

# Acting on Spiritual Promptings

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREGG THORKELOSON

*A chaplain, a missionary, and a mission president blessed others when they acted on spiritual promptings.*

**L**atter-day Saints in the military often face unique challenges, but they are blessed, as are all members, with the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift “is the right to have, whenever one is worthy, the companionship of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

Through His promptings, “the Holy Ghost . . . will show unto [us] all things what [we] should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

Steve Merrill, an army chaplain who served in Kuwait, knows what it feels like to “trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good” (D&C 11:12).

“I felt impressed to start teaching a Book of Mormon study class, though I wasn’t sure why,” he says. “However, I have a firm belief that our Heavenly Father is better at directing our lives than we are, so I obeyed the prompting.”

Soon the name of a recent convert came to his mind.

“John\* had started falling back into his old habits after his baptism, so I invited him to the class,” says Chaplain Merrill. “John wanted to know why he didn’t feel the Spirit all the time. I told him it was because he wasn’t holding fast to the iron rod. John asked, ‘What’s the iron rod?’ I said, ‘Read the Book of Mormon and you’ll find out.’ John started taking his Book of Mormon out on post with him and reading it every day. Soon he was holding fast to the

iron rod. He even brought others to church with him.”

Though Bill\* was a lifelong member of the Church, he had been less active for seven years and had never read the Book of Mormon. “Soon he became a serious student of the Book of Mormon,” says Chaplain Merrill, “and he found a love in his heart for the Savior that he hadn’t felt before.”

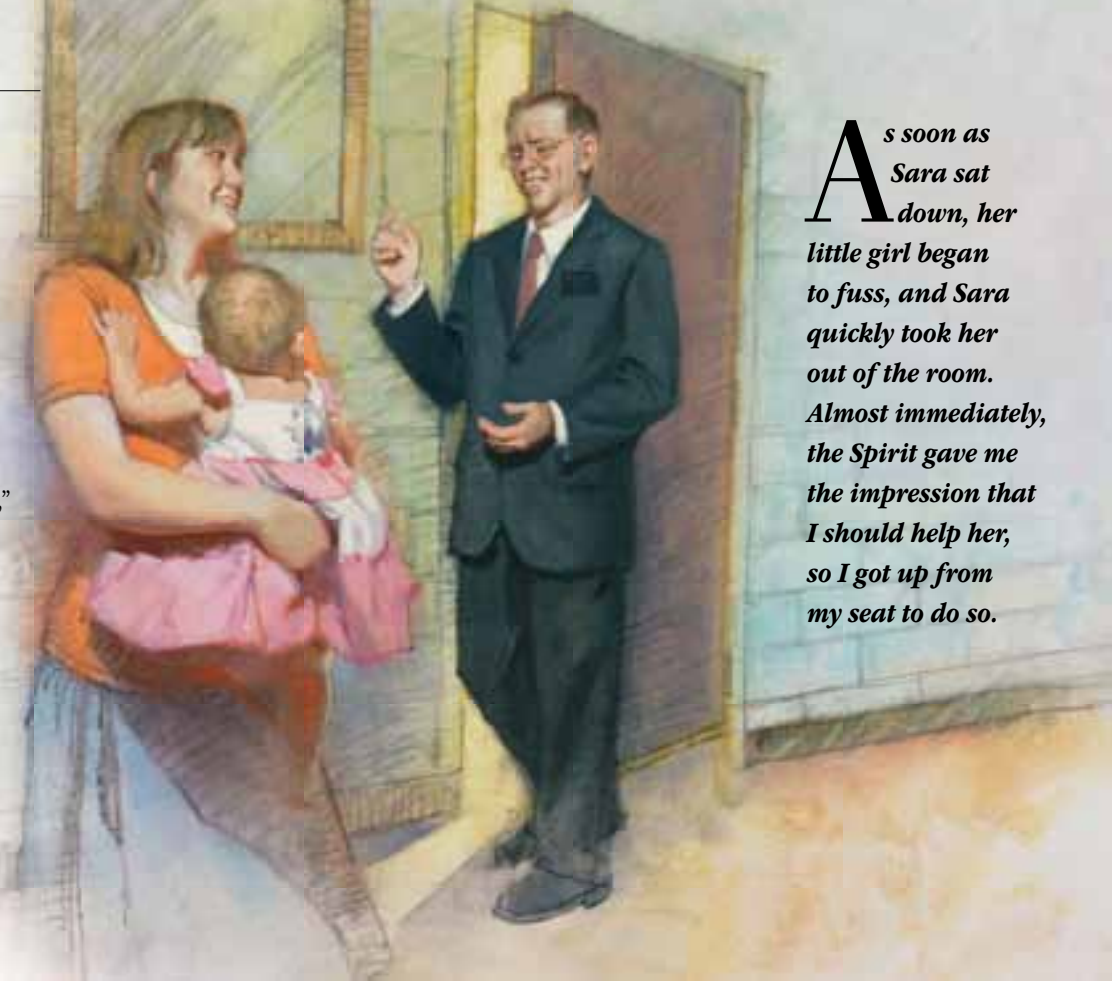
Both John and Bill became stalwarts in the Book of Mormon class. Their lives were changed and so was Chaplain Merrill’s. He says, “Being in Kuwait gave me the opportunity to help save others from spiritual disaster. I have a testimony that the worth of a soul *is* great. The Lord knew that John and Bill needed me. I am grateful for the promptings I received and humbled to have been an instrument in His hands.”

### **I Immediately Got Up**

Arden R. Thorum, who previously had served in the army, and his wife, JoAnn, served as senior missionaries at Camp Pendleton, near San Diego, California. “Our primary responsibility was to provide spiritual and emotional support to the approximately 40 part-member, less-active, and

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\* Names have been changed.



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active military families assigned to us,” he says. “We received inspiration many times as we sought to fulfill our calling.”

One such experience involved Sara\* and David.\* Just before David, a marine, was to be deployed, the Thorums visited with them, and Elder Thorum gave each of them a blessing. “During the blessing for Sara, I said that while her husband was gone we would look after her and the two children,” says Elder Thorum. “My wife and I knew from being involved with these military families that blessings came to them and to us as a result of our service.”

About two weeks later, Sara took her four-year-old son to Primary and then came to Sunday School carrying her 18-month-old daughter. Elder Thorum says of that morning, “As soon as Sara sat down, her little girl began to fuss, and Sara quickly took her out of the room. Almost immediately, the Spirit gave me the impression that I should help her, so I got up from my seat to do so.

“Sara’s desire to come to church that Sunday was exemplified by the fact that it was the weekend of the change to daylight saving time. She had to get the children and herself ready an hour earlier than usual, as well as travel 15 miles to make an 8:30 a.m. meeting.

“I was glad I had listened to the prompting of the



Spirit and felt that the purpose of the prompting had been fulfilled. Later that evening, however, my wife and I received an e-mail from Sara, and it became clear that the prompting had been a blessing to her also. Sara wrote that she had been feeling discouraged, and the fact that we had helped her reassured her that there were those who cared about her and her family.”

#### Invite Him In

Hans-Wilhelm Kelling, now of Utah, previously served as a mission president in the Germany Munich Mission. Among his responsibilities was the opportunity to interview Church members who wanted to receive a patriarchal blessing. He tells of a time when he strongly felt the promptings of the Holy Ghost and obeyed, resulting in the blessing of not one life but two.

“One afternoon a young woman who desired a patriarchal blessing came into my office. She was worthy in every respect. After the formal interview, I became better acquainted with her. I discovered she was married to an American serviceman who was not a member of the Church. When I found out he was waiting outside, this prompting came: ‘Go outside and invite him in.’ I followed the admonition of the still, small voice.

“All three of us chatted briefly about his duties, and then the Holy Ghost took charge. Under inspiration I complimented the soldier for his choice in a spouse and explained what a patriarchal blessing is. He told me his unit was leaving the next day, and he would be gone for four weeks. I told him his wife was a worthy member of the Church who upheld the sacred principles taught by Christ. I assured him she would be faithful to him while he was gone and that she would receive him with open arms when he returned. He listened attentively, and before he left I offered a prayer asking the Lord to bless both of them and to protect him and bring him back safely.



#### LISTEN TO PROMPTINGS

*Elder M. Russell Ballard said on April 27, 2008:*

*“On behalf of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, I express appreciation and love for members of the military and assure them they are remembered in the prayers of the Brethren.*

*“Listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. . . . You’ll have a prompting to say something or to do something in relationship to those that you serve with or in your neighborhood or so forth. Do it! Trust the Lord.”*

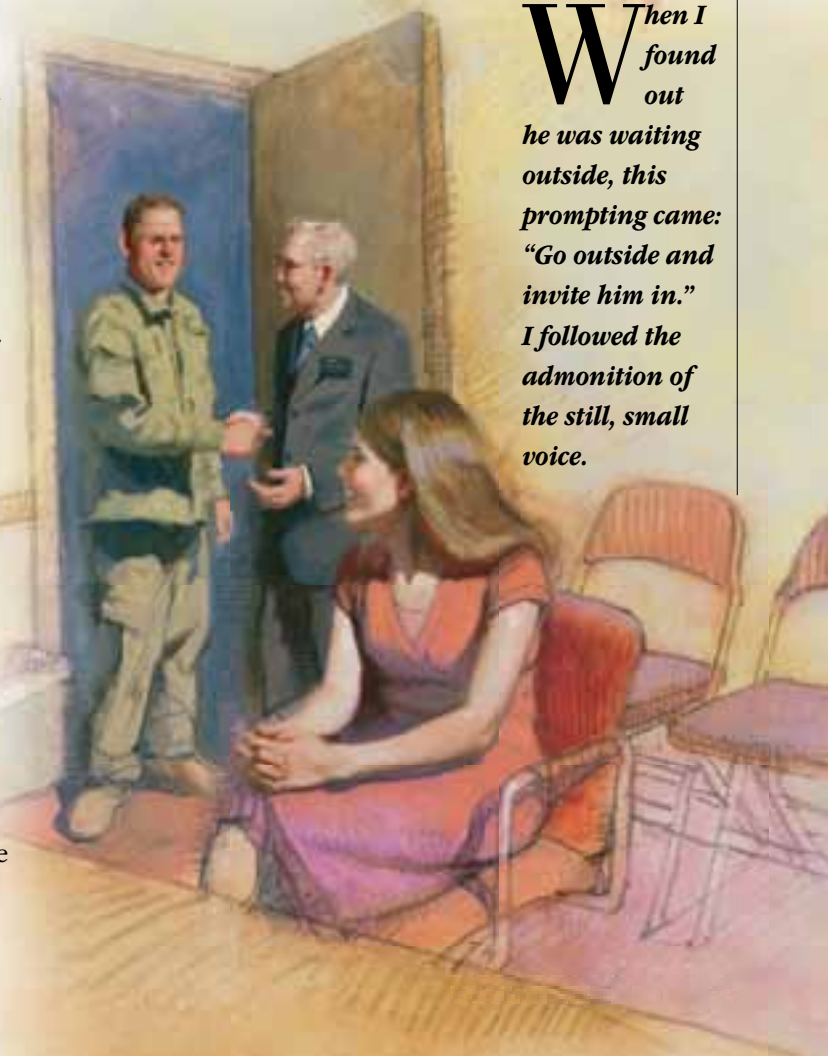
**“Beware of Apathy,” Greg Hill and Ian Houston, Church News, week ending May 3, 2008, 15.**

“Several months later at a district conference, the same serviceman approached me and said, ‘During those long nights on maneuver, when I was sitting in my foxhole, I thought about my wife and recalled what you had said to me about her that afternoon. When I returned, I invited the missionaries to teach me. I have been baptized and ordained a priest.’

“I embraced him and silently thanked the Lord for sending the Holy Ghost that afternoon.” ■

#### NOTE

1. Bible Dictionary, 704.



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