



By Elder Larry R.
Lawrence
Of the Seventy

The Light

OF THE PERFECT DAY

*Accumulating as much light as we can is the key
to successfully passing the test of mortal life.*

Would you be surprised to learn that your success in life depends upon how much light you gain while you are here? Success is not about how much money you make or how many medals you win or how much fame you achieve. The real objective of our existence is to gain light.

Our physical bodies grow bigger when we feed them nourishing food. Our spirits grow brighter when we feed them light. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Our Father in Heaven was once a mortal man who gradually progressed until He became a being with a fulness of light. He wants the same for you and me because a fulness of light means a fulness of joy.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that when we left our premortal life to come to earth, He gave each of us a parting gift: the Light of Christ, our conscience. As the scriptures state, “The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46).

Heavenly Father’s greatest desire is that we follow the light we were born with so we can receive more light. As we continue to follow the light our Father sheds on us, we receive more light and we become more like Him.

The gift of the Holy Ghost—in addition to the light we were born with—gives



WE OBTAIN MORE LIGHT AS WE:

- Love others.
- Study the scriptures.
- Obey the commandments.
- Hearken to the Holy Ghost.
- Serve in the temple.

us a great advantage. It is one of the greatest gifts we can receive in mortality because it brings more opportunities for obtaining light and truth. Without the Holy Ghost, we are like a person walking slowly home in the dark with only a flashlight as a guide. When we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and are baptized, we are offered a floodlight and a guide who knows the way. Now we can walk faster and see our way during our homeward journey.

Increasing in Light

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

This verse perfectly summarizes our

purpose on earth. Eternal progress simply means increasing in light. As our spirits become brighter and brighter, we are working toward that “perfect day” when we can be *like God* and *with God*.

Think of this concept of light the next time you attend an endowment session in the temple. You start in a dimly lit room. As you increase in knowledge, the room becomes brighter. At last your journey of light takes you to the glorious celestial room. Our experience in the temple is symbolic of our journey on earth. Things get brighter and brighter until we finally reenter the Lord’s presence.

Exceeding light is an attribute of every resurrected celestial being. When the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph in his room, the young prophet observed that the angel’s “countenance [was] truly like lightning”

(Joseph Smith—History 1:32).

Matthew used the same words to describe the angels at the Lord’s tomb, recording that their “countenance was like lightning” (Matthew 28:3 [see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 28:3, footnote *a*]).

When it comes time for each of us to be resurrected, how will the Lord determine whether we receive a telestial body, a terrestrial body, or a celestial body? The answer is easier than you may think. If we have accumulated enough celestial light in our spirits, we will be resurrected with celestial bodies. If we have accumulated only enough light to qualify for terrestrial or telestial



bodies, that is the glory we will receive in the Resurrection.

The Doctrine and Covenants explains:

“Your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.



“Ye who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness” (D&C 88:28–29).

As long as we stay on the strait and narrow path, trying to live the commandments and improve ourselves, we are accumulating light. But what happens when we stray from the path and break the commandments? What happens to our light?

The scriptures are clear about this: “He that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he *has* received” (D&C 1:33; emphasis added). In other words, while some people are gaining light, others are losing it. Satan can take away light whenever we disobey truth (see D&C 93:39).

The important thing to ask is, how can we obtain more light so that it “groweth brighter and brighter” within us? I suggest five ways.

Love Others

One of the best ways to gain light is to learn to love as our Father in Heaven loves. We call this kind of love *charity*. Mormon exhorts us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love” (Moroni 7:48). Love rapidly brings more light into our spirits; contention and jealousy take light away.

Remember, the first commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:37–38). The reward for loving God and for putting Him first in our lives is huge. Jesus taught, “If your eye be single to *my* glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light” (D&C 88:67; emphasis added).

The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Matthew 22:39). This may be more difficult to do because our neighbors are not perfect. The real secret for learning to love others is found in serving them. That’s why it comes natural to love our

children, even though they too are far from perfect.

The more you serve, the more you love, and the more you love, the more light you receive. Missionaries—both old and young—develop a glow about them that is visible to others. Full-time service is rewarded by lots of spiritual light.

Study the Scriptures

There is no shortcut to learning truth. You have to invest time in reading the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets. If you want to grow spiritually, you have to feed your spirit by feasting on the word every day. According to the Doctrine and Covenants, truth is just another name for light (see D&C 84:45).

Before you open your scriptures each day, pray that you will learn something new to add light to your spirit. Then search for new insights and understanding. Also ask

yourself, “How do these things I am reading apply to my life?” You have to be willing to invest time if you want to gain more light.

A related source of light to our spirits is found in memorizing scriptures. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of



the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds” and that “great power can come from memorizing scriptures.”¹ Memorized scriptures become a gift you give to yourself—a gift that keeps on giving more and more light.

Obey the Commandments

As you discover the commandments in the scriptures, go and do them. For example, if you read the divine counsel to “retire to thy bed early” and “arise early” (D&C 88:124), you had better obey. If you are reading the Doctrine and Covenants and come across the commandment “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor” (D&C 42:27), then you better watch what you say from now on. As you learn truth, you must apply it to accumulate light.

If you gain light but don’t use it, you may lose it.

Hearken to the Holy Ghost

Hearkening to the Spirit is one way President Thomas S. Monson has gained so much light. He has learned to follow the promptings and impressions that come to him. The scriptures teach, “Every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God” (D&C 84:47).

If you expect spiritual promptings, they will come. If you act on them, you will receive more. If the Holy Ghost asks you to do something that is difficult (like break a bad habit), and you listen and obey the prompting, you will experience a spurt of spiritual growth and a big infusion of light.

Serve in the Temple

When we consider the Lord’s temples, we naturally think of light. For example, consider what the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote about the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836: “The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple).”²

There is so much light and truth to be gained from temple service that the temple may be referred to as the University of the Lord. Temple light is even more beneficial to your spirit than sunlight is to your body. Consider yourself blessed if you are able to bask in this heavenly light on a regular basis.

Be a Light

Every temple, every chapel, every mission office, every Latter-day Saint home, and every Church member should be a light to the world. As Peter reminded the Saints in his day, God “hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

That we may spend our entire lives accumulating as much light as we can in our spirits is my prayer. That doing so is the key to successfully passing the test of mortal life is my testimony. That we can obtain light by following the suggestions above is my witness. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 2:428.