



By Elder Adilson
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Of the Seventy

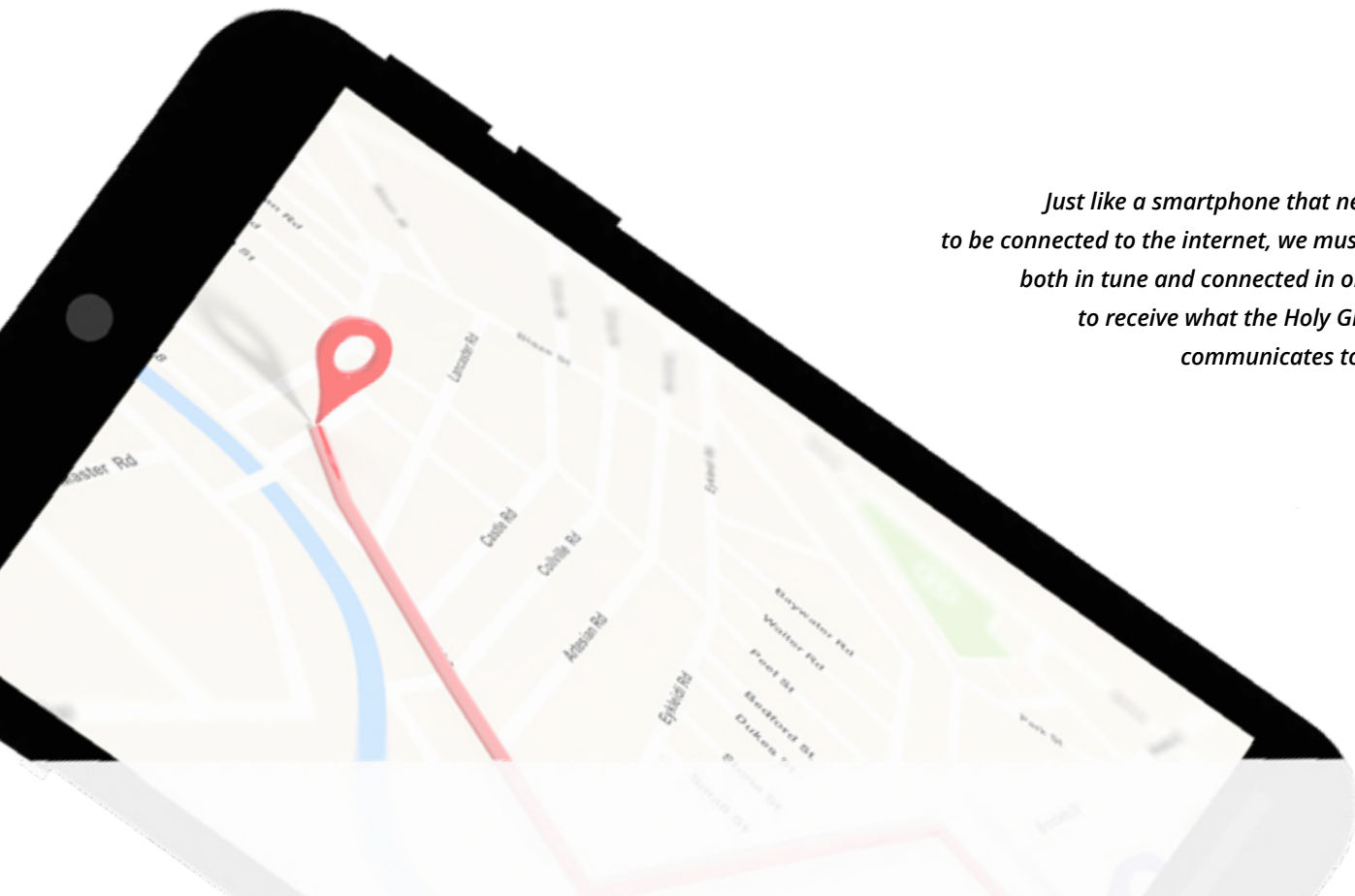
Receiving and Acknowledging Heavenly Guidance

God is willing to give us direction, but we must be willing and ready to receive it.

As young missionaries in the missionary training center in Brazil, we had a day assigned to go, as companionships, into the streets of São Paulo to invite people to hear the missionary lessons. After a few hours we came back to the MTC and held a testimony meeting.

Many spoke of promptings they received to go to a specific street or approach a certain person. These experiences sounded marvelous to me. However, because I had no similar experience, I felt that perhaps I was not good enough, or prepared enough, to be a missionary.

Feeling discouraged, I sought help from MTC leadership. They helped me understand that God *is* willing to give us instructions through the Holy Ghost, and while my experience may not be the same as those of others, I still needed to qualify for the Spirit's direction. Just like a radio that needs to be tuned to a specific station, or a smartphone that needs to be connected to the internet, we must be both in tune and connected in order to receive what the Holy Ghost communicates to us.



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Spiritual Survival

President Russell M. Nelson gave the following warning: “In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”¹

He urged us to “stretch beyond [our] current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation, for the Lord has promised that ‘if thou shalt [seek], thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal’ [Doctrine and Covenants 42:61].”²

During our journey here on earth, the Lord expects us to “do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:27). However, some things we can accomplish only with heaven’s help. The Holy Ghost will reveal to us what we need to do to stay on—and progress along—the path to happiness in this life and to inherit eternal life. “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

The Lord’s Pattern

The scriptures explain how the Lord gives us personal revelation: “I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart” (Doctrine and Covenants 8:2).

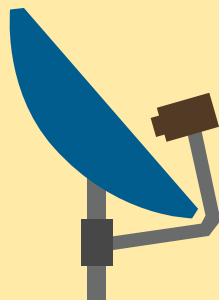
The Lord also tells us to “put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:12). Sometimes the Spirit will lead us to do good through thoughts, ideas, a sequence of ideas, impressions to refrain from or to start doing something, insights or understanding, the unfolding of things we would not learn by our own capacity alone, the remembrance of things forgotten, and more.³

In Galatians 5:22–23, we learn that the Holy Ghost often communicates through feelings and emotions such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The help we receive from the Holy Ghost will frequently come as customized instructions for our specific needs, but remember, such guidance will entice us to do good (see Moroni 7:13) and will always be in harmony with the teachings of the living prophets and the holy scriptures.

Receive and Recognize

Perhaps one of the main challenges we face in mortality is to know how to receive, recognize, and act upon promptings and guidance from the Holy Ghost. The following lessons may help us.

Lesson 1: The Lord is willing to give us personal revelation, but we need to be ready to receive it.

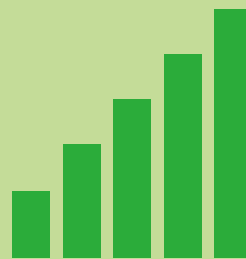


“One of the things the Spirit has repeatedly impressed upon my mind since my new calling as President of the Church,” President Nelson said, “is how willing the Lord is to reveal His mind and will. The privilege of receiving revelation is one of the greatest gifts of God to His children.”⁴

At the MTC, I learned that I needed to be ready to receive whatever the Lord wanted to send me, in His time and His way. I learned that interference can cause us to be so distracted that we will not be able to identify when the Lord is talking to us or to listen carefully to the message He would have us hear.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “As we desire and invite the Holy Ghost into our lives and learn to heed simple promptings quickly, we too can block out the distracting noises of the world and clearly focus upon the promptings of the Holy Ghost.”⁵

Lesson 2: We need to study and learn how the language of the Spirit works.



Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The Spirit most often communicates as a feeling. You feel it in words that are familiar to you, that make sense to you, that prompt you. . . .

“ . . . These feelings are gentle, a nudge to act, to do something, to say something, to respond in a certain way.”⁶

Learning to receive revelation from the Holy Ghost may be compared to learning a language. At first we understand little or perhaps nothing at all. But as we continue to apply ourselves, we pick up on words, then sentences, then whole thoughts. Eventually we find ourselves understanding what is being said. To learn the language of the Spirit, we must:

- Desire to learn.
- Study, in the scriptures and in the words of the living prophets, how revelation is received.
- Be attentive to spiritual impressions.
- Ask God to send us guidance through the Holy Ghost.
- Be willing to receive—not ignore or take lightly—the instructions received.
- Obey the promptings.
- Earnestly seek to receive additional guidance.

Lesson 3: Heavenly Father has His own way and time to give us revelations.



This lesson involves three principles:

1. *God can and will let us know what to do to progress.*

Our Heavenly Father's work is to help us gain eternal life (see Moses 1:39). "[He] is concerned not just about our comfort but even more about our upward progress," said President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.⁷

This means that Heavenly Father is concerned about the steps we take here on earth. He knows which decisions we must make and which actions we must take so that we "may become the sons [and daughters] of God" (Moroni 7:48). "More than you could ever imagine, He wants you to achieve your destiny—to return to your heavenly home in honor," said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁸

2. *Sometimes we don't understand the reason for heavenly instructions.* God will occasionally send us instructions that we do not expect. I remember sitting in a sacrament meeting when an impression came clearly to my mind. The instruction was not a voice or a whisper but a clear thought indicating something I should do. I did not expect to receive such instruction during sacrament meeting.

I turned to my wife and told her the prompting I had just received. She indicated that I should obey the prompting, even though we did not understand the reason behind it.

As we obeyed that instruction, and as time went by, we had several witnesses that the direction we received brought us greater peace and ensured we remained on our path of growth.

3. *We must be willing to do God's will.* In His perfection and wisdom, God knows what is best for us. His will, based on divine perspective, shows us a better way. But it will often challenge us. In this, as in all things, the Lord Jesus Christ is our perfect example. He made the Father's will His own. As the Savior suffered for our sins, He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

We too must be willing to put God's will above our own desires. As we accept His will and do it, we prepare ourselves to receive further guidance. Elder Bednar taught that "as we honor our covenants and keep the commandments, as we strive ever more consistently to do good and to become better, we can walk with the confidence that God will guide our steps."⁹

Receiving Heaven's Help

Our eternal progress depends on receiving personal guidance from the Holy Ghost. May we each be determined to follow President Nelson's counsel to seek revelation for our lives. When we believe and trust that God wants to send us direction through the Holy Ghost, then, as we earnestly center our lives on pursuing heaven's help, we will receive the guidance we need. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign*, May 2018, 96.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," 95.
3. See David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign*, May 2011, 87–90.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," 94.
5. David A. Bednar, "Receiving, Recognizing, and Responding to the Promptings of the Holy Ghost" (Ricks College Devotional, Aug. 31, 1999).
6. Ronald A. Rasband, "Let the Holy Spirit Guide," *Ensign*, May 2017, 94.
7. Henry B. Eyring, "My Peace I Leave with You," *Ensign*, May 2017, 17.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Living the Gospel Joyful," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 123.
9. David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," 90.