



The Gift of the Holy Ghost

Chapter 21

The Holy Ghost

In chapter 7 we learned that the Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. He is “a personage of Spirit” (D&C 130:22). He does not have a body of flesh and bones. His influence can be everywhere at once. His mission is to bear witness of the Father and the Son and of all truth. Furthermore, the Holy Ghost purifies, or sanctifies, us to prepare us to dwell in the presence of God. The Holy Ghost purifies our hearts so we no longer have the desire to do evil.

There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the *gift* of the Holy Ghost. In this chapter we will learn what the gift of the Holy Ghost is and how we can receive this great gift from God.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost

- What is the difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost?

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the privilege—given to people who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ, been baptized, and been confirmed as members of the Church—to receive continual guidance and inspiration from the Holy Ghost.

Joseph Smith said we believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now as much as it was enjoyed in the days of the first

For teachers: You may want to invite class members or family members to participate in one or more of the following activities: (1) Read the additional scriptures listed at the end of the chapter, and discuss how the Holy Ghost helps us through our mortal journey. (2) Tell about some of the blessings that have come into their lives because they have the gift of the Holy Ghost. (3) Discuss what parents can do to help their children understand the gift of the Holy Ghost and how the Holy Ghost communicates with us.

Apostles. We believe in this gift in all its fulness, power, greatness, and glory. (See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 97–98.)

A person may be temporarily guided by the Holy Ghost without receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 130:23). However, this guidance will not be continuous unless the person is baptized and receives the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We read in Acts 10 that the Roman soldier Cornelius received inspiration from the Holy Ghost so that he knew the gospel of Jesus Christ was true. But Cornelius did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that if Cornelius had not received baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost would have left him (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 97).

Today people who are not members of the Church learn by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true (see Moroni 10:4–5). But that initial testimony leaves them if they do not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They do not receive the continuing assurance that can come to those who have the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost

- What must we do to receive the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost?

After people are baptized, they are confirmed members of the Church and given the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. The Lord said, “Whoso having faith you shall confirm in my church, by the laying on of the hands, and I will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them” (D&C 33:15).

Every worthy elder of the Church, when authorized, may give the gift of the Holy Ghost to another person. However, there is no guarantee that the person will receive inspiration and guidance from the Holy Ghost just because the elders have laid their hands on his or her head. Each person must “receive the Holy Ghost.” This means

that the Holy Ghost will come to us only when we are faithful and desire help from this heavenly messenger.

To be worthy to have the help of the Holy Ghost, we must seek earnestly to obey the commandments of God. We must keep our thoughts and actions pure.

Recognizing the Influence of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost usually communicates with us quietly. His influence is often referred to as a “still small voice” (see 1 Kings 19:9–12; Helaman 5:30; D&C 85:6). President Boyd K. Packer explained: “The Holy Ghost speaks with a voice that you *feel* more than you *hear*. . . . While we speak of ‘listening’ to the whisperings of the Spirit, most often one describes a spiritual prompting by saying, ‘I had a feeling . . .’” He continued: “This voice of the Spirit speaks gently, prompting you what to do or what to say, or it may caution or warn you” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 60).

One of God’s Greatest Gifts

- What blessings can we receive through the gift of the Holy Ghost?

The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of God’s greatest gifts to us. Through the Holy Ghost we may know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that His Church has been restored to the earth. We may have the promptings of the Holy Ghost to show us all the things we should do (see 2 Nephi 32:5). The Holy Ghost sanctifies us to prepare us for God’s presence. We may enjoy the gifts of the Spirit (see chapter 22 in this book). This great gift from our Heavenly Father can also bring peace to our hearts and an understanding of the things of God (see 1 Corinthians 2:9–12).

- Why is the gift of the Holy Ghost one of God’s greatest gifts to us?

Additional Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; D&C 130:22–23 (the Holy Ghost dwells with the faithful)
- Acts 19:1–7 (gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed anciently)

- Moroni 8:25–26 (how to receive the Holy Ghost)
- Moroni 10:5 (the Holy Ghost is a witness to truth)
- Mosiah 5:2 (the Holy Ghost changes hearts)
- Alma 5:54 (the Holy Ghost sanctifies)