

Gifts to Help Us Navigate Our Life

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Of the Seventy

We are not left alone. God has given us the necessary gifts to help us in our mortal experience.



Our Heavenly Father has a plan for us, a plan of happiness. His plan is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Following the teachings and example of Jesus Christ will enable us to understand more fully our part in that plan.

In the first chapter of the book of Moses, we find a short but precious statement that simply outlines God's work—namely, “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”¹

In our life's journey to return to and become more like our Father, we are not left alone. God has given us the necessary gifts to help us in our mortal experience.

“Spiritual gifts are blessings or abilities given by God to His children.”² These gifts help us navigate our lives toward eternal goals.

What a comfort it is to know that there is a plan providing us with a Savior, Jesus Christ.³ His sacrifice makes it possible for all people who comply with His gospel teachings to be forgiven through repentance. What a comfort it is to know that help is available for us to succeed in our endeavors to return to live with our Father in Heaven. What a comfort it is to know that we are not alone sailing uncharted waters as we go through life's experiences.

One gift that will help us navigate our lives is the gift He has given to all, *the ability and power to choose*.

Our choices have the undeniable power of transforming our lives. This gift is an extraordinary sign of trust in us and simultaneously a cherished personal responsibility to use wisely. Our Father in Heaven respects our freedom to choose and will never force us to do what is right, nor will He impede us from making mediocre choices.⁴ His invitation, however, concerning this important and vital gift is clearly expressed in the scriptures: “But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which

inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”⁵

The words “to do good continually” depict well the standard we need to apply as we use our agency.

Choices have consequences attached, which may or may not be manifested immediately after our decisions. Using the spiritual gifts we have been given is paramount in order to remain on the right course.

Recently I used a pocket-size GPS receiver; this is an incredible device which consists of an antenna tuned to the frequencies transmitted by satellites high above the earth, along with a screen indicating my current position on earth.

In the last few decades these kinds of devices have become widely used for scientific purposes, mapmaking, land surveying, and more recently to keep people from getting lost when driving!

Throughout history mankind has tried to keep itself from being lost. In my home country of Portugal, for instance, during the period of the discoveries in the fifteenth century, navigators “from Lisbon's shore, thro' seas where sail was never spread before”⁶ used the best possible maps and reading of the stars in the night sky, along with advanced sailing vessels for that time, to find their destination. In spite of all of this, it was not an easy task for those navigators to sail against adverse winds, and many times they wandered endlessly before finding their way in the vast sea.

In contrast, today with this GPS receiver, I can always have simultaneous answers to questions such as:

- Where am I?
- Where am I going?
- What's the best way to get there?
- When will I get there?

With this small device I feel a great sense of security when driving, and I

trust that it will take me with extraordinary precision and accuracy where I want to go.

I remember one day, however, as I drove into an underground parking lot, I was introduced to a new feature of this device—a warning voice struck me: “Lost satellite reception.” The concrete structures that surrounded me had interrupted the satellite signal and caused the device to lose connection.

As I came back again into the open air, I also realized that extra time was required while the device recaptured the needed signal.

We too have within us a “GPS” allowing us to know at all times what is right and what is wrong, as well as assisting us in making correct choices.

“We are born with a natural capacity to distinguish between right and wrong because of the Light of Christ that is given to every person (D&C 84:46). This faculty is called conscience. The possession of it makes us responsible beings.”⁷

Additionally, as members of the Church we have been given *the gift of the Holy Ghost to comfort, protect, and guide us*.⁸

However, like other faculties, our consciences may become inert through sin or misuse.⁹ If we become desensitized to the things of God in our lives, we too lose reception of the signal needed to guide us. Keeping the commandments is our best assurance to maintain a strong signal with the Divine.

President Thomas S. Monson, our beloved prophet, said, “Our lives will depend upon the decisions which we make—for decisions determine destiny.”¹⁰

I bear my witness that choosing good eventually leads to happiness, while wrong choices drag us down to unhappiness.¹¹ Learning to choose that which is good and keeping the commandments will create a pattern that will help us to:



- Attain fulfillment in life;
- Become more like our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ; and
- Qualify to inherit all the blessings promised to the faithful.

Another gift that will help us navigate our lives is *the capacity to believe the words of those who testify of Jesus Christ*.¹²

Through our prophets in every age, including our own, God has revealed His plan of happiness for individuals and families. Those who follow the prophets receive the

blessings God has promised.

We can always trust the living prophets; their teachings reflect the word and will of the Lord. “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”¹³

The lyrics of a Primary song admonish us to:

*Follow the prophet,
Follow the prophet; don't go
astray.
Follow the prophet, . . .
Follow the prophet; he knows the
way.*

*We can get direction all along our way,
If we heed the prophets—follow what they say.*¹⁴

I testify that our Father in Heaven is mindful of each one of us, that He listens to and answers our prayers, and that He communicates with His prophets to guide us. As we develop our faith to believe and live the words of prophets, we will strengthen our testimony of the plan of happiness and the central role of Jesus Christ in it.

Through the power to choose and the inherent capacity to believe the words of those who testify of Jesus Christ, we will be able to cross the great waters of life and reach our eternal destiny.

We have been taught this weekend by prophets, seers, and revelators. I am grateful for the guidance our Father in Heaven has extended to us and for His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I testify that They live and love us, and as we abide by the teachings we have received, we will make good choices, we will not be lost, and we will reach our eternal home. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Moses 1:39.
2. "Spiritual Gifts," at gospeltopics.lds.org.
3. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org/mormonorg/eng/basic-beliefs/heavenly-father-s-plan-of-happiness/god-has-a-plan-for-your-life.
4. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org.
5. Moroni 7:13.
6. Luis de Camões, *The Lusiad*, book I, stanza 1, trans. William Julius Mickle (1776).
7. "Conscience," in Guide to the Scriptures, at scriptures.lds.org.
8. See Acts 2:38.
9. See "Conscience," in Guide to the Scriptures, at scriptures.lds.org.
10. Thomas S. Monson, "Decisions Determine Destiny," *Tambuli*, July 1980, 30; *New Era*, Nov. 1979, 4.
11. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org.
12. See D&C 46:14.
13. Amos 3:7.
14. "Follow the Prophet," *Children's Songbook*, 110–11.