

“How We Hear Him”

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My dear BYU-Pathway students, missionaries, and employees, welcome to a new semester. I pray you will have God’s blessings with you this semester.

President Russell M. Nelson has noted that whenever God the Father introduces His Son, Jesus Christ, Heavenly Father invites us to “hear Him.”¹ Can there be a more important invitation to any of us than to hear Jesus Christ?

Now because Jesus Christ has said that “[His] voice is Spirit,”² learning to hear Jesus Christ is about learning to recognize and understand the promptings of the Holy Ghost in our lives.

The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. The Godhead consists of God the Father, the Savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. These three heavenly beings work to help each of us obtain eternal life. While God the Father and Jesus Christ have bodies of flesh and bone, the Holy Ghost “is a personage of Spirit.”³ This allows the influence of the Holy Ghost to “dwell in us.”⁴ God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are all Gods.⁵

Having the influence of the Holy Ghost gives us access to the messages, strength, and help that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ desire to give us. Here are some of the roles the Holy Ghost can play in our lives if we will let Him:

- The Holy Ghost “is *the* teacher and witness of all truth.”⁶
- He will “teach [us] all things that are expedient for [us]”⁷ and show us all things that we should do.⁸
- The Holy Ghost is a divine source of wisdom and knowledge.⁹

¹ Russell M. Nelson, “[Hear Him](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2020, 81

² [Doctrine and Covenants 88:66](#)

³ [Doctrine and Covenants 130:22](#)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ *The Guide to the Scriptures*, “[God, Godhead](#)”

⁶ David A. Bednar, “[Seek Learning by Faith](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, Sept. 2007, 16

⁷ [Doctrine and Covenants 75:10](#); see also [John 14:26](#)

⁸ See [2 Nephi 32:3, 5](#)

⁹ See [Doctrine and Covenants 46:17–18](#)

- He can help us speak and interpret languages, including helping you with your English language skills.¹⁰
- The Holy Ghost makes us effective teachers.¹¹
- He can help us to know what will happen in the future and to be prepared for those events.¹²
- The Holy Ghost is a guide and can protect us from being deceived.¹³
- He gives us strength to keep God’s commandments.¹⁴
- He can change our heart.¹⁵
- He is the source of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance.”¹⁶
- The Holy Ghost comforts us.¹⁷
- We are “sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁸
- The Holy Ghost makes all our ordinances and covenants binding on earth and in heaven if we live worthily.¹⁹

What marvelous blessings! And these are just a few of the blessings that come into our lives when we have the Holy Ghost with us. Imagine how the Holy Ghost can help you in your studies, your job, your family, and all your righteous endeavors. Imagine what it is like to have the influence of a God, the Holy Ghost, with you potentially at all times. You can see why I plead with Heavenly Father every day to send the Holy Ghost into my life.

So how do we get the Holy Ghost into our lives? It is important to recognize the difference between the power of the Holy Ghost versus having the gift of the Holy Ghost in our lives. Anyone can have the power of the Holy Ghost come upon them from time to time. This occurs as they learn truth, for example. It may also come in times of great need or in response to a sincere prayer. But to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, one must be

¹⁰ [Doctrine and Covenants 46:24–25](#)

¹¹ [Doctrine and Covenants 42:14](#)

¹² [Doctrine and Covenants 46:22](#)

¹³ [Doctrine and Covenants 45:57](#); see also [Mosiah 2:36](#)

¹⁴ See [Ezekiel 36:27](#)

¹⁵ See [Mosiah 5:2](#)

¹⁶ [Galatians 5:22–23](#)

¹⁷ See [Moroni 8:26](#); [John 14:26](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 36:2](#)

¹⁸ See [3 Nephi 27:20](#)

¹⁹ See [Doctrine and Covenants 132:7, 18–19](#)

baptized and then have the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred upon them by one holding the proper priesthood authority.²⁰

Thus, if we want to have the Holy Ghost all the time, we must apply what the scriptures call “the doctrine of Christ” in our lives. This means that we must exercise faith in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, be baptized by immersion,²¹ receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands,²² and endure to the end.²³ We endure to the end by trusting God²⁴ and striving to develop more faith, continuing to repent, partaking of the sacrament regularly, receiving the Holy Ghost to a greater degree,²⁵ and continuing to progress to become more like Jesus Christ.

The influence of the Holy Ghost will only be with us as we strive to keep God’s commandments. Thus, doing things like praying, studying the scriptures, serving others, attending the House of the Lord (the holy temples), thinking about Jesus Christ, and learning truth will also help us to have the Holy Ghost to be with us.

As we do the things that are required to have the Holy Ghost in our lives, God will speak to us.

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Nephi taught that “the Lord God giveth light [also known as revelation] unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding.”²⁶ In other words, God speaks to us in a way we will understand. The term “language” in this scripture may refer to our spoken language — for example, English, Tongan, Samoan, Spanish, Portuguese, French, or Japanese — but it also refers to the various ways or “languages” in which the Holy Ghost communicates with us.

As a mission president, I asked our missionaries as they finished their missions to describe how they knew when God was speaking to them. There were many ways in which the Lord spoke to these missionaries through the Holy Ghost. For example, most had thoughts come into their minds that they recognized as coming from the Lord. Many of them described these messages as an interruption of their own thoughts. Some had dreams. Others had visions. Some got a burning in their bosom.²⁷ Others had to move forward in faith believing that they were making

²⁰ See *Bible Dictionary*, “[Holy Ghost](#)”; [Acts 8:12–17](#); [19:5–6](#); [Moroni 2](#)

²¹ See [3 Nephi 11:23–26](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 20:72–74](#)

²² See [Acts 8:14–17](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 35:6](#)

²³ See [2 Nephi 31](#)

²⁴ See also [2 Nephi 31:19–20](#)

²⁵ Dale G. Renlund, “[Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 56

²⁶ [2 Nephi 31:3](#)

²⁷ See [Doctrine and Covenants 9:8](#)

a correct decision and a confirmation would come later. Others talked about the sensation that Joseph Smith once described: “Yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and often times it maketh my bones to quake....”²⁸ Most had more than one way in which the Holy Ghost regularly spoke to them.

No matter how He speaks to us, the Holy Ghost will only prompt us to do good. In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Mormon taught, “But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”²⁹ This is an important clue to recognizing and understanding the Holy Ghost. In fact, whenever we have a desire to do good, we are feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost. What’s more, the Holy Ghost will only prompt us to do things that are consistent with the word of the Lord. If we feel we are being prompted to do something that is not consistent with the teachings of the current prophet and apostles and/or the scriptures, what we are feeling is probably not from the Holy Ghost.

It takes effort, practice, and time to learn how to fully recognize and understand the messages we receive from the Holy Ghost. When I was on my mission in Peru as a young man, I wanted to improve my ability to recognize when the Holy Ghost was speaking to me. I also wanted to learn how to interpret His messages correctly. Consequently, I determined that every time that I had a feeling to do something that seemed to be good, I would act on it. As I acted on those feelings, I eventually came to realize that there was a subtle but distinguishable difference between my own thoughts and those that came from God. With time and practice, I could consistently tell the difference. While I am still learning, I have grown in my ability and confidence to recognize and understand promptings from the Holy Ghost. You can do the same.

Finally, over the years, I have come to understand that unity is the final step in the revelatory process. For example, when my wife, Melinda, and I are seeking revelation for our family, we sometimes feel like we should do different things. However, as we continue to pray and counsel together, eventually our feelings come into alignment. If what we feel leads us to do good and is consistent with the word of the Lord, we know that we have both received the same revelation from God, and we can move forward with confidence.

I testify that God really does want to speak to you. Heavenly Father really is inviting you to hear the voice of Jesus Christ. President Russell M. Nelson has taught, “[I]n coming days, it will not

²⁸ [Doctrine and Covenants 85:6](#)

²⁹ [Moroni 7:13](#)

be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”³⁰ I plead with you to seek to hear Him. I promise as you do so, you will find greater joy and peace in your lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

³⁰ Russell M. Nelson, “[Revelation for the Church, Revelation for our Lives](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 93