

YOUR OWN LIAHONA

Wouldn't it be great if you could have a spiritual GPS to guide you? With your patriarchal blessing, you can.

By Richard M. Romney
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Sometimes it can seem hard to get through life. There are so many major things coming your way in the next few years: preparing for the temple, sharing the gospel, choosing a school and a career. And you're only a teenager! Wouldn't it be great if, like Lehi, you could find a Liahona outside your door, an instrument guaranteed to keep you on course if you just pay attention to it?

Actually, there are already many sources of guidance in your life: prayer, scriptures, counsel from parents and leaders, promptings from the Holy Ghost, general conference, and the list goes on. But here's another source to add to your list—a personal Liahona known as your patriarchal blessing. It's personal revelation for you, about you, from your Heavenly Father, who has known you since, well, forever.

Think of your patriarchal blessing as a sort of spiritual GPS, and then some. It not only allows you to know *who*

you are and *where* you are; it can also help you to understand *why* you're here and *where* you should be headed. But remember, guidance from your patriarchal blessing requires use of the same principles that made Lehi's Liahona work: heed and diligence (see 1 Nephi 16:28; Mosiah 1:16).

HEED AND DILIGENCE

What are heed and diligence? To *heed* means not only to hear what is said but to also pay attention to it. A related word is *hearken*, which means to hear *and* obey. So for your patriarchal blessing to serve as a Liahona in your life, you must not only read it, but you must also follow it.

"Scriptures recorded in all dispensations teach that we show our *love* of God as we *hearken* to His commandments and *obey* them," said President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "These actions are closely connected. In fact, the Hebrew language of the Old Testament in most instances uses the same term for both *hearkening* (to the Lord) and *obedience* (to His word)." ¹

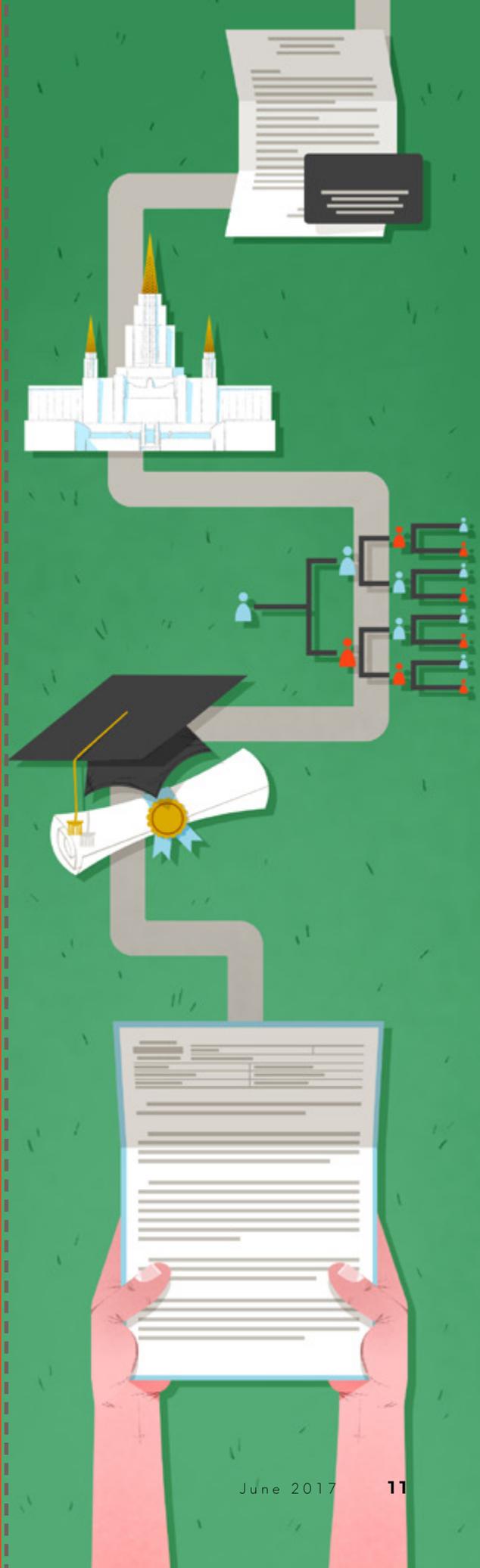
Diligence is another key to learning from your patriarchal blessing. Diligence means being conscientious, attentive, and persistent. It means determined, unflinching effort. "It is to learn what the Lord expects of you, make a plan to do it, [and] act on your plan," said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.²

If you want your patriarchal blessing to be helpful to you, study it with earnest, energetic effort; make plans to act upon it; and carry out those plans.

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

Alma the Younger, counseling his son Helaman, said the Liahona is a "type," or example, for us to follow in our own lives. In Alma 37:38–45 he says:

1. It was prepared by the Lord to show, like a compass, which way to travel.
2. It worked according to faith in God, which allowed "miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day."



3. It used “small means” to accomplish “marvelous works.”
4. If Lehi and his family forgot to exercise faith and diligence, then “marvelous works ceased” and “they did not progress in their journey.”
5. When they became distracted, they did not travel a direct course.
6. It is easy to give heed to the words of Christ, which point in a straight course.

These same principles hold true for your patriarchal blessing. “The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever” (Alma 37:46). **NE**

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Listen to Learn,” Apr. 1991 general conference.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Act in All Diligence,” Apr. 2010 general conference.



PATRIARCHAL PERSPECTIVE

We asked four patriarchs to answer questions about patriarchal blessings. Here are some of their responses.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RECEIVE A PATRIARCHAL BLESSING?

“As we attend meetings, classes, and seminary, we are taught doctrines, principles, and expectations that are in common to all members of the Church. But when we receive a patriarchal blessing, it is not common to all—it is specific to one. It is not about what we should do but about what you can do, blessed by attributes or gifts that are divine in origin. A patriarchal blessing is tangible evidence that you have a unique personal relationship with a Heavenly Father who loves you and desires that you return to His presence.”

—Clayne A. Steed, *Raymond Alberta Stake, Canada*



TO GUIDE YOUR WAY
 “Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona to chart your course and guide your way.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “On Being Spiritually Prepared,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2010, 5; see also “Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light,” Oct. 1986 general conference.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT YOUR LINEAGE IS?

“It helps you to understand that the stories written in the Bible are not just stories about some people and when they lived. Their history becomes part of the history of all people—of people who lived and who will still live. We can better understand their role and our role as we come to know our heritage. The Lord wants His people to know who they are.”

—Vyacheslav V. Protopopov, Moscow Russia Stake

HOW DO I KNOW IF IT IS TIME FOR ME TO RECEIVE IT?

“I met with a young lady recently. She described how she had been thinking about meeting with her bishop [to talk about her patriarchal blessing recommend] for some time. She had discussed her desire with her parents and fasted and prayed to know when she was ready. She told me when we started our discussion that she was still a little nervous, wondering if she was prepared, but said that recently she had felt at peace as she thought about her appointment with me. I told her, ‘That’s your answer. The Spirit brought that peace to your heart.’”

—Keith L. Stapleton, Cartersville Georgia Stake, USA

IS IT ALL RIGHT TO SHARE MY BLESSING WITH OTHERS OR TO COMPARE MY BLESSING TO THEIRS?

“Patriarchal blessings are sacred and personal. They may be shared with immediate family but not shared with or interpreted by others. There may be a time in your life that as you are speaking with someone, a thought or phrase from your blessing comes into your mind. It may be appropriate to share it, not in a boastful or prideful way but as a message that offers hope and encouragement.”

—Keith L. Stapleton, Cartersville Georgia Stake, USA

HOW CAN I PREPARE TO RECEIVE IT?

“The Savior provides the perfect example of preparation. Begin with things He taught us: first, prayer and fasting (see Matthew 14:23); second, studying the scriptures prepares us to receive and understand personal revelation.”

—Emile E. Bailly, Paris France South Stake

HOW DOES INSPIRATION HELP PATRIARCHS?

“I remember the first time I gave a patriarchal blessing. Of course I had pondered, studied, and prepared spiritually. I was nervous, but when the moment came, the Spirit filled the room and removed any fear or restraint. The Spirit helped me to hear the words which came into my heart.”

—Vyacheslav V. Protopopov, Moscow Russia Stake