

Lesson  
**15**

# Recognizing Personal Revelation

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**Purpose** To teach class members to better understand, receive, and act on personal revelation.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–15; 9:7–9; Articles of Faith 1:9.
  2. Familiarize yourself with the following scriptures describing ways revelation can come: Genesis 41:1–36; Luke 1:26–38; 1 Nephi 4:1–18; 8; 16:10; Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23; Moses 1:8; Joseph Smith—History 1:30, 33, 59, 62.
  3. Additional reading: Bible Dictionary, “Revelation,” 762.
  4. You may want to invite the bishop or another guest (with the bishopric’s approval) to tell about how personal revelation has affected his or her life. (This comes at the end of the lesson; the guest does not need to be present the entire class time).
  5. Materials needed: A set of scriptures and a scripture marking pencil for each class member. Continue to encourage class members to bring their own scriptures to class each week.

*Note to the teacher* *The First Presidency has said, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes its origin, its existence, and its hope for the future to the principles of continuous revelation” (Church News, 10 Jan. 1970, 12). The prophet receives revelation for the Church as a whole, but each individual can receive revelation for his or her own personal needs. Help class members be aware of the importance of personal revelation in their lives.*

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Revelation Is God’s Way of Communicating with His Children**

**Activity** Write the letter *R* on the chalkboard and ask class members what gospel-oriented word it stands for. If class members do not guess *Revelation* right away, add letters one at a time until class members guess the right word.

**Discussion** • What is revelation? (God’s way of communicating with his children on earth.)

Help class members find “Revelation” in the Bible Dictionary (page 762). Ask a class member to read the following excerpt from that section, and suggest that class members mark the excerpt in their own scriptures.

“Divine revelation is one of the grandest concepts and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for without it, man could not know of the things of God and could not be saved with any degree of salvation in the eternities. Continuous revelation from God to his saints, through the Holy Ghost . . . makes possible daily guidance along true paths and leads the faithful soul to complete and eternal salvation in the celestial kingdom.”

- Some churches believe that revelation has stopped, that God no longer communicates with his children on earth. Why is it important to know that revelation continues today?

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### Every Worthy Church Member Has the Right to Receive Personal Revelation

Quotation  
and discussion

- Who can receive revelation? (You may want to list class members' responses on the chalkboard.)

Have someone read the following statement from Elder Boyd K. Packer:

"Revelation is not confined to the prophet. It is shared by the General Authorities.

" . . . Fathers and mothers also may receive inspiration, revelation . . . to help guide their families. And of course each of us, if we will live for it, may be the recipient of spiritual communications for our own personal guidance" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 135; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 93).

Explain that every worthy Church member has the right to receive revelation, but each of us is given revelation based on our responsibilities and stewardship.

- Who has the right to receive revelation for the whole Church? (The prophet.)
- For the ward? (The bishop.)
- For the ward Primary? (The ward Primary president.)
- For your family? (Your father and mother.)
- For you individually? (You.)

Emphasize that each class member, if he or she is trying to live righteously, has the right and privilege to receive personal revelation.

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### Revelation Comes in Many Different Ways

Chalkboard  
discussion

Explain that the revelations of God come in a variety of ways.

- What are some of the methods God uses to communicate with his children?

List class members' responses on the chalkboard. As class members mention a method, ask if they can think of an incident in the scriptures or Church history when this method of revelation was used. (Spend only a few minutes on this discussion.)

Answers may include:

1. Heavenly messengers (Moroni's appearance to Joseph Smith; the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, the mother of Jesus).
2. Visions and dreams (Moses' vision of the earth's creation; Lehi's dream; Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream; Brigham Young's dream of Joseph Smith, discussed in lesson 14).
3. Sacred instruments (Lehi's use of the Liahona for direction; Joseph Smith's use of the Urim and Thummim to translate the Book of Mormon).

4. Inspiration (Oliver Cowdery receiving peace and a testimony through the Holy Ghost; Nephi determining how to obtain the brass plates from Laban).
- Which method of revelation will most members of the Church likely experience? (Inspiration.)

Teacher presentation

Remind class members that inspiration comes through the Holy Ghost, and it can come by way of feelings, thoughts, or words. Review from lesson 14 the ways the Holy Ghost may inspire us (see pages 76–77).

Explain that personal revelation can also come to us through the scriptures or another person. The Holy Ghost may prompt us to read a certain verse of scripture, or he may inspire a parent, teacher, or Church leader to tell us what we need to hear. (For example, when Joseph Smith needed to know which church to join, he was prompted to pray when he read James 1:5 in the Bible.) Priesthood blessings can also be valuable sources of personal revelation.

*Note to the teacher*

*Many class members have received and recognized inspiration from the Holy Ghost. Some, however, may not have received it or may not have recognized it as inspiration. As appropriate, encourage class members who are familiar with the promptings of the Holy Ghost to share their experiences with other class members.*

You may want to point out to class members that Satan tries to imitate the promptings of the Holy Ghost. See the third enrichment activity for information you can share on how to distinguish between genuine personal revelation and counterfeit promptings from Satan.

Stories and discussion

Tell in your own words the following stories. Discuss with class members how the person in each story received personal revelation through inspiration.

#### *Story 1*

In 1921 Elders David O. McKay (who later became the ninth President of the Church) and Hugh J. Cannon visited missions around the world. While in Hawaii, they visited the Kilauea volcano, the largest active volcano in the world, with some of the missionaries. They discovered a natural balcony just inside the volcano, and Elder McKay and several of the missionaries climbed down to stand on it. On this balcony they were out of the chilly wind and had a marvelous view of the inside of the volcano. After a while, Elder McKay said, “Brethren, I feel impressed that we should get out of here.” Almost immediately after they climbed back to the rim, the balcony on which they had been standing crumbled and fell into the molten lava below. (See *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss, rev. ed. [1976], 51–53.)

#### *Story 2*

A young elder of the Church in the armed services was stationed in Australia during World War II. He became acquainted with a family living on a nearby farm and spent a good deal of time with them while off duty. The family members became interested in the gospel and desired to learn more about it. The elder had attended seminary, priesthood meetings, and Church classes as a boy but felt unqualified to teach this family the gospel. He decided, however, to do his best and pray for help. He later explained that in his attempt to teach the family he quoted many scriptures that he had long forgotten.

*Story 3*

When Annie was born she was so tiny that her mother's wedding ring would fit over her wrist. When Annie's mother died, she left the ring to Annie. One day Annie wore the ring, which she loved dearly, while she was doing her housework. When the work was all done, she discovered that the ring was gone. She frantically searched the house, but it was nowhere to be found. Finally she knelt down and asked Heavenly Father to help her. She felt she should look in the bedroom. She looked everywhere in there, but could not find the ring. Disappointed, she went into another room, but again she felt she should look in the bedroom. As she went through the bedroom door, there, beneath the bed, she saw the ring.

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**We Can Ask for Personal Revelation**

Scripture  
discussion

Explain that sometimes inspiration or revelation simply comes to us, as it did to Elder McKay in the story above. More often, however, we must ask for the revelation we need, as the people in the other two stories did.

- How did Annie and the young elder in the military ask for personal revelation? (Through prayer.)

Explain that when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were working on the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Lord taught Oliver how to seek and receive the revelation he needed to translate. We can use the same pattern to seek personal revelation.

Read with class members Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9, and discuss the steps for receiving revelation given in these verses. Explain that we should ask Heavenly Father if a decision is right rather than ask him to make the decision for us.

Point out that we will not necessarily receive our inspiration the same way Oliver Cowdery did. We may have a feeling of peace rather than a burning in the bosom, or we may feel uncomfortable about a wrong decision rather than forgetting it.

Chalkboard  
discussion

- What are some specific areas in which people your age may want to seek personal revelation? (If it is appropriate for your class, you may want to substitute the first enrichment activity for this chalkboard discussion.)

Write class members' answers on the chalkboard. Answers may include:

Resisting temptation.  
 Understanding the scriptures.  
 Enduring sickness and trials.  
 Overcoming discouragement.  
 Keeping safe.  
 Choosing friends.  
 Receiving a testimony.  
 Preparing for a mission.  
 Filling Church callings.  
 Dealing with family members.

Quotation Have a class member read the following statement by President Lorenzo Snow, fifth President of the Church:

“The spirit of God . . . will reveal to [people], even in the simplest of matters, what they shall do, by making suggestions to them. We should try to learn the nature of this spirit, that we may understand its suggestions, and then we will always be able to do right. This is the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint. We know that it is our right to have the manifestations of the spirit every day of our lives” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1899, 52).

Emphasize to class members that they can seek the Lord’s guidance on any subject.

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### We Must Act on Revelation We Receive

Stories and discussion Explain to class members that once we receive revelation or inspiration about something we should do, we must act. Read or have class members read the following stories, and discuss what would have happened if the person in each story had not acted on the inspiration.

#### *Story 1*

“We were riding horses at my uncle’s ranch. Dad said my younger brother and sister and I could ride into the field where my uncle was working. We had just started when my brother and sister both said they didn’t want to go. I started across the field, when it seemed someone said, ‘Go back.’ At first I just kept going, but the voice came again. It was a very quiet voice. I stopped the horse. Just then the horse saw a large snake and started to rear back. I was able to turn him around and calm him down, but if we had been going fast when he reared back I would have been thrown off and hurt.”

- What might have happened if this person had ignored the voice that said, “Go back”?

#### *Story 2*

“I was with some friends. One girl was not a member of the Church, and I got the idea that I should tell her what our church believed. Just thinking about it frightened me. I thought I couldn’t, but something seemed to say to me, ‘Yes, you can. Go ahead.’ I told her I’d like to tell her about our church. She said, ‘All right,’ so I did. I didn’t feel frightened. Soon she was asking questions, and all the girls were telling her about the Church. We talked for a long time. I was glad I received the courage to ask her.”

- What might have happened if this girl had not followed the inspiration to tell her friend about the Church?

Point out that in this case, the girl would not have been hurt by ignoring her inspiration, but her friend would not have learned about the Church at that time. Also point out that if we do not act on inspiration we receive, it becomes harder to receive inspiration the next time we need it. The more we seek and act on personal revelation, the more in tune we are to receive it.

Testimony Have the invited guest tell about how personal revelation has affected his or her life. If you did not invite a guest, tell about how personal revelation has affected your life, or bear testimony of the importance of personal revelation in our lives.

Encourage class members to prayerfully seek personal revelation when they need guidance in their lives.

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## Enrichment Activities

You may want to use one or more of these activities during the lesson.

1. Write on separate pieces of paper situations where class members may need personal revelation (prepare at least one piece of paper for each class member). Put these pieces of paper into a bowl, basket, or jar and bring them to class. Also bring a thin-necked bottle, such as a soda pop bottle.

Have class members arrange their chairs in a circle. Put the bottle on the floor in the middle of the circle, and spin it. When the bottle stops spinning, the class member to whom it is pointing chooses a piece of paper and tells how personal revelation could help if he or she was in that situation.

When the class member has answered, he or she spins the bottle, and another class member has a turn to choose a piece of paper (if the bottle points to a class member who has already had a turn, spin it again).

Possible situations:

- You are tempted to use harmful drugs.
- Your mother is sick with cancer.
- You have no close friends.
- You feel you lack a testimony.
- Your father has lost his job.
- You want to understand the scriptures better.
- You want to know how to begin preparing for a mission.
- You do not get along with your older brother.

2. If *Book of Mormon Video Presentations* (53911) is available, show “I Will Prepare the Way,” a seven-minute segment. Discuss why the young woman in the segment needed personal revelation and how she received it.
3. Explain to class members that sometimes Satan can give us strong feelings that we may confuse with revelation from God. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches us how we can recognize a feeling from Satan. Have a class member read the following statement from President Packer:

“There can be counterfeit revelations, promptings from the devil. . . . As long as you live, in one way or another the adversary will try to lead you astray. . . . If ever you receive a prompting to do something that makes you *feel* uneasy, something you know in your *mind* to be wrong and contrary to the principles of righteousness, do not respond to it!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 78–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 61; italics in original).

You may want to point out that in a situation like this, it is the feeling of uneasiness that is the actual revelation. This uneasiness is the Holy Ghost warning us that what we are considering is wrong.

Emphasize to class members that God will never give them personal revelation that contradicts what has already been revealed in the scriptures.