

A GUIDE FOR



By Elder Larry J.
Echo Hawk
Of the Seventy

You can find guidance for your life from the words of prophets, both in the scriptures and in the words they speak today.

I was a teenager when the missionaries brought the gospel into my home. I remember listening to their message and thinking that the Father and the Son appearing to 14-year-old Joseph Smith and an angel leading Joseph to golden plates sounded too good to be true. The missionaries also said that there was a living prophet on the earth. That also sounded too good to be true. But I noticed positive changes in our home as the missionaries taught our family. Soon I joined the Church.

Changes in my own life, however, didn't come immediately just because I was baptized. I began attending church on Sundays, but other than that, I still did the same things I was doing before. It wasn't until I was 17 years old that I made a promise to the Lord that I would read at least 10 pages of the Book of Mormon every day.

YOUR LIFE



SPECIAL MESSAGES

One of the first things I read was that the Book of Mormon was “written to the Lamanites,” and I was taught that the Lamanites “are among the ancestors of the American Indians” (Book of Mormon, Title Page and Introduction).

My great-grandfather was a Pawnee Indian born in the mid-1800s in present-day Nebraska, USA. He was the first to carry the name Echo Hawk. Among the Pawnee, the hawk is a symbol of bravery. As the elders of the tribe watched my great-grandfather, they saw many deeds of bravery. They also noticed that he was quiet and reserved and did not speak about the courageous things he had done. The elders also heard about his brave deeds from others.

“It is like an echo,” they said. “We will call him Echo Hawk because he is like the hawk whose deeds are echoed.”



Photo of Elder Echo Hawk's great-grandfather.

I am proud of my name and of my heritage. Because of my heritage, I felt that the Book of Mormon had special messages for me. I was eager to continue reading.

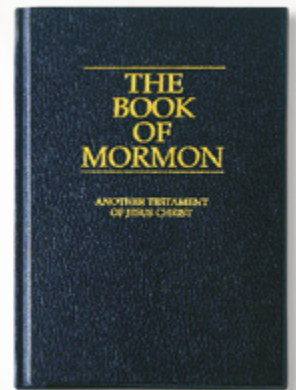
I never missed a day. As I read, I marked in red all the great truths everyone needs to know. Then I marked in yellow the promises the prophets made to the descendants of the Lamanites. As I did so, their words seemed to fly off the page!

After reading the last page, I got on my knees and asked Heavenly Father if the Book of Mormon was true, if Joseph Smith was a prophet, and if the Church had a living prophet. As I prayed, I felt the Spirit powerfully witness to me the truth of these things.

Several years later, I volunteered for service in the United States Marine Corps. At the beginning of basic training, I found myself standing at attention in front of my barrack's bunk along with 54 other Marine Corps recruits. I met my drill instructor, a battle-hardened veteran, when he kicked open the door to the barracks and entered while screaming words laced with profanity.

After this terrifying introduction, he started at one end of the barracks and confronted each recruit with questions. Without exception, the drill instructor found something about each recruit to ridicule with loud, vulgar language. Down the row he came, with each marine shouting back his answer as commanded: “Yes” or “No, Sergeant Instructor.” I could not see exactly what he was doing, because we had been ordered to stand at attention with our eyes looking straight ahead.

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When it was my turn, I could tell he grabbed my duffel bag and emptied the contents onto my mattress behind me. He looked through my belongings, then walked back to face me. I braced myself for his attack. In his hand was my Book of Mormon. I expected that he would yell at me; instead, he moved close to me and whispered, “Are you a Mormon?”

As commanded, I yelled, “Yes, Sergeant Instructor.”

Again I expected the worst. Instead, he paused and raised his hand that held my Book of Mormon and in a very quiet voice said, “Do you believe in this book?”

Again I shouted, “Yes, Sergeant Instructor.”

At this point I was sure he would scream disparaging words about Mormons and the Book of Mormon, but he just stood there in silence. After a moment he walked back to my bunk and carefully laid down my Book of Mormon. He then walked by me and went on to ridicule and disparage all the remaining recruits.

I have often wondered why that tough drill instructor spared me that day. But I am grateful I was able to say without hesitation, “Yes, I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” and “Yes, I know the Book of Mormon is true.” My testimony of the special messages found in the Book of Mormon is a precious gift given to me through the Holy Ghost.

You can find special messages for you from the words of prophets in the Book of Mormon and other books of scripture as you follow Nephi’s teaching to “feast upon the

words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3).

We don’t just have the words of prophets in the scriptures—we also have the words of prophets and apostles who speak to us today. Their words have been a wonderful blessing throughout my life.

GUIDANCE FROM A PROPHET, SEER, AND REVELATOR

Shortly after my baptism, I was with other Native Americans at a youth conference near my hometown in Farmington, New Mexico. We were told an Apostle of the Lord, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), would be speaking to us. I had never seen him before,

but when he arrived, I remember feeling something special in his presence.

I had that same feeling several years later when Elder Kimball spoke to a group of Native American students at Brigham Young University. He said he could see the progress of the Native American people. He could see them as engineers and builders, owners of industries and factories. He also saw them in political positions and as doc-

tors and lawyers looking after their people.

I remember listening carefully to his words. The Spirit witnessed to me that I should remember them, so I took a copy of this part of Elder Kimball’s talk and put it in my scriptures. I still have it there, and I’ve been prompted to read it again and again. The paper is old now. It looks like an ancient document, but it has been a guide for me.

Before graduating from BYU, I read Elder Kimball’s words again about seeing Native Americans as lawyers looking after their people. I decided to go to law school and become a lawyer. I’m grateful for the opportunities I’ve had to use my education to help others. I have also been elected to several



Elder Spencer W. Kimball, who later became President of the Church, had a great love for Native Americans.



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President Russell M. Nelson (center) and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (right) visit District President Dennis Brimhall at the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center during a global tour of eight countries.

political offices. Growing up, I never thought I would have a university education or run for political office. I probably would have done none of these things without the words of a prophet, seer, and revelator of the Lord to guide me.

The best day of my life, December 20, 1968, was the day my wife and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. The officiator at our temple sealing was Elder Kimball. He gave us wise counsel that day. He told us that we were going to make tens of thousands of decisions in our lives. The most important of those decisions would be deciding to live in accordance with gospel teachings and the covenants we made in the temple. These decisions have been a blessing to us throughout our marriage.

BLESSED AND GUIDED

Have you ever wondered how following the prophets can bless and guide your life? The last time we heard the voice of President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) in general conference, he counseled us to read the Book of Mormon

and to study, ponder, and pray about its message.

In the following conference, President Russell M. Nelson and President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency spoke of the blessings they received as they heeded President Monson's counsel. Through their example, they showed us that it's not just a matter of hearing the prophet's words. We also need to study, ponder, and apply them in our lives. As we take the opportunity to hear and follow the words of living prophets and apostles and study the words of ancient prophets in the scriptures, we will be blessed and guided.

For the past few years, I have worked on a daily basis in the midst of prophets, seers, and revelators. The more I associate with them, the more I know of their divine calling. Having the faith to follow their words has helped me recognize the hand of the Lord in my life. **NE**

