



# The Voice of the Spirit



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*Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or need to change my course.*

When I was young, my father had a store where he sold and repaired clocks and watches. Our family home was located in the back of the store, so I grew up with the sounds of clocks and watches.

At the end of each day, my father would take some of the wall clocks he had worked on during the day and hang them inside our home on the walls near our bedrooms. I didn't understand why he did this and why we had to sleep with all that noise. But with time, the sound of different clocks became a familiar part of otherwise quiet nights.

A couple of years later, I began working with my father in the store, learning from him how to repair watches. One morning he said something that opened my mind and helped me understand why he hung the wall clocks outside our bedrooms instead of keeping them inside the store.

"Could you bring me the wall clock that was near your bedroom last night?" he asked. "I was listening to the sound of it during the night, and I realized it is not working right. I need to look at it again."

*That was it!* In the silence of the night, he had listened to the sound of the clock in the same way a doctor listens to the sound of the heart of a patient. In the process of repairing various types of clocks and watches over a

lifetime, he had trained his ears to determine by a clock's sound whether it was working perfectly or not.

After that experience, I began to pay attention to the sound of the clocks during the night, just as my father did. By doing so, I learned to recognize whether a clock was working correctly or whether it needed adjustment.

As I grew older and gained an understanding of gospel principles, I began to compare this experience with the positive influence the Holy Ghost can have in our lives. I began to liken times of spiritual reflection and meditation to quiet moments in the night during my childhood, and I began to liken the sound of the clocks to the voice of the Spirit warning me, guiding me, and speaking to me from time to time.

## Important Spiritual Qualities

This experience helped me recognize the truthfulness of experiences Nephi had with the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. From the Book of Mormon, we learn that Nephi shared with his brother Sam "the things which the Lord had *manifested unto [him] by his Holy Spirit*" (1 Nephi 2:17; emphasis added).

Nephi was well acquainted with the influence of the Holy Ghost. His life was filled with feelings of love from the Father and the Son, which were manifested to him

by the Holy Ghost. As we review the life of Nephi, we see clear examples of God's love made manifest through answered prayers and spiritual guidance. Examples include:

- Nephi's vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 11–15).
- The Liahona, which worked according to faith (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 26–30).
- Nephi's deliverance after being bound with cords (see 1 Nephi 7:17–18).
- The Lord's direction while Nephi's family crossed the ocean (see 1 Nephi 18:21–23).
- A warning from the Lord to flee into the wilderness (see 2 Nephi 5:5).

In his early years and likely with help from the example of his parents, Nephi developed a sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. He cultivated this ability by exercising the following important spiritual qualities:

- *Desire*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, . . . [had] great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 2:16). “I . . . desired to know the things that my father had seen” (1 Nephi 11:1; see also verse 3).
- *Faith*: “I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father” (1 Nephi 2:16).
- *Prayerfulness*: “And I, Nephi, did go into the mount oft, and I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things” (1 Nephi 18:3).
- *Obedience*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

### The Work of the Holy Ghost

Nephi was well qualified to speak about the third member of the Godhead. He had learned to listen to the voice of the Spirit—whether in calm waters or troubled seas. His



experiences guided him to write about “the work of the Holy Ghost”<sup>1</sup> (see 2 Nephi 31–32). From Nephi and other prophets, we learn that:

The Holy Ghost *reveals*: “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator”<sup>2</sup> (see 1 Nephi 10:17–19; 2 Nephi 32:5; Moroni 10:5).

The Holy Ghost *inspires*: He gives us thoughts, feelings, and words, enlightens our understanding, and directs our thoughts (see 1 Nephi 4:6).

The Holy Ghost *testifies*: He testifies of the Father and of the Son (see 2 Nephi 31:18; 3 Nephi 28:11; Ether 12:41).

The Holy Ghost *teaches*: He increases our knowledge (see 2 Nephi 32:5).

The Holy Ghost *sanctifies*: After baptism we may be sanctified through reception of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:20).

The Holy Ghost *reminds*: He brings things to our mind when we need them most (see John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost *comforts*: During times of trouble or despair, the Holy Ghost can lift our spirits, give us hope

(see Moroni 8:26), teach us “the peaceable things of the kingdom” (D&C 36:2), and help us feel “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).<sup>3</sup>

**The Influence of the Holy Ghost**

In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, we learn that Lehi “was filled with the Spirit of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:12). In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni promises us that God “will manifest the truth of [the Book of Mormon] unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

From the beginning to the end of this inspired book of scripture, the Holy Ghost actively participates in the lives of God’s people. This powerful influence extends to and touches all readers of the Book of Mormon who pray, show faith, and have a sincere desire to know the truth (see Moroni 10:4–5).

How can we recognize the Holy Ghost and use the right we have as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to receive the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives? Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy has taught: “We all have experiences with the Holy Ghost, even though we may not always recognize them. As inspired thoughts come into our minds, we know them to be true by the *spiritual feelings that enter into our hearts.*”<sup>4</sup>

To increase our ability to receive the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost

in our lives, we, like Nephi, need to cultivate a desire to receive, exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “pray always, and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:9), and obey the commandments.

President Thomas S. Monson has asked that we do one more thing: “Open your hearts, even your very souls, to the sound of that special voice which testifies of truth. . . .

May we ever be in tune, that we might hear this comforting, guiding voice which will keep us safe.”<sup>5</sup>

From my father, I learned the lesson of listening in a practical way—working with watches and clocks. Today I treasure the lesson he taught me. The Holy Ghost, in fact, still brings that lesson to my mind and heart, and He gives me a promise of good things to come.

That experience has helped me search for quiet moments when I can listen for the voice of the Spirit. Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or whether I need to change my course so that I can be in tune with Heavenly Father’s desires. ■

**TO RECEIVE INFLUENCE AND DIRECTION FROM THE HOLY GHOST**

- Cultivate a desire to receive.
- Exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray always.
- Obey the commandments.

**NOTES**

1. Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 105.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
3. For further understanding of the roles of the Holy Ghost, see David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 59–62; Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105–7.
4. Craig C. Christensen, “An Unspeakable Gift from God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 14; emphasis added.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 84.



**THE HOLY GHOST AND PERSONAL REVELATION**

“The Holy Ghost provides personal revelation to help us make major life decisions about such things as education, missions, careers, marriage, children, where we will live with our families, and so on. In these matters, Heavenly Father expects us to use our agency, study the situation out in our minds according to gospel principles, and bring a decision to Him in prayer.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 105.