

WORDS OF THE Prophets *Just for You*

By LaRene Porter Gaunt

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Ashish Pokhrei, a young single Latter-day Saint in India, had some serious questions, but he trusted he could find answers to them by listening to the prophets during October 2012 general conference.

“Just as young Joseph Smith prayed to get answers to his questions,” Ashish says, “I went upstairs to the terrace in the early morning to pray before general conference. I wrote down five questions and prayed that during conference I would hear the answers to my questions. I felt I would receive my answers like Joseph Smith had.”¹

“One of my questions was, how can I be happy when it seems that so many things I plan for go wrong? The answer came when President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said: ‘We are commanded “to give thanks in all things” [Mosiah 26:39]. So isn’t it better to see with our eyes and hearts even the small things we can be thankful for, rather than magnifying the negative in our current condition?’²


“My heart started beating faster and tears came to my eyes. I did not hear a voice from heaven, but the answer came so clearly that I knew exactly what God wanted me to do. Did I have reasons to

rejoice? Yes! And I needed to focus on my reasons to rejoice rather than ‘magnifying the negative.’

“One by one my questions were answered during conference. I am grateful I am a part of this true and living Church. I know all the things shared by God’s prophets are what we need at that point in time.”

We are led by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whom we sustain as prophets. We can have experiences similar to Ashish Pokhrei’s when we believe in and follow these living prophets as we seek answers—often during general conference. Of this two-way relationship between conference speakers and conference listeners, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “If we teach by the Spirit and you listen by the Spirit, some one of us will touch on your circumstance, sending a personal prophetic epistle just to you.”³

Ashish found that by writing down specific questions and taking them to God in prayer as the Prophet Joseph Smith did, all five of his questions were answered during general conference. What will you find?

A group of men in dark suits and ties are walking in a line. The man in the foreground is smiling broadly, looking slightly to his right. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie with a small white pattern. The background shows other men in suits, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The setting appears to be an indoor space with wooden paneling, possibly a church or a formal event.

What will you find when you listen carefully to the words of the living prophets? Five Latter-day Saints share what they found.

Here are four additional experiences where Latter-day Saints were blessed when they sustained the prophets by following their counsel.

I Found Tolerance, Love, and Peace

Ashlee Cornell is a night nurse at a pediatric hospital in Oklahoma, USA. “It can be a rough place at times,” she says. “Activity is constant and stress is high. So on my breaks, I go to a quiet room and pray. Then I read the general conference issue of the *Ensign*. The inspired words of our prophets and leaders help me gain the spiritual focus I need to do my job, even at 3:00 a.m. Their words increase my tolerance and love toward God’s children and help me to bring peace to others, whether they’re staff members, patients, or patients’ families.

“When I get home I tell my husband and children about spiritual promptings I had and how the Holy Ghost helped me. I have learned that when I apply what I learn in conference messages, it invites the Spirit into everything I do.”

Ashlee found comfort in the words of the prophets and spiritual focus in her work at the hospital. What will you find?

I Found the Right Major for Me

As a freshman in college, Kylie Earl of Washington, USA, began praying about which major to choose. One day she saw a class of elementary students. “Something about seeing them completely filled me with joy,” she says. “Maybe elementary education was the right major for me. Soon it was time for general conference. I prayed that I would be inspired to know if I had chosen the right major. During his talk at the end of the Sunday morning session, President Thomas S. Monson began listing all of the things we had to be grateful for. When he mentioned ‘teachers who teach,’⁴ my heart was filled with the Spirit. I knew this was the answer I had been waiting for.”

Kylie found confirmation that she should become a schoolteacher. What will you find?

I Found Reasons to Repent and to Rejoice

Donna K. Maxwell, a Latter-day Saint who loves to study the scriptures, says, “Years ago, a Relief Society instructor told us she studied the conference issues of the *Ensign* the same way she studied her scriptures. I decided to try it.

“I was in the habit of studying my scriptures for half an hour first thing every morning, using a study notebook to record inspiration and insights. The next time a conference issue arrived, I began studying it for 30 minutes each day. I made my way through all the talks, marking them and writing things that applied to my life in my notebook. I was delighted to learn that it *was* like latter-day scripture. I found many things in the printed version that I had not remembered from watching conference.

“Since that time I have always studied the conference talks as well as my scriptures. I often notice things that apply directly to my life. Just as in the standard works, I find reasons to repent or try harder and reasons to rejoice, and there is much to ponder. It’s refreshing when the conference issues arrive, a marvelous opportunity to study the words of the prophets and other leaders.”

Donna found increased understanding of the gospel by studying the words of the prophets. What will you find?

I Found a New Priority

Sierra McGugin, a young single adult, was baptized because she had a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the support of many loving members of the Church.

“I recognized that this was God’s true Church,” she says, “so I naturally accepted President Thomas S. Monson as a living prophet. I enjoyed attending general conference and reading the talks in the *Ensign*, but I never thought much about how I could follow the prophetic counsel in those talks. I admired President Monson for his life of service and devotion but sometimes viewed him more as a role model than as the Lord’s prophet.

“When I started college I found my testimony being tested in new and increasingly difficult ways. Early in



my first semester, I wandered down the street to the institute building associated with my campus. I had considered taking a class, but it was at the bottom of my to-do list. I reasoned that I would go only if I could find time in my busy schedule.

“As I approached the entrance to the institute building, I noticed a poster attached to the window. It was a picture of President Monson, the man I had raised my hand to sustain as a prophet of God. Underneath the picture was a quote: ‘Make institute a priority. . . . I promise you that as you participate in institute and study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased.’⁵ After that, I chose to make institute a priority. Now every time I go, I know I am following the prophet. That decision continually blesses my life.”

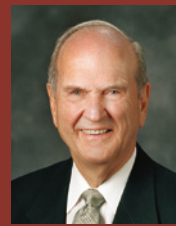
Sierra found a stronger testimony that President Monson was a prophet. She found increased knowledge of the gospel and friends with high standards. What will you find?

Following Our Prophets

Ashish, Ashlee, Kylie, Donna, and Sierra have borne testimony that they found inspired answers unique to their situations. You too can find answers, strength, and glimpses of eternity in the words of our living prophets. And if you listen by the Spirit to our prophets who are teaching with the Spirit, you will receive a “personal prophetic epistle” sent just to you. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith—History 1:13.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 24.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “An Ensign to the Nations,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 113.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 88.
5. Thomas S. Monson, poster available at institute.lds.org/about/quotes.



PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP

“We . . . sustain Thomas S. Monson as President of the Church, . . . the counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. Think of that! We sustain 15 men as prophets of God! They hold all the priesthood keys that have ever been conferred upon man in this dispensation. . . .

“The Church today has been organized by the Lord Himself. He has put in place a remarkable system of governance that provides redundancy and backup. That system provides for prophetic leadership even when the inevitable illnesses and incapacities may come with advancing age. Counterbalances and safeguards abound so that no one can ever lead the Church astray. Senior leaders are constantly being tutored such that one day they are ready to sit in the highest councils. They learn how to hear the voice of the Lord through the whisperings of the Spirit.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Sustaining the Prophets,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 75.