

Nephi obeys and receives revelation

Nephi was commanded by the Lord to obtain the brass plates to carry with them as they journeyed into the wilderness. Laban resisted every effort they had made to obtain the record. The Lord then delivered Laban into Nephi's hands. Concerning the slaying of Laban, Nephi was taught: "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief."¹⁵

This revelation helped Nephi recall something the Lord previously promised him in the wilderness: "Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise."¹⁶

Then Nephi reasoned:

"Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law.

"And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass."¹⁷

Repeatedly the scriptures declare that the Lord gives His commandments to the children of men through living prophets. No committee, assembly, or any other authority has the right to dictate to Him doctrine that is contrary to His law. God's eternal blessings are contingent upon our

obedience and adherence to the word of the Lord that is revealed to us through His holy prophets.

God grant that we may always have the will and the courage to be obedient to Him who is our Eternal Father and to His chosen Son, our Lord and Savior, that we may enjoy Their blessings here and in the eternities to come. In the name of our Lord and Savior, even Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Articles of Faith 1:9.
2. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 296.
3. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 21.
4. *Teachings*, 111.
5. See *Deseret News*, Dec. 9, 1857, 317; Feb. 12, 1862, 257.
6. Numbers 1:48, 50–53.
7. Exodus 31:18.
8. Exodus 32:1.
9. Exodus 32:19.
10. Exodus 33:7.
11. Exodus 34:1.
12. Exodus 34:27–28.
13. See 3 Nephi 15:5.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 59:5–13.
15. 1 Nephi 4:13.
16. 1 Nephi 4:14.
17. 1 Nephi 4:15–16.

Elder Henry B. Eyring

A testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith

On the evening before he was martyred in Carthage, the Prophet Joseph Smith bore testimony to his guards. He testified of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. He bore witness of the administration of angels and that the kingdom of God was again established upon the earth.

I wonder if any of those guards prayed that night. The Holy Ghost was ready to tell them that the remarkable message was

true. With a testimony of the Spirit, they would have known that they should ask for baptism. And then they could have received the priceless gift of the Holy Ghost. With that gift, they could know the truth of all things. I wonder if any of them sensed that night how close they were to starting down the only path which would lead them to the Savior in the world to come, to see His face with pleasure and to hear the words, "Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father."¹

We all have people we love. Think of them now. They may be our children or our grandchildren. Perhaps you think of your husband or your wife. It may be someone you are teaching as a missionary. It may be a friend. You want with all your heart to have them someday hear those words from the Master. And for that blessing to come, they will need that testimony offered by the Prophet in Carthage burning in their hearts through all the tests of life, as it did in his.

Testimony of the Three Witnesses

To begin, we can offer them the testimony of eyewitnesses. The Lord gave others to stand with Joseph to verify what the Lord had done. They were with the Prophet when the heavens were opened.

Oliver Cowdery preached the first missionary sermon the first Sunday after the Church was organized. He went into the mission field to proclaim what he knew by what he saw and heard and felt. With two others he signed a testimony which they never denied. Their witness is printed in the front of the Book of Mormon:

“Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes,

that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

Oliver Cowdery
David Whitmer
Martin Harris”²

The Holy Ghost bears witness of truth

Those you love can have more than the physical evidence given to those witnesses by what they saw and heard. Those three witnesses had something more—something we all need. The Holy Ghost bore witness to their minds and hearts that what they saw and heard was true. The Spirit told them that the angel was from God and that the voice was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. That witness of the Spirit was given to them and many who were not there. It is a witness that can, if we qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, be ours and stay with us forever.

The Three Witnesses never denied their testimony of the Book of Mormon. They could not because they knew it was true. They made sacrifices and faced difficulties beyond what most people ever know. Oliver Cowdery gave the same testimony about the divine origin of the Book of Mormon as he lay dying. But in the times of trial, they wavered in their faith that Joseph was still God’s prophet

and that the only way to come unto the Savior was through His restored Church. That they continued to affirm what they saw and heard in that marvelous experience, during long periods of estrangement from the Church and from Joseph, makes their testimony more powerful.

Gift of Holy Ghost keeps testimony bright

The Lord gave the witness of the Spirit without the same physical evidence to others who were severely tested by opposition and tribulation. Brigham Young, John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, and many others stayed steady in their testimonies. They endured in faith because they paid the price to keep the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the burning testimony He alone brings.

Because of that, they had more than a memory of the moment when the Spirit whispered to their minds and hearts that God lived, that Jesus was the Christ, and that Joseph was their prophet. And they had more than a memory of the feeling of peace and the joy that witness brought. Because they qualified for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, they could say in every circumstance, however difficult, "I knew it then. I felt it was true then. I feel so now."

They did some simple things to keep that testimony bright and vibrant. We can teach those we love to do those same things. Done faithfully, they allow the Holy Ghost to be a constant companion. And we can promise those we love that they will feel joy and peace as the Spirit confirms truth, if they ask for that blessing in faith.

What to teach those you love

Now, we teach things of the Spirit best with both example and testimony. I don't remember much of what my parents said about the Holy Ghost, but I remember what I felt when I saw them do

the things which brought the Holy Ghost into our home. Here are some things you can teach those you love with your example and testimony, with confidence that the Lord will send the Spirit to confirm truth to their minds and to their hearts.

Teach them to pray

Teach them to pray to the Father in faith in the name of Jesus Christ. There is a promise in the book of Omni about that: "And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved."³

The young Joseph Smith showed us how to pray that way. He believed in the promise he read in the book of James.⁴ He went to the grove with faith that his prayer would be answered. He wanted to know which church to join. He was submissive enough to be ready to do whatever he was told to do. So he prayed, as we must, already committed to obey.

What he was told to do required his whole soul and finally his life. He endured during the 24 years that followed by continuing to pray with that childlike faith and humility. We can teach those we love to pray with the intent to obey. We can promise them they will gain the companionship of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit will testify the truth to their hearts every time they read in the scriptures which came to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith. And the Spirit will confirm again that God spoke through His prophet.

Teach them to ponder the scriptures daily

Teach them to ponder the scriptures every day, with faith that they will be taught by the Spirit. Now listen to these words from scripture translated by Joseph

Smith. Expect to be taught now what you should do. You will feel impressions of how you should approach the scriptures and how you should teach that to the people you love.

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”⁵

The Prophet Joseph taught us what it means to feast on the scriptures. He said that the Book of Mormon would get a man “nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”⁶ You will grow closer to the Lord and love Him more. That is the promise in Jacob 3:2:

“O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.”

You and those you love will receive the word of God by obeying it. That will allow them to feel His love. That is one of the great blessings of the gift of the Holy Ghost. When we feel that love, we can know that our course in life is approved of God. That is the feast of the delicious fruit described in the Book of Mormon.⁷

Teach them to build the kingdom of God

Teach them to sacrifice to build up the kingdom of God. That sacrifice brings the testimony of the Spirit. The Prophet Joseph translated a wonderful promise written by a prophet long ago for our time:

“And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.”⁸

All can claim that promise. The youngest and the newest member can seek to build up the kingdom of God. Zion is made up of individuals and families. When their faith increases, the kingdom is established more firmly. We can try to help with that every day. Even the smallest act to build faith in another person or in a family qualifies us for the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost testifies of truth. Therefore, in our service, our faith increases that Jesus is the Christ, that our Heavenly Father lives and loves us, and that Joseph was Their prophet. You can expect that, every time you go to a home to build faith, as a home teacher or a visiting teacher or a friend.

Some may not feel that blessing in their Church service. But that is because they have focused on the mechanics and not the glorious opportunity of publishing “peace, yea, tidings of great joy” to God’s children in His kingdom. When that is how we see our service, we will not only be lifted up at the last day but refreshed and encouraged along the way. And the Spirit will testify that this is the Lord’s kingdom restored in the latter days.

Teach them to love others by serving them

Teach them to love others by serving others. That brings the Spirit. The Prophet Joseph taught that, and he lived it. Of the many examples recorded of his loving nature, the one which most touches me occurred in Carthage Jail the night before his death. One of the men who went there with him was Dan Jones. The Prophet sensed the danger from the mob. He had reason to turn inward, to think of himself and his own peril. Instead his heart turned outward to comfort someone else.

“When all were apparently fast asleep, Joseph whispered to Dan Jones, ‘are you afraid to die?’ Dan [answered], ‘Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors.’ Joseph replied, ‘You will

yet see Wales, and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die.’”⁹

Dan Jones survived to serve missions in Wales. Thousands of Welsh converts came to Zion. Some were gifted singers. They were among the first members of what became the Tabernacle Choir. When we hear the choir sing, I hope we remember Dan Jones, the faithful friend of the Prophet Joseph. Teach those you love to remember Joseph’s comfort, given when he needed comfort. When we comfort others, out of our faith in the Lord, He sends the Comforter to us. And the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, gave Joseph the power to give prophetic and loving encouragement.

Joseph showed in his loving kindness the truth of the words from the Book of Mormon: “Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.”¹⁰

Example of the Prophet Joseph Smith

The Prophet Joseph is for me an example and a teacher of enduring well in faith. I do not worship him, but I thank and love him as the Lord’s prophet of the Restoration. He has helped me pray with the intent to obey. I am better able to feast on the word and the love of God. Because of him, I feel the Holy Ghost more often in the moments when I try to build the faith of a person in the Lord’s kingdom. And because of what I know of the

Prophet Joseph and the scriptures which were revealed through him, I more often feel the love of God for His children and His love for me when I reach down to lift someone up.

My prayer is that we and those we love will endure in faith in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and in His kingdom. I pray that we will keep the promise as we take the sacrament to always remember Him so we may *always* have His Spirit to be with us. I pray that in family home evenings and in missionary discussions and in all the times we worship together, we will invite the Holy Spirit by what we do and what we say and by what we are.

I testify that God lives. I know that Jesus Christ lives and that He is our Savior. This is His Church. Joseph was His prophet. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet today. I know this by the Spirit, which tells me that it is true. I so testify, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Enos 1:27.
2. “The Testimony of Three Witnesses,” Book of Mormon.
3. Omni 1:26.
4. See James 1:5.
5. 2 Nephi 31:20.
6. *History of the Church*, 4:461; see also 3 Nephi 5:18; Doctrine and Covenants 17:6; 20:6–10.
7. See 1 Nephi 11:21–23; 15:36.
8. 1 Nephi 13:37.
9. *History of the Church*, 6:601.
10. Moroni 7:46–47.

Elder William W. Parmley

“Come, follow me”

We are disciples of Jesus Christ. In the words of Nephi, “We believe in Christ, . . . we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ,

we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ” (2 Nephi 25:24, 26). To believers everywhere, the three most powerful behavioral words He spoke were “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22; see also Matthew 16:24; Mark