

How Does the **SPIRIT** Speak to Us?



*The Spirit is a voice
that one feels more
than hears.*

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We do not have the words—even the scriptures do not have the words—which perfectly describe the Spirit. The scriptures usually use the word *voice*. That does not exactly fit—it does, but it doesn't. These very delicate, fine spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears; it is a voice that one *feels* more than *hears*.

We cannot communicate spiritual knowledge with words alone. We can, with words, show one another how to prepare for the reception of the Spirit, and the Spirit itself will help: “For when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1).

When we experience a spiritual communication, we are wont to say within ourselves, “This is it. Now I understand.” That is what is meant by those words in the revelations; and thereafter, words are adequate for teaching about spiritual things if they are carefully chosen. Nephi explained it this way:

“Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Should an angel converse with you, neither you nor he would be confined to corporeal sight or sound in order to communicate. For there is that spiritual process described by the Prophet Joseph Smith by which pure intelligence can flow into our minds and by which we can know what we need to know without either the effort of study or the passage of time, because that is revelation (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 132). We talk about confining on little computer chips vast amounts of information; through the processes of revelation and through this language of the Spirit, tremendous amounts of inspiration and information can be given to us instantly.

The voice of the Spirit is described in the scriptures as being neither loud nor harsh, not a voice of thunder,

neither a voice of great tumultuous noise, but rather as still and small, of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it can pierce even the very soul and cause the heart to burn.

The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting. It never shakes us with a heavy hand. The Spirit whispers. It caresses so gently, indeed, that if we are preoccupied, we can't feel it at all.

Occasionally, the Spirit will press just firmly enough or often enough for us to pay attention; but from my experience, most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, if we do not listen with those feelings, the Spirit will withdraw and wait until we come seeking and listening, in our manner and our expression.

I have learned that the very impressive and miraculous spiritual experiences come very infrequently. Something is amiss if they come too intensely and too frequently. The question then arises, from whence come these experiences? Remember that there is a counterfeit.

You cannot force spiritual things. A testimony is not thrust upon you; it grows. And a testimony is a testimony, and it should be respected, whether it is small or large. We become taller in our testimony like we grow in physical stature and hardly know it is happening, because it comes by growth.

I know that the gospel is true; the Spirit is there. If you rely on that, you will be doing the work of Him who is our Redeemer, who wrought the Atonement, whose Church this is, who lives. You will be blessed of the Father. Of these things I bear witness and invoke His blessings.

You'd think there would be a better way for one the Twelve to bear testimony, but we're left to bear it in the same way our little grandkids do in Primary—just to say we know it's true. But I know that He lives. I know His voice when He speaks. I know Him, and of Him I bear witness. **NE**

From an address delivered at a seminar for new mission presidents on June 19, 1991