

“I’ve been praying for something important, but I don’t know if I have received an answer. How will I recognize it?”

Receiving answers to prayers has been described as a process: first you study your question in your mind; then you ask God if your answer is right. If your answer is right, the Lord will “speak peace to your mind” (D&C 6:23).

But what if you don’t feel an overwhelming sense of peace? Or what if you feel like you have an answer, but you’re not sure if it’s you or the Holy Ghost?

According to Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation.”¹ It doesn’t always come suddenly; most of the time it comes “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30), and often you have to take a step in one direction even *before* you feel like you have a full answer. Sometimes you might not get an answer at all—that’s when you need to act anyway with faith that God will answer when the time is right.

If you’re worried about whether your answer is coming from you or from the Holy Ghost, remember that the best answer will be one that “inviteth and enticeth [you] to do good, and to love God, and to serve him” (Moroni 7:13).

NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” April 2011 general conference.



Decide and Wait for the Spirit

One summer I didn’t feel like the Lord had given me an answer about an important decision. I had prayed sincerely every day to know His will for me, and I told Him what I desired to do. Still without a distinct answer, I made my decision. I immediately felt the Spirit witnessing to me that the decision I made would help me grow and become more like my Father in Heaven. Sometimes we need to act to receive an answer—Heavenly Father respects our agency and our righteous desires. If we are living worthily, His Spirit will guide us through our desires because they will be aligned with His.

Amanda H., age 16, Utah, USA

Pray for Help

I have prayed and received answers for many things, but the instances that stand out the most are the ones regarding schoolwork. Prior to an exam, I would pray to be calm and to be able to recall the information I had studied. Many times I remembered whole paragraphs of information that I know I never would have been able to remember without His help. He has blessed my life dearly, and I value the power of prayer and His influence I feel through it.

Emily B., age 18, Queensland, Australia





Be Patient and Observant

A while ago, I challenged myself to pray for service opportunities. I thought of ways I could help others, but I did not receive what I believed was a prompting. I was getting discouraged, when my mom shared with me Alma 5:40: “Whatsoever is good cometh from God.” I realized that the quiet thoughts of service I had were actually promptings from the Holy Ghost. I know that our prayers are always answered; we just have to be patient, be observant, and trust in the Lord.

Lybee B., age 16, Oregon, USA



Trust in the Spirit

When you learn to trust in the Holy Ghost and develop the ability to recognize the way that Heavenly Father answers you, you will see how accessible the Spirit is to you. His voice prompts us so gently that if we are preoccupied with the things of the world, we will not notice the delicate whisperings and feelings that come from on high. If, however, we are living the way we should, then we will always have the promise that we will know in our heart what the Spirit is saying in response to our supplications.

Sister Ribeiro, age 24, Brazil Porto Alegre South Mission



Try It and See!

Sometimes the Lord requires us to act on our faith before we get a complete answer.

Do you want to know if the Word of Wisdom is truly a commandment from God? Then live it! Do you want to know if the Book of Mormon is true? Then read it! Trust the promise in John 7:17: “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”

Preston O., age 19, Utah, USA



By the Power of Christ

I was watching the Face to Face broadcast with Elder Rasband and Sister Oscarson when a youth asked this same question about receiving answers. Sister Oscarson quoted Moroni 7:16, “By the power



INSPIRATION COMES A PIECE AT A TIME

“When we seek inspiration to help make decisions,

the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight.”

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer,” Oct. 1989 general conference.

and gift of Christ . . . ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.” That scripture shows us that we will be able to know the will of God for us with a perfect knowledge. Feel the Spirit and you will know the answer.

Sara S., age 17, Santa Catarina, Brazil

UPCOMING QUESTION

“Sometimes I don’t feel worthy to be loved by the Savior. How can I overcome this feeling and recognize my self-worth?”

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by January 15, 2018, at liahona.lds.org (click “Submit an Article”).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.