

“THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION”

By Ted L. Gibbons

Introduction: I have sent six sons and one daughter on missions. For some reason, (probably because my wife hates it) it has always been my responsibility to write to them. I have done this faithfully every week, and have, at last count written a total of 508 letters to my children. All of these letters are evidence of my love, and almost all of them have contained doctrinal lessons to assist my children in dealing with the challenges and opportunities of their missions. Many times, I have responded to questions they have asked in their own epistles.

I cannot imagine sending them off for two years with no hope of communication. I want to be a part of their successes and their heartaches. I want to share the insights of my own experience with them. This works out nicely because my children have all been willing to listen and generally, to respond in appropriate ways.

Our Father sent us on a mission into mortality. He has provided some basic handbooks of instruction which we call the scriptures, but from the beginning he has shown himself willing to give individualized instruction according to the needs of his children and their willingness to respond appropriately. This individualized instruction, called personal revelation, is the subject of the next two lessons.

1, OUR NEED FOR PERSONAL REVELATION

We have a marvelous description of the Savior in D&C 38:1,2.

THUS saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, *the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made;* The same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes (emphasis added)

We have, by virtue of divine involvement with us and our mortal challenges,

the possibility of knowing any and everything we need to know to cope effectively, because we worship divine beings who know all things and who have repeatedly declared their willingness to reveal to us the things we need to know and the things we want to know. However, it is likely that we are unaware of much of the inspiration that the Lord intends to give us.

I will, in the commencement of my remarks, take up a subject upon which much has been said in the pulpit and in the chimney corner. It is regarding the Spirit of the Lord manifesting his will to his children. There is no doubt, if a person lives according to the revelations given to God's people, he may have the Spirit of the Lord to signify to him his will, and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties, in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I am satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.32 - p.33)

The significance of our confirmations as members of the church includes this matter of revelation. The prophet Joseph Smith taught:

No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 328.)

2. UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE SHOULD DO TO RECEIVE REVELATION

The lesson manual presents wonderful counsel and insights about the matter of our responsibility in receiving revelation. I am convinced that the Lord never gives *gentle* revelations to people who are not prepared and who will not respond obediently.

You who have read these lessons during the past years know that I rarely repeat things from the lesson manual, choosing rather to offer additional insights and teaching moments from the scriptures. My feelings about the manuals are and have been very strong and positive. If you have access to the gospel doctrine manual, read the second point of this lesson, which suggests that in order to receive revelation, we must

- ' Study out the matter in our minds
- ' Ponder the words of the prophets and the scriptures
- ' Inquire of the Lord in faith, with an honest heart and real intent
- ' Be obedient
- ' Be meek and humble
- ' Focus on the things of God rather than the things of the world

the manual gives some wonderful scriptural references with each of these points.

In addition I think we ought to recognize that the Lord is at least as anxious to communicate with us as we are to receive divine communication. We call him *Father* in part to celebrate those divine attributes that make him most accessible to us. He wants to help us and to guide us and to protect us and to enlighten us. But since he loves us so perfectly, he cannot do those things in a way that will injure our spirituality or impede our growth. Thus there are requirements that we must meet before we enjoy such experiences.

Reflect on the times in your life when you have been the recipient of divine direction. What were the circumstances that made such inspiration possible? Are you more likely to receive revelation when you are in a crisis, or does your spirituality sustain you even when things are going well? Have there been times when you have sought revelation unsuccessfully? Why is it sometimes more difficult than others to receive and understand the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

CONCLUSION: As I recall, the Lord speaks by name to about sixty people in the D&C. Even though we have those communications as scripture in our standard works, they came first as very personal revelation. They came through a prophet, or course, but they came in regard to individual needs and circumstances. The flow of the divine will continues.

This principle ought (in its proper place) to be taught, for God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye that Lord; for all shall know Him (who remain) from the least to the greatest.

How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power, and the other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.149)

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