



**By President
Russell M.
Nelson**

President of
The Church of
Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints

Grow into the Principle of Revelation

I encourage you to take the necessary steps to hear the Lord better and more often so that you can receive the enlightenment He wants to give you.

On September 30, 2017, following the afternoon session of general conference, I stopped by the hospital to check on my beloved quorum member Elder Robert D. Hales. He had been hospitalized since suffering a heart attack a few days earlier.

We had a wonderful visit, and he seemed to be improving. He was even breathing on his own, which was a good sign.

That evening, however, the Spirit spoke to my heart and mind that I should return to the hospital on Sunday. During the Sunday morning session of general conference, that strong impression returned. I felt that I should skip lunch and hurry to Elder Hales's bedside as soon as the morning session ended, which I did.

When I arrived, I could see that Elder Hales had taken a serious turn for the worse. Sadly, he passed away 10 minutes after I arrived, but I am thankful that I was at his side with his sweet wife, Mary, and their two sons when he departed this life.

How grateful I am that the whisperings of the Holy Ghost prompted me to do something I might not have done otherwise. And how grateful I am for the reality of revelation and that the heavens are once again open.

This year our focus for personal and classroom study will be the Doctrine and Covenants. These “divine revelations and inspired declarations” can bless all who study them and act on their divine directives. They invite “all people everywhere to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ,”¹ for truly “the voice of the Lord is unto all men” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:2).

Because of the increasing dangers we face, our need for divine guidance has never been greater, and our efforts to hear the voice of Jesus Christ have never been more urgent.

Danger, Darkness, Deception

Physical and spiritual tempests are a part of life on the earth, as the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us. Of the time prior to His Second Coming, the Savior predicted days of great tribulation. He said, “There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:29).

Compounding such tribulation is the increasing darkness and deception that surround us. As Jesus told His disciples, “Iniquity shall abound” before His return (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:30).

Satan has marshaled his forces and is raging against the work of the Lord and those of us engaged in it. Because of the increasing dangers we face, our need for divine guidance has never been greater, and our efforts to hear the voice of Jesus Christ—our Mediator, Savior, and Redeemer—have never been more urgent.

As I said shortly after I was called as President of the Church, the Lord is ready to reveal His mind to us. That is one of His greatest blessings to us.²

In our day, He has promised, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:61).

I know He will respond to our pleadings.

How We Hear Him

Knowing how the Spirit speaks is essential today. To receive personal revelation, to find answers, and to receive protection and direction, we remember the pattern the Prophet Joseph Smith set for us.

First, we immerse ourselves in the scriptures. Doing so opens our minds and hearts to the Savior’s teachings and truths. The words of Christ “tell [us] all things what [we] should do” (2 Nephi 32:3), especially in these days of uncertainty and upheaval.

Next we pray. Prayer requires initiative, so we humble ourselves before God, find a quiet place where we can regularly go, and pour out our hearts to Him.

The Lord says, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall

find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:63).

Drawing near to the Lord brings comfort and encouragement, hope and healing. So, we pray in His name about our worries and our weaknesses, our longings and our loved ones, our callings and our questions.

Then we listen.

If we will stay on our knees for a while after we finish our prayer, thoughts, feelings, and direction will come into our mind. Recording those impressions will help us remember what actions the Lord would have us take.

As we repeat this process, we will, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, “grow into the principle of revelation.”³

Worthy to Receive Revelation

Refining our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost and increasing our capacity to receive revelation requires worthiness. Worthiness does not require perfection, but it requires that we strive for increased purity.

The Lord expects daily effort, daily improvement, daily repentance. Worthiness brings purity, and purity qualifies us for the Holy Ghost. As we take “the Holy Spirit for [our] guide” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:57), we qualify for personal revelation.

If something is stopping us from opening the door to heavenly direction, we may need to repent. Repentance allows us to open the door so we can hear the voice of the Lord more frequently and clearly.

“The standard is clear,” taught Elder David A. Bednar



of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us.”⁴

When we couple increased purity and obedience with fasting, diligent seeking, study of the scriptures and the words of living prophets, and temple and family history work, the heavens will open. The Lord, in turn, will fulfill His promise: “I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:13).

We may need to be patient, but God will speak to us in His own way and in His own time.

A Spirit of Understanding

Job declared, “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8). In this new year, I encourage you to take the necessary

steps to hear the Lord better and more often so that you can receive the enlightenment He wants to give you.

Before Elder Hales’s passing that October day in 2017, he prepared a short talk for general conference that he was unable to give. In that talk, he wrote, “Our faith prepares us to be in the presence of the Lord.”⁵

When we receive revelation, we spend time in the presence of God as He reveals His mind, will, and voice unto us (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:4). May we put our faith into action, calling upon Him, living worthy of His promised inspiration, and acting on the guidance we receive. ■

NOTES

1. Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 94.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
4. David A. Bednar, “That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 30.
5. In Neil L. Andersen, “The Voice of the Lord,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 125.