

HELPING OTHERS TO BE SPIRITUALLY LED

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CES Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History • 11 August 1998 • Brigham Young University



I am grateful for the privilege of being with you tonight—over ten thousand devoted individuals who prayerfully teach and testify to the precious youth of the Church. While the size of this group is impressive, I am more touched by each of you as an individual, willing to give of your time, effort, and best creative talents to bless the

lives of those you teach. I know you are mindful of how your capacity can be enhanced as you seek the guidance of the Spirit in your efforts to serve the Master and your Father in Heaven in such a vital and important way.

What I have chosen to share tonight would be much easier to do were there a possibility of two-way communication. To approximate that, will you consider that you and I are alone and I am describing how to teach your students to be led by the Spirit to make correct decisions in their lives? From time to time I will ask you questions. If you would respond by writing the answers that you would give were we able to interchange comments, you will learn far more from this experience.

Principle

I will seek to learn by what I:

- Hear
- See
- Feel

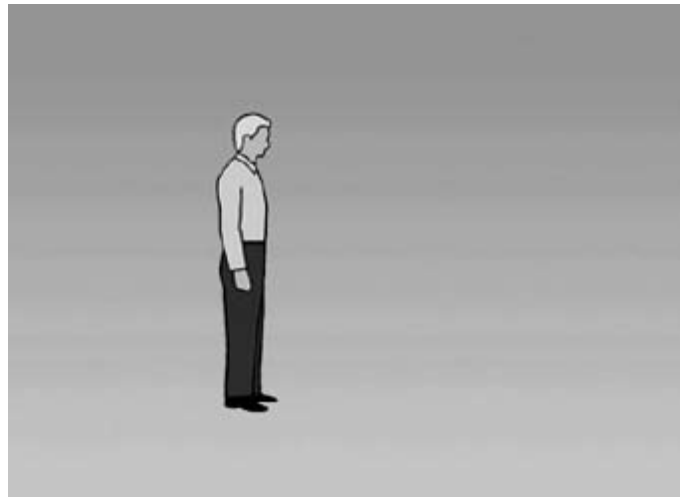
I will write down the things I learn and will do them.

Were I a teacher of young students, I would have them commit to apply this principle: I will seek to learn by

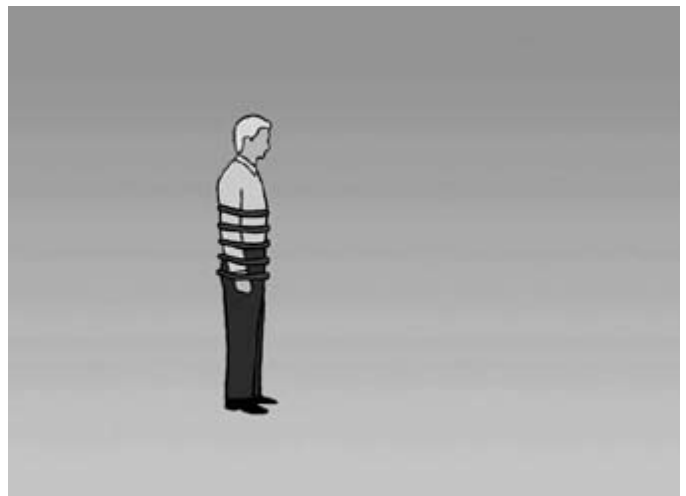
what I hear, see, and feel. I will write down the things I learn and will do them.

You would want to explain how to use each of these three avenues of communication. Every student who consistently does that will be blessed by inspired direction in life.

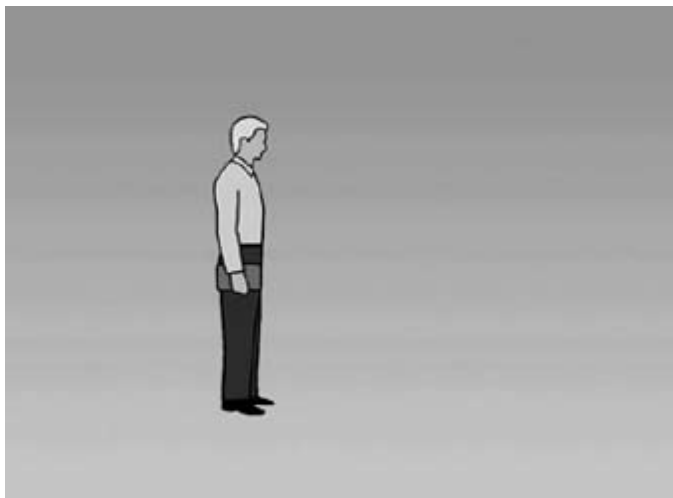
I will illustrate with a series of graphics what I want to communicate to you.



I will suggest some ways for you to help students qualify to be led by the Spirit and recognize when that direction comes, to record and obey it.



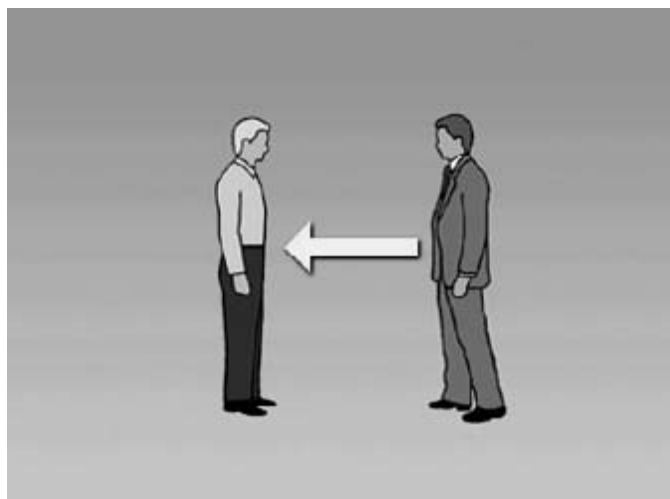
Those you teach live in a world subject to challenges and temptations. I am convinced that without the help of the Spirit an individual will have difficulty avoiding transgression in the world of today. Should the wrong choices be made, that person becomes bound by sin.



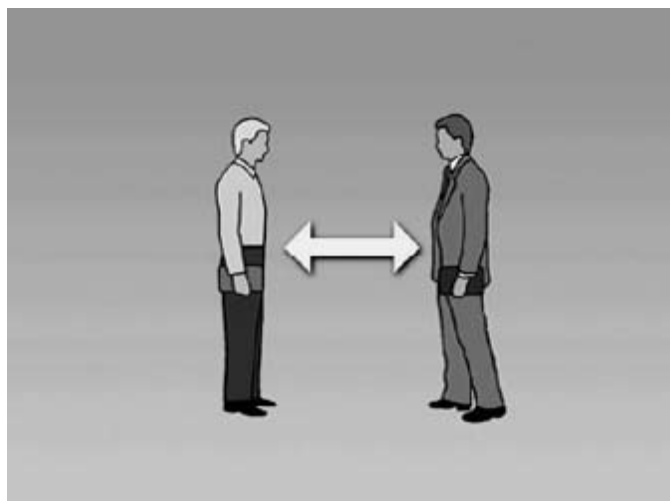
Now I will discuss how to help a student live so as to be influenced by the Spirit and to recognize its guidance in order to be blessed by obedience to its direction. You play a vital role in that process.



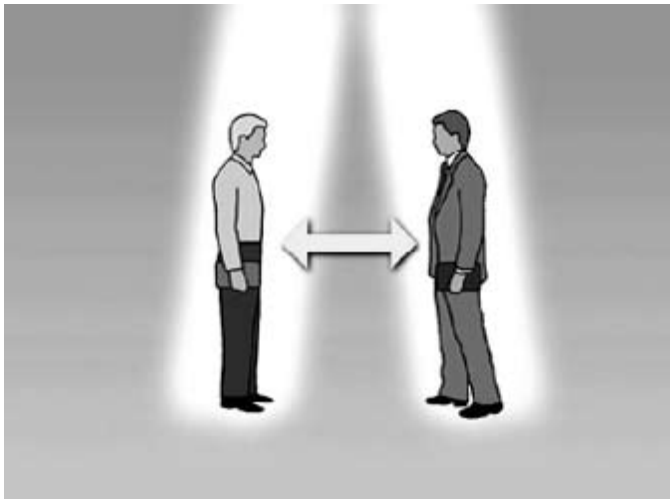
As you teach the appropriate doctrine and help explain the processes by which the Lord communicates through the Spirit, your students will *experience* being spiritually led. They will learn the principles upon which such communication is based. As they apply those principles, they will make the correct choices in life.



All too often in the world, a teacher's relation to a student is one of giving counsel with little or no interaction. Often there is no explanation of the reasons why there are commandments, rules, and standards. Most of the teaching in the world is based on one of the five senses—hear, see, touch, smell, or taste.



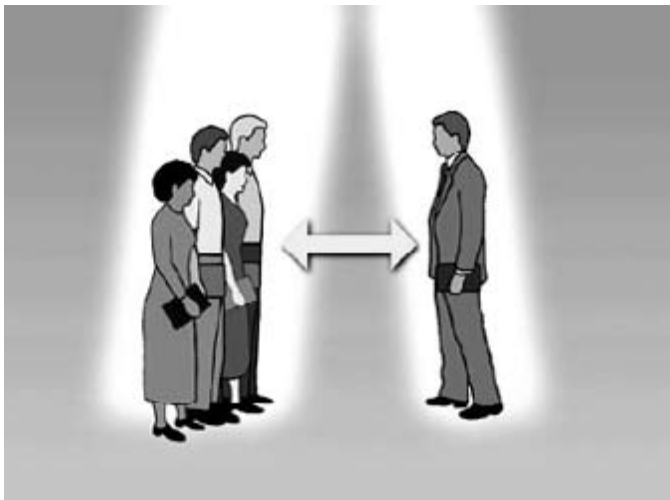
In your classroom, you can teach by the power of the Spirit. You have the opportunity to encourage continual participation of your students in the discussion to bring into their lives the direction of the Holy Spirit.



When you encourage students to raise their hand to respond to a question, they signify to the Holy Spirit their willingness to learn. That use of moral agency will allow the Spirit to motivate and give them more powerful guidance during your time together. Participation allows individuals to *experience* being led by the Spirit. They learn to recognize and feel what spiritual guidance is. It is through the repeated process of feeling impressions, recording them, and obeying them that one learns to depend on the direction of the Spirit more than on communication through the five senses.

I would now like to lay a doctrinal foundation for what we will share together. You may find some of this helpful to use with your students.

Your capacity to do this is enhanced by the direction you receive from the Holy Spirit.



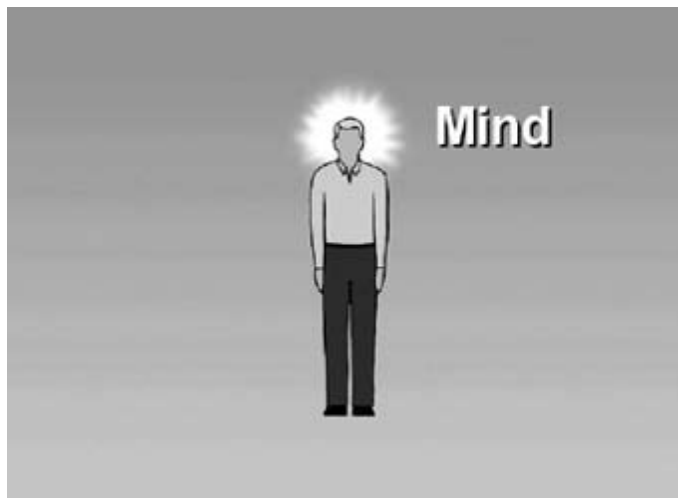
**I will tell you in
your mind and in
your heart, by the
Holy Ghost . . .**

The Savior said, “I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost” (D&C 8:2; italics added).

If you accomplish nothing else in your relationship with your students than to help them recognize and follow the promptings of the Spirit, you will bless their lives immeasurably and eternally. You have learned that to do this you must constantly seek the guidance of the Spirit to know what to say and how to say it.

I would explain to the students that an impression to the *mind* is very specific.

Those of you who are beginning service as an instrument of the Lord in teaching and testifying to the precious youth of the Church will learn an important lesson that the more experienced have long since confirmed. There is no place in your teaching for gimmicks, fads, or bribery by favors or treats. Such activities produce no lasting motivation for personal growth nor any enduring beneficial results. Simply stated, truths presented in an environment of true love and trust qualify for the confirming witness of the Holy Spirit.



Detailed words can be heard or felt and written as though the instruction were being dictated.



A communication to the *heart* is a more general impression. The Lord often begins by giving impressions. Where there is a recognition of their importance and they are obeyed, one gains more capacity to receive more detailed instruction to the *mind*. An impression to the heart, if followed, is fortified by a more specific instruction to the mind. In a moment I will use the example of Enos to illustrate how communication can come in cycles.

But first, let's discuss different ways of learning from the scriptures.

Learning Truths from the Scriptures

- Read, ponder, and pray about the meaning of specific verses.
- Analyze and unite related scriptures. Then prepare a statement of principle that embodies the truths contained in these scriptures.
- Be instructed through inspiration as you search the scriptures.

One way is to read, ponder, and pray about the meaning of specific verses. Another is to analyze and unite related scriptures. Then on a separate sheet of paper, prepare a statement of principle that embodies the truths contained in these scriptures. When these two things are carefully

and consistently done, then you can be instructed through inspiration as you search the scriptures.

Learning Truths from the Scriptures

- Read, ponder, and pray about the meaning of specific verses.
- Analyze and unite related scriptures. Then prepare a statement of principle that embodies the truths contained in these scriptures.
- Be instructed through inspiration as you search the scriptures.

I intend to concentrate on "Analyze and unite related scriptures. Then prepare a statement of principle that embodies the truths contained in these scriptures." I will now show how that can be done.

From the scriptures themselves we will draw nuggets of truth and record them on a separate sheet as a statement of principle.

Statement of Principle

In order to qualify to be led more powerfully by the Spirit, I must:

Let us begin the statement of principle by writing *In order to qualify to be led more powerfully by the Spirit, I must:*

Now we'll go to specific scriptures and identify what we will write under that heading. We will use the experience of Enos. I will read several scriptures from that marvelous instructive chapter and end by identifying two key gems of instruction he received that help us learn truth from the Holy Spirit.

“I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart” (Enos 1:3).

He was experiencing a general impression to his heart and wisely he responded powerfully and immediately.

“My soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:4).

We don’t know exactly what happened, but it is not likely that he was on his knees praying all that time. You’ve had the experience of when something urgent is needed to be resolved, you pray, you ponder, you pray more, you formulate commitments and decisions, you present them to the Lord, you pray more and get feelings of guidance from Him. The guidance to Enos was very direct because of the need and his wisdom in responding immediately to a prompting of the Spirit.

“There came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

“And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

“And I said: Lord, how is it done?”

Now comes a gem of instruction:

“He said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ. . . .

“Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren.”

Another heart-centered impression from the Lord, and Enos immediately responded:

“Wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them.

“And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, . . . the voice of the Lord came into my *mind* again, saying:”

Now the Lord gives another gem of truth:

“I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments” (Enos 1:5–10; italics added).

Because of thy faith in Christ, . . .

I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments

(Enos 1:8, 10)

We have identified two truths regarding spiritual communication that the Lord gave Enos: “because of thy faith in Christ” and “I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments.” Let us now write these truths as part of our statement of principle.

Principle

In order to qualify to be led more powerfully by the Spirit, I must:

- **Exercise faith in Jesus Christ.**
(Enos 1:7)
- **Be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord.**
(Enos 1:8, 10)

In order to qualify to be led more powerfully by the Spirit, I must exercise faith in Jesus Christ and be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord.

Notice that I have added a brief scriptural reference to each element of the principle in order to remember its source.

Whatever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you. (Moroni 7:26)

Now see if you can identify what elements of the following scripture you would write under the statement of principle.

“Whatever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you” (Moroni 7:26).

What have you identified?

Whatever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you. (Moroni 7:26)

This is what I would suggest: “Whatever thing ye shall *ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive.*”

With students, you need to explain what those elements mean and how they apply in life. You could also point out how risky it is to use a single scripture and expect that it communicates all that is needed for a prayer to

be answered by the Lord. When we end, we will have a whole list of requisites that the Lord has identified for effective spiritual communication.

Principle

- Ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Have faith believing that I shall receive. (Moroni 7:26)

Let us add to our statement of principle two elements: *ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ and have faith believing that I shall receive.*

Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me. (Moroni 7:33)

Whatever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you. (D&C 88:64)

What would you identify in these scriptures?

“Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33).

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This is what I would choose:

"If ye will have *faith in me* ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is *expedient in me*."

"Whatsoever ye ask the *Father in my name* it shall be given unto you, that is *expedient for you*."

You would, of course, explain what the word *expedient* means to them.

Principle

– Be sure that what I ask is expedient to the Lord and to me. (Moroni 7:33; D&C 88:64)

We should add to our statement of principle: *Be sure that what I ask is expedient to the Lord and to me.*

Notice how I haven't taken the exact words of the scripture. I have had to alter them so they fit into the format of what an individual should do. That needs to be done carefully so as not to lose the power of the doctrine. In the interest of time, from this point on I will just show the scriptures with highlighted sections to identify those elements I feel are crucially important.

Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed. (Alma 26:22)

"Yea, he that *repenteth* and *exerciseth faith*, and *bringeth forth good works*, and *prayeth continually without ceasing*—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed" (Alma 26:22; italics added).

Principle

– Repent, exercise faith, bring forth good works, pray continuously without ceasing. (Alma 26:22)

We now add to our principle *repent, exercise faith, bring forth good works, pray continuously without ceasing.*

Is the pattern that we are following becoming clearer? This same approach could be used to teach any doctrine, such as the Atonement of the Savior. Effort to study the scriptures and unite common concepts from like scriptures will qualify one to receive further inspiration and guidance through pondering the scriptures.

The example of Nephi, the son of Helaman, is absolutely filled with instruction on how to be directed by the Spirit. Let us read some of the pertinent scriptures.

Nephi went his way towards his own house, pondering upon the things which the Lord had shown unto him.

. . . as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a voice came unto him saying:

(continued)

And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.

(Helaman 10:2-5)

"Nephi went his way towards his own house, *pondering upon the things which the Lord had shown unto him.*

". . . As he was thus *pondering in his heart*, behold, a voice came unto him saying:

Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

"Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those *things which thou hast done*; for I have beheld how thou hast with *unwearyingness declared the word*, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And *thou hast not feared them*, and *hast not sought thine own life*, but *hast sought my will*, and to *keep my commandments*.

"And now, because thou hast done this with such *unwearyingness*, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for *thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will*" (Helaman 10:2-5; italics added).

Now we will add these requisites to our list, revising slightly the wording to be applicable to an individual.

Principle

- Ponder impressions in my heart. (Helaman 10:3)
- Do worthwhile things—serve others.
- Unwearyingly declare the word of God.
- Not fear.

(continued)

I must:

- Ponder impressions in my heart.
- Do worthwhile things—serve others.
- Unwearyingly declare the word of God.
- Not fear.

Principle

- Not seek my own interests above those of the Lord.
- Seek to know and obey the will of God.
- Unwearyingly (consistently) keep the commandments.
- Not ask for that which is contrary to the will of God. (Helaman 10:2-5)

- Not seek my own interests above those of the Lord.
- Seek to know and obey the will of God.
- Unwearyingly (consistently) keep the commandments.
- Not ask for that which is contrary to the will of God.

And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done.

But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask.

(D&C 50:29–30)

We will end with two of the many other verses of scripture that could be used:

“And if ye are *purified and cleansed from all sin*, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done.

“But know this, *it shall be given you what you shall ask*” (D&C 50:29–30; italics added).

Principle

- Be purified and cleansed from all sin.
- Continually strive to ask for and recognize the will of the Lord. (D&C 5:29–30)
- Be humble. (D&C 1:28)

We add that to the statement of principle: *Be purified and cleansed from all sin and continually strive to ask for and recognize the will of the Lord.*

I will add another—*be humble*—and will later describe its source.

Statement of Principle

You may want to take several class periods to cover what we have had to do in just a relatively few minutes. Look at the treasure of doctrinal guidance we have accumulated from these few scriptures in our statement of principle:

In order to qualify to be led more powerfully by the Spirit, I must:

- Exercise faith in Jesus Christ.
- Be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord.
- Ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Have faith believing that I shall receive.
- Be sure that what I ask is expedient to the Lord and to me.
- Repent, exercise faith, bring forth good works, pray continuously without ceasing.
- Ponder impressions in my heart.
- Do worthwhile things—serve others.

- Unwearyingly declare the word of God.
- Not fear.
- Not seek my own interests above those of the Lord.
- Seek to know and obey the will of God.
- Unwearyingly (consistently) keep the commandments.
- Not ask for that which is contrary to the will of God.
- Be purified and cleansed from all sin.
- Continually strive to ask for and recognize the will of the Lord.
- Be humble.

Another Principle

Sometime you may want to teach your students how to recognize guidance as it comes from the Spirit so that they may record and follow it. In a manner similar to that we have illustrated, you could develop this principle:

I will recognize answers from the Lord through the prompting of the Holy Ghost as I feel:

- A burning in my bosom (D&C 9:8). (That is the feeling that I have, for example, when I feel strongly prompted to bear my testimony.)
- A stupor of thought (D&C 9:9). (That is like the feeling that comes when someone proposes that I violate a cherished principle.)
- Peace of mind (D&C 6:22–23). (That has been the most common way the Lord answers my supplications through the Holy Ghost.)

Some years ago I had an assignment in Mexico and Central America similar to that of an Area President. I noticed how false traditions often bound even the members of the Church to be led to do the wrong things. For a long time I prayed for guidance from the Lord in how to help those people I love so much recognize false traditions without my being misunderstood as one who did not appreciate their culture.

One Sunday, I attended services in the building where our family ward met together with a Spanish branch. I visited the branch priesthood meeting where a humble, unschooled Mexican priesthood leader struggled to communicate truths of the gospel. It was obvious how

deeply they had touched his life. I noted his intense desire to communicate those principles. He recognized they were of great worth to the brethren he loved. He read from the lesson manual, yet his manner was of pure love of the Savior and those he taught. That love, sincerity, and purity of intent allowed the influence of the Holy Ghost to envelop the room.

The Lord chose that moment to answer my pleadings. I began to receive distinct direction regarding how to help the leaders and members overcome false traditions. There were other impressions intended for me personally. As each impression came, I faithfully recorded it. I was given precious truths that were greatly needed to be a more effective servant of the Lord.

While the details of the communication are sacred, like a patriarchal blessing—for the benefit of the recipient—I will share some of the insight gained and the unfolding of other truths that occurred that day. It is an example of the inspired direction from the Lord through the Holy Ghost that anyone can receive when the doctrines we have discussed are conscientiously applied.

The specific counsel began with this statement: “You are to continue to build the Church on a foundation of true principles, but with increased expression of love and appreciation you have been blessed to understand and feel for the great Lamanite people.” There followed specific directions, instructions, and conditioned promises that have altered the course of my life.

Subsequently, I visited the Sunday School class in the ward where my family attended. A well-educated university professor presented the lesson. That experience was in striking contrast to the one enjoyed in the branch priesthood meeting. It seemed to me that the instructor had purposely chosen obscure references and unusual examples to develop his assigned topic—the life of Joseph Smith. I had the distinct impression that he used the teaching opportunity to impress the class with his great knowledge. At any rate, he did not seem as intent on communicating principles as had the humble priesthood leader.

This experience also created an environment where strong impressions came to me again. I began to write the instructions given directly to my mind. Some of the paragraphs begin with phrases such as these: “Teach and testify to instruct, edify, and lead others to full

obedience, not to demonstrate anything of self. All who are puffed up shall be cut off.”

Another entry reads, “You are nothing in and of yourself, Richard.” That was followed by some specific counsel on how to become more effective as an instrument of the Lord. Then later a section begins, “Through qualification by obedience, self-restraint, and the power of faith.” That phrase is followed by further promises conditioned upon those requisites.

In this experience there came such an outpouring of personal impressions that I felt inappropriate to record in the midst of a Sunday School class. In a more private location I continued to write the feelings that flooded into my mind, as accurately as possible. After each powerful impression was recorded, I pondered it, seeking to confirm that I had accurately expressed the feelings I had received. I then prayed, expressing to the Lord what I thought I had been taught by the Spirit. Feelings of peace confirmed the appropriateness of what I had recorded. I was impressed to ask if there were more I should receive. There came further impressions and the process was repeated until I received some of the most precious, specific direction that anyone could ever hope to obtain in this life.

This is not an isolated experience. I know that sincere, righteous individuals who follow the principles we have discussed will enjoy such direction from the Lord. Please help your students to understand these principles and to receive confirmation from your own testimony of the reality of spiritual direction that will encourage them to seek such guidance. Prayerfully help them understand that such guidance is as real as are the five physical senses. I encourage you to emphasize that we often leave the most precious personal direction of the Spirit unheard because we do not record and respond to the first promptings that come to us when the Lord chooses to direct us or when impressions come in response to urgent prayer.

This sacred experience illustrates the meaning of that familiar instruction from the Doctrine and Covenants:

“He that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth[.]

“. . . He that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are *edified and rejoice together*” (D&C 50:21–22; italics added).

To me, the word *edified* means that the Lord will personalize our understanding of truth to meet our individual needs and as we strive for that guidance. In the branch priesthood meeting, I *understood* the principles that were taught by a Spirit-directed instructor. I had a witness of their truthfulness. But in addition to that, I was *edified*. The message taught was powerfully expanded for my personal benefit by sacred impressions communicated through the Holy Ghost. The humility of the Mexican priesthood leader was requisite to his being used as an instrument for spiritual communication of truth.

Humility is that quality that permits us to be taught from on high through the Spirit or to be taught from sources whose origin was inspiration from the Lord, such as the scriptures and the comments of the prophets. Humility is the precious, fertile soil of righteous character. In it the seeds of personal growth germinate. When cultivated through the exercise of faith, pruned by repentance, and fortified by obedience and good works, such seeds produce the cherished fruit of spiritual direction.

The importance of humility is illustrated by verse 28 of section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “And inasmuch as they were *humble* they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time” (italics added).

Teach your students that one cannot “call down” the Spirit as some are prone to say. We can create an appropriate environment for the Holy Ghost to instruct us. Spiritual communication cannot be forced. We must qualify ourselves and be ready to receive the Lord’s guidance and direction when He determines to provide it. No matter how urgent our personal timetable, the Lord responds according to His own will.

As you emphasize the need for obedience to the commandments of God in order to be spiritually directed, the youth will understand why Satan tempts them to disobey the commandments. Even matters that are considered relatively small deviations will seriously affect their capacity to be led by the Spirit. Your extended explanations and examples will help them confirm in their minds a determination to be righteous in order to qualify to be led by the Lord through the Spirit in the important decisions they must make in life.

I know that the principles we have discussed are true. I have repeatedly experienced the fruits of applying them

in my own life. I also know that as you seek guidance and direction, you will be led to teach and testify of them in ways that will motivate your students to live to be inspired to make the right choices in life. Help them receive the powerful stability in life that comes from knowing that the Lord will guide them and direct their paths as they follow His requirements for such inspiration.

In humility and exercise of a sacred privilege, I invoke a blessing of the Lord upon each of you that in your individual efforts to teach these precious young men

and women how to be led by the Spirit, you will be guided and prompted to do it effectively. A blessing that there will come to your mind your own experiences, other scriptures, the teachings of the prophets, and many clear and compelling ways to teach these eternal truths.

I know that the Savior guides His Church. I know that He loves each of you and will watch over you. I know that He communicates with us through the Holy Spirit. I solemnly testify that He lives. I witness that He lives. I know He lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.