

During times of uncertainty — including the current COVID-19 pandemic — Latter-day Saints can receive guidance from the Holy Ghost “that comes with certainty,” Elder Dale G. Renlund.

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/leaders-and-ministry/2020-05-20/covid-19-elder-renlund-personal-revelation-uncertainty-184629>

1. “God knows that all of us need personal revelation for our own circumstances,” said the member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
2. Speaking to the Church News as governments across the globe began easing restrictions brought on by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, Elder Renlund said personal revelation enables Latter-day Saints to move forward without fear.
3. The virus that causes COVID-19 is indiscriminate, he explained. “It is protein and ribonucleic acid. It has no soul, it has no temperament, it has no personality.”
4. It affects people differently, though often exploiting individual weaknesses such as compromised health conditions and even unknown underlying illnesses.
5. Because of this, “it is an incomparable blessing that God has blessed us with the opportunity to receive personal revelation so that we, in our different circumstances, can be inspired.”

6. ‘No fear’

7. While the pandemic has halted economic productivity and social connectivity, the work of the kingdom continues to move forward. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles “are not idle, not sidelined” by the pandemic, he emphasized.
8. Revelation has been received for the Church through the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, who then acted in unity to protect Latter-day Saints not only in the present pandemic but also to help the Church and its members well into the future.
9. Because of revelation, the senior leaders of the Church have never expressed fear as the COVID-19 pandemic has affected world populations, said Elder Renlund.
10. “There is not a hint of fear. Instead, we are asking: ‘How can we do things better? How can we improve? How can we bless our people?’”
11. “There is no fear.”
12. He said it has been amazing to see the leaders of the Church, “packed with full confidence that the Savior will get us through this. And the only concern is, ‘Are we going to learn what we need to learn?’”

13. Learn to listen

14. A former cardiologist who dedicated his medical career to treating the human heart, Elder Renlund compares listening to the Holy Ghost to using a stethoscope.
15. As a doctor, Elder Renlund had to learn how to use a stethoscope to listen to the heart. Medical mentors taught him to eliminate distractions and ensure the room was quiet, following thorough and consistent

patterns. “They put in the work and tuned their ears,” he said.

16. Members who really want to hear the Holy Ghost also “need to practice hearing,” Elder Renlund explained.
17. Elder Dale G. Renlund shakes hands with a young woman in Dominica during a visit to the Caribbean Area on Feb. 16, 2020. Credit: Intellectual Reserve, Inc.
18. “It just doesn’t happen. Even as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I was not issued a hardwire to heaven. It still requires individual hard work to receive inspiration.”
19. Elder Renlund acknowledges he is not as good today at using a stethoscope as when he was called away from his profession as a cardiologist a decade ago because he isn’t using the skill every day. Similarly, receiving revelation requires daily practice.
20. “If we get casual about personal acts of private devotion or daily repentance, if we get casual about our scripture study, if we get casual about not wanting to ask God questions, I think we lose our ability to hear.”

21. ‘Tailored instructions’

22. As recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Savior after His resurrection visited the Nephites and appointed twelve disciples. The next day the twelve taught the people, and they prayed. “The scriptures say, ‘And they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them’ (3 Nephi 9:19),” said Elder Renlund.
23. For times of uncertainty, the apostle said he can think of no greater gift for himself or his family or for any of Heavenly Father’s children than “to be able to have a member of the Godhead convey personalized, tailored instructions.”
24. “I am hoping we have all learned about being self-reliant and taking responsibility for our own faith and our own spiritual progress.”
25. Personal revelation, taught Elder Renlund, is buttressed by the scriptures and words from living prophets and apostles and local leaders. “But within that framework, the details are left to each individual to receive and act on personal revelation.”
26. President Russell M. Nelson taught in April 2018 [general conference](#) “that if we will truly receive the Holy Ghost and learn to discern and understand His promptings, we will be guided in matters large and small.”
27. The heavens open with a combination of daily repentance, daily scripture study, regular temple and family history work, and by expressing gratitude and patiently honoring the Lord’s timetable, said Elder Renlund, quoting President Nelson.
28. Those living in this age of doubt and fear must increase faith in their Heavenly Father and in His Son so they can receive personal revelation. “Faith increases as we act in faith,” he said.

29. In addition, focusing on the needs of others — concern for “our fellow beings” — stimulates personal revelation, he taught.

30. ‘Study it out’

31. There are things Latter-day Saints can do that open the channels for personal revelation. “When we want personal revelation, we need to study it out,” he said.

“As the leaders of the Church seek revelation in the COVID-19 pandemic, we study. We study what the medical experts are saying and try to sort through how it will apply.

32. “To think that God will just simply reveal what we have not studied is naive and nonsensical.”

33. Elder Renlund said it is important to remember that Joseph Smith could not translate the Book of Mormon when his mind dwelt too much on earthly things. “I never get personal revelation if I am angry, excessively frustrated, or even excessively anxious.”

34. Receiving personal revelation requires the recipient to be at peace, he said.

35. Elder Renlund said President Nelson has pled with Latter-day Saints to do the spiritual work necessary to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the Spirit more frequently and more clearly. “In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost,” the prophet said in April 2018.

36. President Nelson repeated that plea during general conference one month ago, asking Latter-day Saints to “refine our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost” and adding “it has never been more imperative to know how the Spirit speaks to you than right now.”

37. Personal responsibility

38. Restrictions amid COVID-19 have made it clear that “each of us are responsible for our own spirituality,” said Elder Renlund. “Each of us are responsible for our own salvation, for our own faith.”

39. For example, a young missionary recently asked Elder Renlund how to apply the Atonement without weekly partaking of the sacrament. “That missionary was actually limiting the infinite Atonement of our Savior and its ability to reach anywhere in the world,” he explained.

40. Blessings come as Church members keep the covenants associated with the sacrament ordinance. “If we do that, if we keep those covenants, then the power of godliness can be manifest in our lives.”

41. Elder Dale G. Renlund of The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles greets a young Latter-day Saint during the cornerstone ceremony of the Kinshasa DR Congo Temple on Sunday, April 14, 2019. Credit: Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

42. Members should also take reasonable precautions and follow all wise public health policies. “That way our

prayers for safety and health are not disingenuous,” he said.

43. And all can be assured that this uncertainty is temporary, said Elder Renlund. “We actually know what the ultimate outcome is — that we can live in a state of never-ending happiness with our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and our families.”

44. Having an eternal perspective is a great blessing.

45. “We know that God loves us, we know that we can trust Him, and that He will have our best interests at heart.”

46. What have we learned?

47. Elder Renlund said he hopes Church members have learned during the COVID-19 pandemic that “God lives and that He listens to prayers, that He listens to our petitions as the prophet calls on us to fast and pray.

48. “I am hoping we have all learned that home-centered church can be spiritually rich.

49. “I am hoping we have all learned about being self-reliant and taking responsibility for our own faith and our own spiritual progress.

50. “And I am hoping we have learned that messages from the Holy Ghost are quiet, plain and simple — and that this contrasts widely to the worldly messages that are loud, confusing and brash.”

51. The Holy Ghost communicates to different people in different ways, he said. “But any member of the Church may seek wisdom, knowledge and understanding as they find a quiet place to communicate with God. ... The Holy Ghost will teach us things as they really are, and as they really will be, and He will comfort us.”

52. Elder Renlund said the more Latter-day Saints are focused “on Jesus Christ, and on the joy that He can bring, the less we are bothered by individual circumstances.”

53. “We can experience afflictions ... but they can be swallowed up in the joy of Christ.”

54. With the right perspective, he said, “this time will be a blessing to us, not just in the future, but right now.”