

# BECOMING WHAT YOU WANT TO BE



**By Elder Don R. Clarke**

Of the Seventy

*You can  
become any  
good thing  
the Lord  
wants you  
to be if you'll  
listen to  
Him and  
follow  
the Spirit.*

When I was the mission president in the Bolivia Santa Cruz Mission, one of the missionaries serving with me, Elder Hinostroza, was happily serving in a town near the Brazilian border and wanted to finish serving his mission there. When it came time to make missionary transfers, I felt the impression to change Elder Hinostroza's assignment and sent him to Santa Cruz. He said, "President, why change me when I have only six weeks left on my mission?"

I said, "I think it's the right thing to do."

He looked at me and said, "I'm not so sure." But he was a good missionary and went to work.

## **Why Santa Cruz?**

Shortly after he began serving in his new assignment, he went to teach a family. He finished teaching the lesson, and the lady took out a picture from her wallet and showed it to Elder Hinostroza. She said, "The reason I'm here in Santa Cruz is because I'm looking for my daughter, whom I have not seen in 10 years. Somebody told me that she might be here."

More than a million people live in Santa Cruz. The chances of a mother finding her daughter in a city of that size were very slim. Elder Hinostroza looked at the picture, then looked at the mother. He said, "I know your



daughter. When I served one year ago in another ward, your daughter was there. She's a member of the Church." That night Elder Hinostroza took this mother to find her daughter who had been lost.

Heavenly Father cared so much about one mother and one daughter that He found a way to bring them together again. After that evening Elder Hinostroza called me and said, "I now know the care Father in Heaven has for His children, and I know why I was transferred. That knowledge has changed my life."

Episodes such as this one and many others that I have witnessed make it evident that there is a loving God who looks over us, cares about us, knows who we are, and works in very special ways to give us experiences to let us know how important that relationship with Him is.

He works with us by using the promptings of the Holy Ghost. He works with us seven days a week, 24 hours a day. He doesn't sleep. After we have done our part, He does the rest. He tells us when we are doing right. He tells us when we are making a mistake. He helps us avoid the things that can mess us up. What we need to know is that it doesn't

matter whether we are young or old; Heavenly Father will talk to us if we are willing to listen. He will help us with our goals to become better, to achieve eternal life.

#### **Keep Track of Your Thoughts**

A few years ago I visited a family with a teenage son who was looking at a copy of *Preach My Gospel*. I encouraged him to write in

***When I write it down and do what I'm impressed to do, He keeps talking to me.***

the margins of the book the impressions he felt while reading.

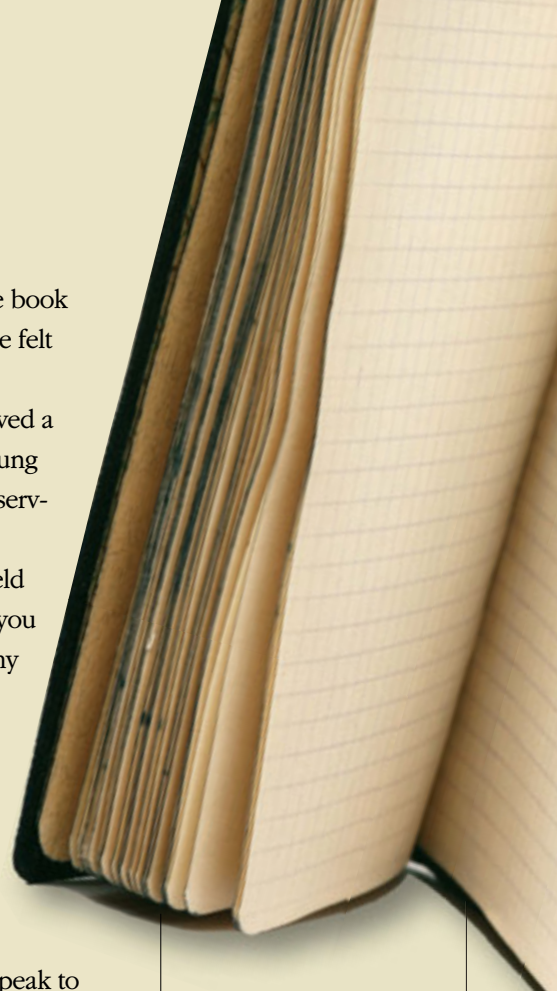
I recently received a letter from this young man who is now serving a mission. He

wrote: "I've been in the mission field for six months and want to thank you for reminding me to write down my impressions. I've just been called to be a trainer, and I have a new missionary companion. When my companion saw my agenda and a small notebook under my pillow, he asked me why it was there. I told him what you taught me: if I would listen, God would speak to me, so I keep it there to write down the personal revelations He gives me.

"The next night at 2:00 a.m. I had an impression come to me, and I wrote it down in my notebook. My companion said, 'Now I understand.'"

I have a little book I carry with me. I call it my book of inspiration. What I have found, just like this elder, is that Heavenly Father does want to talk to me, and when I write it down and do what I'm impressed to do, He keeps talking to me. When we pray, we need to take the time to listen to the inspiration that comes to our minds, instead of getting up right away.

I began writing down impressions from the Holy Ghost when I was on my mission, and it has been reinforced over the years as I have served in various callings. Inspiration will come in so many different ways. It will come when we need to know what to do to help a friend. It will come when we need to know how to do better in school. Heavenly Father



**“Learn to read the scriptures so they become a joy and a source of inspiration. In them you will find answers to your problems, especially if you practice the principles they teach.”**

Elder Don R. Clarke

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**We might think, "Maybe I should do this to help a widow," or, "Maybe I should do this to do better in this class." That's the way it works, with just little, simple things.**

cares about all those things. He cares about school, He cares about our relationships with our friends, He cares about our relationships with our families. He cares about us going on our missions. He can help us if we will let Him.

It starts out in simple ways. We start off by keeping track of inspiration that comes to our minds. Then we review and ponder it.

Then we follow through by taking action on the inspiration. We'll know it's the right thing because we will feel peace about it and

because it will really work to make our lives better. It's like the experience Joseph Smith recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Yea, behold, 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."

"Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground" (D&C 8:2-3).

If the Holy Ghost can direct Moses to divide the Red Sea and help him know that he can do it, certainly He can help us in our

studies. Certainly He can help us improve our relationships with our parents. Certainly he can help us find good friends. The Holy Ghost can also help us in deciding what paths to take in deciding what kind of spouse or parent we want to become or what our job or vocation should be.

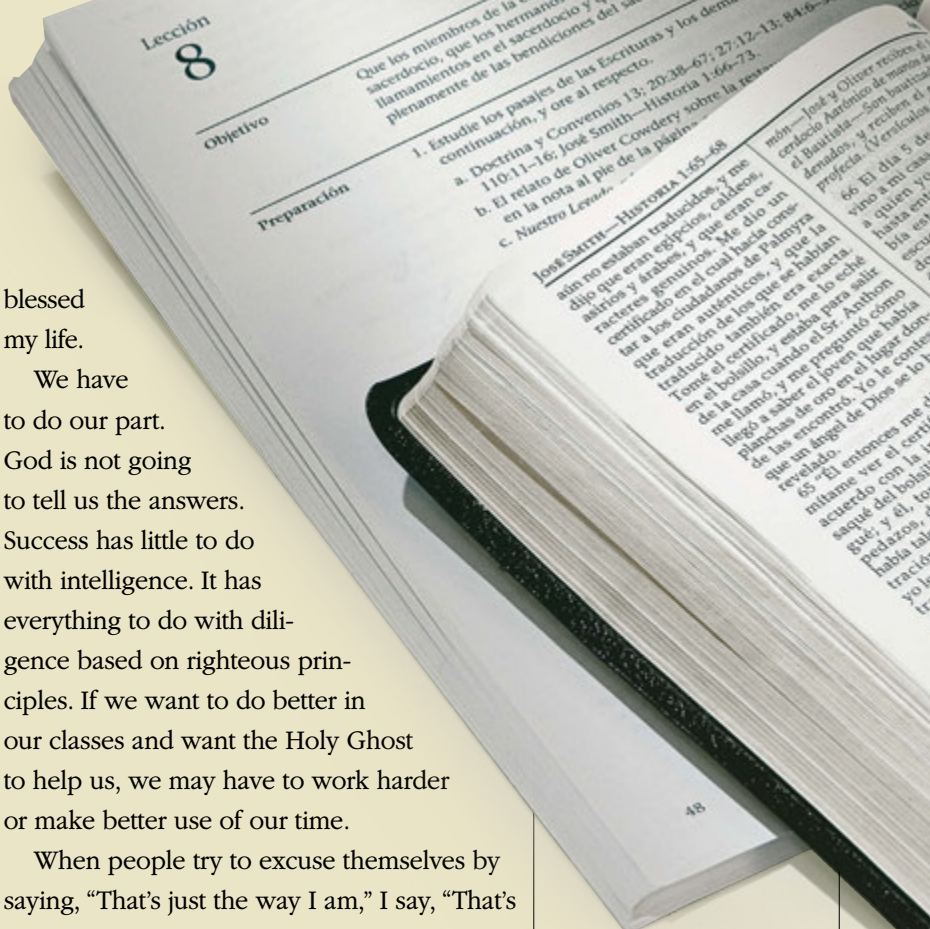
### **Listening to the Holy Ghost**

We start listening to the Holy Ghost by reading the scriptures and following the suggestions found in *For the Strength of Youth*. If we are trying with all of our hearts to be clean and pure, if we are studying the scriptures and praying faithfully, all of a sudden impressions will come to our minds. We might think, "Maybe I should do this to help a widow," or, "Maybe I should do this to do better in this class." That's the way it works, with just little, simple things.

My mother sent me out on my first job: shoveling the sidewalk of two elderly sisters who lived together. And that sidewalk was long. My mother was very smart. She said, "Do it anonymously so that they won't know you did it." I don't know how many times my brothers and I went, but we did it without their knowing. We had to do it early in the morning so we wouldn't be caught. I remember how good I felt. The next time it snowed, my mother didn't have to tell me to go shovel their walk; the Holy Ghost prompted me to go back again.

My brothers and I kept shoveling their sidewalk, and one day they caught us. They became our friends. They even took us to see a semiprofessional baseball team in Idaho Falls. It wasn't much of a trip, maybe 25 miles, but for us it was a big deal. We probably wouldn't have been able to go to a ball game without them.





The Holy Ghost became real to me with that experience. It changed my life. My mother encouraged me to do one good thing, and then the Holy Ghost testified that it was good to keep doing it.

During my junior year in high school the principal asked me to run for vice president of the student body. It was a life-changing experience for me, because I had never considered such a thing before. I didn't say yes at first, but I thought about it, and the Holy Ghost confirmed that it was the right thing for me to do. It scared me, but I ran and won the election. From that time to now, a whole different world has opened up as I gained confidence. Listening to the Holy Ghost helped me know I could become more than I had ever dreamed of becoming.

### Learning Spanish

When I was called on a mission to Argentina, I spent three months at what was then called the Language Training Mission. We had a test every Saturday, and I kept getting low scores. I was used to getting good grades in high school, and I was not content with the grades I was getting on my tests at the LTM. The price to get better at Spanish was to get up earlier than anyone else there and practice. At the time, we memorized discussions. When I arrived in Argentina, I had memorized six lessons. When I gave my first discussion, I looked at my companion to see if I had done it right. It was far from perfect, but I felt that the Lord knew I was trying, and He helped me with the language. Learning Spanish was important so that I could serve. I served in Argentina for two years. Later I was called to serve as a mission president in Bolivia for three years and then lived in Central America for three more years, so learning Spanish has

blessed my life.

We have to do our part. God is not going to tell us the answers. Success has little to do with intelligence. It has everything to do with diligence based on righteous principles. If we want to do better in our classes and want the Holy Ghost to help us, we may have to work harder or make better use of our time.

When people try to excuse themselves by saying, "That's just the way I am," I say, "That's not who you are. That's what you have chosen to be. What do you believe you could become?" With the power of the Holy Ghost, you can become whatever you want that is good and right in God's sight. We can become what we should become. It's about enduring. It's about deciding what you want to be and working for it.

How does personal revelation work? It is more than just the idea of positive mental attitude. The Holy Ghost had the power to help me overcome my shyness. He has the power to do what He did for me when I was learning Spanish. I couldn't have done it without His help. The important thing is to do those things that will bring us closer to God. He will show us the way. The doors to our understanding will be open and we will know the pathways we should take to becoming who the Lord knows we can become. **NE**

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### NEmore

For more thoughts about following the Holy Ghost, see "The 20-Mark Note," by President Boyd K. Packer (*New Era*, June 2009, 2).