



EIGHT REASONS FOR REVELATION

*Heavenly Father
can speak to you
in many ways
and for many
purposes.*



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You have already received revelations, and you can receive more revelations because communication from God to men and women is a reality. President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) declared that it is “the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint . . . to have the manifestations of the Spirit every day of our lives.”¹

As I review the following eight purposes of revelation, I hope you will recognize the extent to which you have already received revelation or inspiration and resolve to cultivate this spiritual gift for more frequent use in the future.

1. *Testify*

The testimony or witness of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ and that the gospel is true is a revelation from God. When the Apostle Peter affirmed that Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God, the Savior called him blessed, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17).

2. *Prophecy*

Speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost and within the limits of his or her stewardship, a person may be inspired to predict what will come to pass in the future. This is the office of the prophet, seer, and revelator, who prophesies for the Church. Prophecy is part of the calling of a patriarch. Each of us is privileged to receive prophetic revelation illuminating future events in our lives, like a Church calling we are to receive.

3. *Comfort*

A third purpose of revelation is to give comfort. Such a revelation came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail.

After many months in deplorable conditions, he cried out in agony and loneliness, pleading with the Lord to remember the persecuted Saints. The comforting answer came:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

A revelation of comfort can also come in connection with a blessing of the priesthood, either from the words spoken or from the feeling communicated in connection with the blessing.

Another type of comforting revelation is the assurance received that a sin has been forgiven. This revelation, which comes after a person has completed all the steps of repentance, gives assurance that the price has been paid, that God has heard the repentant sinner, and that his or her sins are forgiven.

4. *Uplift*

At some time in our lives each of us needs to be lifted up from a depression, from a sense of foreboding or inadequacy, or just from a plateau of spiritual mediocrity. Because it raises our spirits and helps us resist evil and seek good, I believe that the feeling of uplift that is communicated by reading the scriptures or by enjoying wholesome music, art, or literature is a distinct purpose of revelation.

5. *Inform*

The fifth purpose of revelation is to inform. This may consist of inspiration giving a person the words to speak on a particular occasion, such as in the blessings pronounced

by a patriarch or in sermons or other words spoken under the influence of the Holy Ghost. The Lord commanded Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to lift up their voices and speak the thoughts that he would put into their hearts:

“For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:6; see also D&C 84:85; D&C 124:97).

In other circumstances, needed information is communicated by the quiet whisperings of the Spirit. A child loses a treasured possession, prays for help, and is inspired to find it; an adult has a problem at work, at home, or in family history research, prays, and is led to the information necessary to resolve it; a Church leader prays to know whom the Lord would have him call to fill a position, and the Spirit whispers a name. In all of these examples, familiar to each of us, the Holy Ghost acts in His office as a teacher and revelator, communicating information and truths for the edification and guidance of the recipient.

6. *Restrain*

The revelation that restrains us from doing something is one of the most common forms of revelation. It often comes by surprise, when we have not asked for revelation or guidance on a particular subject. But if we are keeping the commandments of God and living in tune with His Spirit, a restraining force will steer us away from things we should not do.

7. *Confirm*

A common way to seek revelation is to propose a particular course of action and then pray for inspiration to confirm it. The Lord explained the confirming type of

revelation when Oliver Cowdery failed in his efforts to translate the Book of Mormon:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:7–8).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stressed our responsibility to do all that we can before we seek a revelation: “We’re expected to use the gifts and talents and abilities, the sense and judgment and agency with which we are endowed. . . . We’re expected to do everything in our power that we can and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we’ve reached the right conclusion.”²

8. *Impel*

The Spirit can impel a person to action. This is not a case where a person proposes to take a particular action and the Spirit either restrains or confirms. This is a case where revelation comes when it is not being sought and impels some action not proposed. This type of revelation is obviously less common than other types, but its rarity makes it all the more significant.

I know that God lives and that revelation to His children is a reality. I pray that we will be worthy and willing and that He will bless us to grow in this principle of revelation. **NE**

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on September 29, 1981.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 76.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, “Agency and Inspiration,” *New Era*, June 2012, 30, 32.