are distributed among the members of the Church, according to their faithfulness, circumstance, natural abilities, duties, and callings; that the whole may be properly instructed, confirmed, perfected, and saved." (14. Spiritual Gifts. *Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt*. Compiled by N.B. Lundwall. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962, [5th Printing, 1981], 571).

*How has a particular spiritual gift helped you serve others?

*How have you been blessed through the spiritual gifts of others?

Laura Russell Bunker states,

"As we were busily preparing for a Christmas dinner, my teenaged sister excitedly reached into the cupboard for the silver-rimmed china. The lovely...set had been Grandmother's wedding present to Mom and Dad and was used only on special occasions. But as my sister removed some of the precious plates from the cupboard, she bumped her arm and the china slipped from her hands. Her desperate attempts to recover the plates were in vain, and the crash of china shattering on the floor was as heartbreakin as the look of helpless horror on her face.

"Mother's meal-preparing hands stopped in midair, and the festive chatter of a bustling household ceased as we all stood frozen in awful silence. Without turning around to see the damage, Mother quietly slipped out of the room. Then...the rest of us tried to resume the tempo of our holiday duties.

"Except my sister. She stood motionless, a big tear trickling down her cheek. As another tear fell, she mechanically found the broom and dustpan and began sweeping up the scattered chips. Then on her knees, she slowly picked up the larger pieces and carefully placed them in the dustpan.

"Within a few minutes Mother returned to the kitchen and wrapped her arms around her grieving daughter. My sister began to sob out loud...Quietly [Mother] soothed, 'That's all right, honey; people are more important than things.'

"Mother later told me that she had gone into the other room to pray and was blessed with a peaceful feeling and the inspiration of how to comfort my sister. The gift of spiritual perspective given to my mother that Christmas day became the most priceless gift our family received." ("The Art of Perspective," in *Ensign*, December 1998, 54-55; also *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 83-84).

Application:

*Which gifts of the Spirit would be helpful in the following situations. (see D&C 46:13-25.)

1. A home teacher is called to the home of one his families to give a priesthood blessing.
2. A missionary presides over a small branch of church members.
3. A young woman is assigned to teach a lesson to her class.
4. An Aaronic Priesthood adviser is responsible for a group of deacons on a overnight camping trip that encounters difficulty.
5. A Relief Society president assigns visiting teachers to the sisters in her ward or branch.

"c. To help us avoid being deceived

Doctrine and Covenants 46:8

8 Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

*How can gifts of the Spirit help us avoid evil influences or deception?

One of the gifts of the Spirit involves the ability to discern evil influences or deception. This is also one of the primary blessings of having the gift of the Holy Ghost in our lives. He will always prompt us, through the whispering of His Spirit, when danger is present. If we are living worthily, we need to learn to recognize His promptings, and always heed them. Thereby, we will always enjoy His protection and guidance in our lives.

IV. We Should Seek and Cultivate Gifts of the Spirit

We have been counseled in the Doctrine and Covenants to "Seek ye earnestly the best gifts..." (D&C 46:8). Surely, the gifts of the Spirit are among the best gifts for which we should each seek.

"What can we do to discover the spiritual gifts that God has given us?

We may ponder, pray, fast, read our patriarchal blessing, always obey the commandments, and serve others.

*What can we do to cultivate and develop the spiritual gifts we have each been given?

"a. Ask of God and follow the Spirit's guidance.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:7, 30

7 But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that you should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not

be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrine of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are men, and others of devils.

30 He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh.

"b. Seek gifts for the benefit of others, not for selfish reasons.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:9

9 For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts.

"c. Do all things in the name of Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:31

31 And again, I say unto you, all things must be done in the name of Christ, whatsoever you do in the Spirit;

"d. Thank God for the gifts He has given us.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:32

32 And ye must give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with.

If we are not grateful for the gifts we have been given how could ever expect that God would give us additional gifts.

"e. Practice virtue and holiness continually.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:33

33 And ye must practice virtue and holiness before me continually. Even so. Amen.

All blessings that we receive from God are predicated upon our obedience to His commandments. We must first repent from our sins before seeking further blessings at His hand.

George Q. Cannon states,

"If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. Have I any imperfections? I am full of them. What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct these imperfections. If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and is kind. Am I an envious man? It is my duty to seek for charity, which envieth not. So with all the gifts of the Gospel. They are intended for this purpose. No man ought to say, 'Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.' He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them."
(Millennial Star, 23 April 1894, 260; also Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 85).

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"[My mother sought to apply the principle of seeking gifts of the Spirit:] Having lost her husband, my widowed mother was incomplete. How she prayed for what she needed to fulfill her responsibility to raise three small children! She was seeking, she was worthy, and she was blessed! Her prayers were answered in many ways, including the receipt of spiritual gifts. She had many, but the ones that stand out in my memory are the gifts of faith, testimony, and wisdom. She was a mighty woman in Zion." ("Spiritual Gifts," in *Ensign*, September 1986, 72).

The key to receiving spiritual gifts is to seek after them. If we are living worthily, and our desire to receive a specific spiritual gifts is for the purpose of blessing the lives of others, we will receive them. As noted, we may also seek for those gifts that will enable us to be more Christ-like in our thoughts and actions. Our sincere petition to God on our own behalf will also be heard and answered.

V. There are Many Spiritual Gifts, But Not All Are From God

We need not conclude that the spiritual gifts listed by Paul, Moroni or others, include all spiritual gifts.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state regarding Section 46:20-26,

"The working of miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, and speaking in tongues are here listed as illustrations of spiritual gifts. It is not to be supposed that these, with the other gifts mentioned in this revelation, constitute an exhaustive list of the gifts that God has chosen to give his children. That is not the design or purpose of the revelation. The gifts of God are as diverse as are those to whom they have been given. Like fingerprints, they are individual and distinctive. The genius of that is that it binds us together as a community of Saints, everyone having something to contribute that no one else can do as well. Each of us is in a position to bless and to be blessed. For this reason we have been commanded to 'meet together often' that we might succor and strengthen each other. It is not intended in the gospel plan that we be saved separate and singly. Salvation is in many respects a community affair." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 368-369).

Marvin J. Ashton adds,

"[Some of the] less-conspicuous gifts [include] the gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice,...the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable,...the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost." ("There Are Many Gifts," in *Conference Report*, October 1987, 23; or *Ensign*, November, 1987, 20).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler remind us,

"Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Ghost to those who have rightful claim upon his companionship through the waters of baptism and by the laying on of hands. Thus, they are the exclusive providence of members of the Church. These are spiritual talents given to bless those of the household of faith and to aid in the declaration of the gospel. They find their manifestation in service to others...Spiritual gifts are talents given and consecrated for the Lord's purpose. All spiritual gifts edify the soul and testify of Christ." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 364).

There are many, however, who are misled by those whose purpose is to mislead the sincere seeker of truth. They are the source of counterfeits gifts of the Spirit found upon the earth. It is essential, therefore, that we be able to discern the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit from those that are counterfeits.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:7

7 ...I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrine of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men and others, of devils.

Joseph Smith states,

"A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world of all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors; for 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. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power and baneful effects. Long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endured, and pain, misery, and ruin have followed in their train; nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overthrown, provinces laid waste, and blood, carnage and desolation are habiliments in which it has been clothed." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Second Edition, Revised 1969], 573).

To discern the operation of counterfeit spirits requires the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Marion G. Romeny suggest three simple tests to discern false spiritual manifestations:

"First, determine whether the alleged supernatural manifestation is edifying. It is not, then it is not of God because spiritual gifts are given for the edification of God's people.

"Second, this pertains particularly to purported supernatural healing--find out whether the purported healer followed the divinely established procedure [Holds priesthood of God; faith is manifest, anoints with oil by laying on of hands in the Name of the Lord, and, in accordance with the mind and will of God].

"Third, find out whether the worker of the purported miracle has himself received the gift of the Holy Ghost through the prescribed ordinances. If he has not, then his works, whatever they may be, are not the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This is the key test because,...the gifts of the spirit are given by the power of the Holy Ghost. Without the gift of the Holy Ghost, the manifestations of his gifts may not be enjoyed." ("Gifts of the Spirit," in *Conference Report*, April 1956, 68-73).

As noted, while there are many Spiritual gifts, each individual who is baptized, and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, at the time of his confirmation, receives one spiritual gift. Likewise, we have been directed to seek after other gifts for the purpose of using them to bless the lives of others.

We have also been cautioned that the devil also has the capacity to produce counterfeit manifestations of the Spirit. We read that in the days of Moses, when Aaron's rod became a serpent, then Pharaoh's wise men, sorcerer and magicians "...cast down every man his rod, and they became serpent:" (Exodus 7:12). "Aaron's rod [however] swallowed up their rods." (Exodus 7:12). When, however, they reached the plague of lice, the magicians sought to [repel the lice], "but they could not...Then the magicians said unto

Pharaoh, This is the finger [or manifestation] of God:" (Exodus 8:18-19).

VI. Conclusions

We learn of the importance of spiritual gifts through the scriptures. These include the writings of Paul, Moroni, and Mormon. We are also taught regarding the gifts of the Spirit in the Doctrine and Covenants.

All Faithful Members of the Church of Jesus Christ Receive Gifts of the Spirit: We noted three experiences from early Church History that illustrate the manifestations of the Spirit. These include: Philo Dibble and Newel Knight; Alma Smith; and, Dan Jones and Joseph Smith. We then listed and clarified eleven spiritual gifts.

God Gives Gifts of the Spirit for the Benefit of His Children. The purposes of these gifts are: (a) To strengthen and bless us individually; (b) To help us serve others; and, (3) To help us avoid being deceived.

We Should Seek and Cultivate Gifts of the Spirit. Five steps can help us as we develop the spiritual gifts we have been given: (a) Ask of God and follow the Spirit's guidance; (b) Seek gifts for the benefit of others, not for selfish reasons; (c) Do all things in the Name of Christ; (d) Thank God for the gifts He has given us; and, (e) Practice virtue and holiness continually.

There are Many Spiritual Gifts, But Not All are From God. There are many spiritual gifts. Marvin J. Ashton has added to the list. They each come by the Holy Ghost. Some are not of God, but of the devil. Marion G. Romney offers three simple tests to discern the counterfeit manifestations of the Spirit. They are: (1) Are the results edifying; (2) Are they done through the power and authority of the priesthood of God in proper manner; and (3) Has the one performing the manifestation received the Holy Ghost, otherwise the manifestation are not of God.

As we seek to apply the counsel we have received, we will be better able to identify the gifts of the Spirit we have received, and how we can use them to bless, not only our lives, but also the lives of others.

In our next lesson [D&C#16], we come to understand the importance and benefits of our keeping the Sabbath day holy.