



Although at times we may doubt
our spiritual experiences,
our certainty can come
flooding back.

When in Doubt,
Keep the Door
Open to

faith

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Whether we were raised in the Church or converted later in life, many of us have probably experienced moments of questioning or doubt. We may have had amazing spiritual experiences but now find ourselves wondering: Were those spiritual experiences real, or did I just imagine feeling the Spirit? What if none of this is true? And what about my questions that don't have answers yet? How can I stay in the Church if I'm not sure that it's true anymore?

For me, I was surprised that these questions came after I had served my mission! I had known the truth with such conviction that I wanted to go preach it to others for a year and a half—and now I was doubting all that I had known and taught. What a waste it would have been if none of it were true. So *was* it true, all that I had taught? Or had I just *wanted* it to be true? After seeing friends leave the Church and while facing my own struggle of faith, I wondered if I had deceived myself.

During this time, I didn't stop going to church or obeying the commandments because I had big questions.

Instead, *because* I had questions, I tried to follow President Russell M. Nelson's counsel to "increase [my] spiritual capacity to receive revelation."¹

I knew that "nothing opens the heavens quite like the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon, and regular time committed to temple and family history work."² I felt it was crucial to stay close to God. After all, He was the only one who would have answers to my questions.

Eunice's Story

One day while I was reading *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, I came across a remarkable story about a woman of the early Restoration. Eunice Franklin seemed to have my same questions and worries.

Eunice was baptized in New York by a missionary named Elijah Able. She had been truly converted to the gospel at her baptism. But then, after Elijah left for Canada to preach, Eunice began to doubt the gospel and what she had once

known to be true. She began to wonder if Joseph Smith really was a prophet and if the Book of Mormon was true scripture. She lost many nights of sleep, thinking she may have been deceived.

The Lord showed Eunice's struggle to Elijah in a dream, and he immediately returned to New York. When he knocked on her door, Eunice was stunned—she had been planning on telling him she no longer believed when she saw him again. Instead, she let him in. When Elijah invited her to his sermon that evening, she hesitated and didn't want to go. But she eventually gave in and went to listen to what he had to say.

At his sermon, Elijah quoted 1 Peter 4:12, which says to “think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.” The fiery trial that had sought to destroy Eunice's faith could not succeed—as Eunice heard Elijah speak, her doubts melted away. *Saints* tells it this way: “The certainty she had once felt flooded back.”³

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Certainty Comes Flooding Back

Eunice's experience struck me, and I've reflected on it again and again. Just like Eunice, I learned from Elijah's simple and powerful words. We should “think it

not strange” to have questions about our faith. It's completely OK. While truth may have once seemed to pour down from heaven, there may be later moments where we feel a spiritual drought. We might wonder if we ever truly felt the rain. With no answers or confirmations yet given, we can continue to pray for the rain of revelation. We can seek a witness to know that what was true yesterday is still true today. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “If it was right when you prayed about it and trusted it and lived for it, it is right now. . . . Face your doubts. Master your fears.”⁴

By opening the door to her missionary friend again, even when she wondered why she should, Eunice reopened her heart. The Lord could again reach Eunice and help her feel a confirmation of all that she once knew. In a similar way, each of us can leave the door open to faith even when struggling with doubts. We can keep doing what's right and seeking revelation—even when we're unsure why exactly we're doing it.

We keep the door open by continuing to do the little things God has told us are good for our souls. We keep the Sabbath day holy and attend our meetings. We read the scriptures, even if it's just one verse at times. We listen to a hymn or conference talk. We talk to Heavenly Father about our concerns and hopes and ask Him to help us know the truth. We keep the commandments, repent, and seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

If we can have no more than a desire to believe, we can still continue to do the little things and let the desire work within us. We can save some space in our hearts for more belief to grow. (See Alma 32:27.)

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What I Know

Although at times I have wondered, wandered, and wavered, I've learned and relearned for myself that this is Christ's Church. Although Joseph Smith may have been an imperfect man, I know he was an inspired prophet of God who sacrificed everything and did his complete best. I also know that the Book of Mormon is a true ancient record and holy scripture preserved just for us in our day. Heavenly Father continues to confirm these truths to me every day. And I'm glad He confirmed these truths to Eunice Franklin too.

I know that as we keep our doors and hearts open to truth, God will help us feel what's real and what's not through the Holy Ghost. Our spiritual experiences will be undeniable in the moment. And every moment after that, when we feel doubts creeping back in, we can remind ourselves of how we felt. Just as it did for Eunice, our certainty about gospel truths can come flooding back.

We don't have to live in the drought of doubt for too long if we'll just hold on to our spiritual experiences. Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says to "embrace your sacred

memories. . . . Trust that they come to you from your Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. Let them bring patience to your doubts and understanding to your difficulties. I promise you that as you willingly acknowledge and carefully treasure the spiritually defining events in your life, more and more will come to you."⁵

I know that for those who strive to make new spiritual experiences and exercise faith in Christ, this promise is true: "He that believeth on [Christ] shall never thirst" (John 6:35). The answers we need will come. We can get through the fiery trials Satan throws our way. And we can remain faithful to our loving God all our days. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," 95.
3. See *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (2018), 315–17.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence" (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 2, 1999), 4, speeches.byu.edu.
5. Neil L. Andersen, "Spiritually Defining Memories," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 21–22.

