

Seeking & Receiving Revelation from God

Val Brinkerhoff

Faith & Trust in God Those without revelation in Christ's day turned to academics (Rabbi's) for help. The best teachers and leaders rely on God's word, not man's. Trusting in the arm of flesh (Psalm 118:8 and 2 Ne. 4:34; 28:30-31) without revelation from God is to deny the spirit of prophecy and revelation (Hel. 4:12; 2 Ne. 28:4). The Lord said, "Seek not to declare my word, **but first seek to obtain my word**, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have *my Spirit* and *my word*, yea, *the power of God* unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21). God added, "And as all have not *faith* [necessary for revelation] seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Note here that faith sufficient for revelation is *greater* than that given in books. They are for those of weaker faith. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught. "The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching" (TPJS p. 191). "It is the privilege of the children of God to come to God and get revelation." (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 13). The Prophet Joseph added, "Salvation cannot come without revelation. It is in vain for anyone to **minister** without it" (WJS, p. 10). "If we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for anything, it is for *knowledge* . . . Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God . . . Could you gaze into heaven five minutes [visions], *you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject*" (TPJS p. 324). The Lord's word originates in Him. He said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." We must have "oil in our lamps" to be prepared for the last-days. Receiving the precious *oil* of revelation is a simple five-step process.

Step #1: Believe & Trust God Happiness, peace, and confidence in a world of turmoil is best accomplished by having a personal relationship with God, where answers to questions are received. This is first a matter of *faith* and *trust* in Him (see Moroni 7:21-39). We must be child-like, *believing* and *trusting* (see 2 Ne. 4:34; Psalm 118:8). And we must also have a **broken heart** (be teachable, repentant, and clean) and a **contrite spirit** (open to God's **will**, not our own). Then we can go boldly to God in *faith* and *trust*, like a child who loves a wise parent. We should be clean, however, before rushing in.

Step #2: Repent We must be clean before approaching God. Repentance should be a daily thing, part of regular set apart time each day to purify ourselves and become holy. For many, this is early morning after a night of cleansing rest (there has also been no food, like a fast). Cleansing can be physical, but especially spiritual, as obtained by seeking forgiveness of sin and all things going against God's will, law, and commandments. The sacrament is also an important part of a regular cleansing process. God is eager to forgive us, giving His life for this purpose. We can be forgiven if we seek forgiveness in child-like humility and sincerity.

Step #3: Praise David of the Old Testament taught us the great value of praise, worship, and thanksgiving. Too many have ignored this useful tool. God loved David's heart. David knew how to get God's attention by praising and thanking Him. Spend time after you repent in sincere praise, doing so with humility, joy and thanksgiving. Many rely on good music to raise and lift themselves higher. It can be transforming and healing, helping to draw us closer to our Creator, Redeemer, Judge, and King, our Intercessor with the Father. Joyful worship leads to receiving the Spirit and speaking in tongues, a common gift in early Church history.

Step #4: Access Light Ask Father that His light (influence, power, and Spirit) and love might come down upon you. Visualize it. Pray in that light.

Step #5: Pray, Seek & Receive Daniel, Joseph Smith, and the prophets of scripture have taught us how to pray mightily - with real intent via a broken heart and contrite spirit, and with clean hands. It is to surrender yourself to God like a trusting child. For many, this means kneeling with uplifted hands, like a child wanting to be held. In this manner we expose our hearts to our Creator, we surrender to Him. It is our heart and intent that matter most, not words or body and hand positions. Nevertheless, choose words carefully, but always with heartfelt intent. Prayer can be offered anywhere. At home, find a time and place to be holy with God consistently. Address Him respectfully. Ask for forgiveness. Don't move on until you are clean, then express gratitude. Do so with praise and heartfelt worship. With the door opened, now ask questions, make a request, and express *the desires of your heart*. Be prepared with writing tools to record what you feel, sense, hear, or see. Last, pray for others. Be an intercessor for them. Finally, with God's permission, consider sending a portion of His light to them.

Discerning Truth from Error - Is it from God, Our Own Thoughts, or the Evil One

We are here on Earth to gain knowledge and experience. The second best knowledge is real life experience. The best knowledge, however, is from God, if we can receive it and not be deceived by our own voice or that of Satan. The Prophet Joseph Smith had to learn via experience like all men, and so must we. Therefore we should expect to receive false things

and well as real revelation from God as we learn to part the veil separating heaven and Earth. This is apparent in a number of experiences in the life of the young Prophet Joseph. David Whitmer, the third soul baptized into the Church of Christ (after Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery), and one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon (chosen by God), stated that he was with Joseph Smith during many of his early revelations. Whitmer witnessed Joseph during his early development. He stated, “*How humble and contrite in heart a man must be to receive revelations from God: and how very weak man is, and how liable to be led into error, thinking at the time that he is doing God's will. At times when Brother Joseph would attempt to translate, he would look into the hat in which the stone was placed, he found he was spiritually blind and could not translate. He told us that his mind dwelt too much on earthly things, and various causes would make him incapable of proceeding with the translation. When in this condition he would go out and pray, and when he became sufficiently humble before God, he could then proceed with the translation. Now we see how very strict the Lord is; and how he requires the heart of man to be just right in His sight, before he can receive revelation from him*” (see David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 30, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/address1.htm>).

Whitmer added, “Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto, Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had *utterly failed* in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: **Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil.** When a man enquires of the Lord concerning a matter, if he is **deceived by his own carnal desires**, and is in error, **he will receive an answer according to his erring heart, but it will not be a revelation from the Lord.** This was a lesson for our benefit and we should have profited by it in future more than we did” (quoted words of the Prophet Joseph Smith by David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 30 - p. 31).

Deception because of the Desires of our Heart

According to Joseph, there are three voices we can receive information from; (1) the Lord, (2) Satan, or (3) our own voice - in connection with the desires of our heart. All men can be deceived, especially when we ask without a pure heart, without humility, without seeking *God's will*. **Revelation from God requires that we seek His will, not our own or we can be deceived by the idols or lusts in our heart!** We read in Proverbs 23:7, “**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.**” James stated, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*, that ye may *consume it upon your lusts*” (James 4:3; Morm. 9:28). The phrase “*lusts of the flesh*” is not tied to sexual perversion here, but our own heartfelt desires or lusts in mortal tabernacles. Some can be good, but not necessarily in line with God's will for us. ***If we want pure revelation from God, we must be willing to receive its truth and then do according to God's will, fully submitting to it!***

Joseph Smith stated earlier that he was deceived by a false revelation to go to Toronto – that he might sell the copyright to the Book of Mormon there. The trip was a complete failure. Joseph was human. He too had to learn line upon line as do all mortals. We are here to gain knowledge, experience, and salvation. Quoting Joseph, Whitmer stated, “*Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil.*” So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copyright was not of God, but was of the devil or of the heart of man. When a man enquires of the Lord concerning a matter, if he is *deceived by his own carnal desires*, and is in error, he will receive an answer **according to his erring heart, but it will not be a revelation from the Lord.** This was a lesson for our benefit and we should have profited by it in future more than we did . . . The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed. When Brother Joseph was *humble* he had the Spirit of God with him; but when he was not humble he did not have the Spirit . . . When a prophet, or any other man, prays to God and asks wisdom concerning a matter, **his conscience will reveal an answer to him just according to the desires of his heart. If his desires are in any way carnal, he being deceived, an answer will be revealed to him accordingly; and he will think it is the revealed will of God** [this is the “*strong delusion*” of 2 Thess. 2:10-12, Isa. 66:2-4, Ezek. 14:4-6; James 4:3; Jacob 4:14]. Satan reveals his will to deceive him, and makes it appear as an Angel of Light. This is a mystery to a great many people, but only to those who are weak and have need of milk that they may grow in spiritual knowledge to understand the word of God. It is Satan who deceives the man, **but God permits it because of the wicked desires of the man**, and it is right and justice in *God's wisdom to permit the persistent transgressor to be led off and deceived by a delusive false doctrine*” (see David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/address1.htm> (pps. 42-43).

Paul, in 2 Thess. 2:11, stated: “And for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.*” Why would God do or allow this? Verses 10 and 12 give the reason why; “*because they received not the love of the truth.*” ... because they “*believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” – **in their carnal desires.** In Isaiah 66:2-4, the Lord said, “But to this man will I look, even to him that is **poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.**” But to the people who “**have chosen their own ways,** and their soul delighteth in their abominations, *I will also choose their delusions.*” Note also Ezekiel 14:1-11, especially verses 3-6. There we read, “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his *idols in his heart,* and putteth **the stumbling block** of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; **I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;** That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.” Finally, note Alma 29, where God often answers us *according to our agency and will.* “God...granteth unto men **according to their desire,** whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, **according to their wills,** whether they be unto *salvation* or unto *destruction*” (Alma 29:4, see also Jacob 4:14).

Answers Faith and trust in the Lord means desiring and expecting answers from Him – **according to His will,** and then listening for His gentle voice. It most often comes within our *mind* as “**still small voice**” (see Enos 5, 10). We must “*believe as little children*” that we what hear in such *submissive* circumstances is from Him, given us in our language and words - that we might understand. We sometimes doubt that this is the Lord because of these familiar words. Picking up a pen, listening, and writing can be an effective method for receiving revelation. It is my preferred method for receiving answers. Writing answers engages the mind *with* action tied to *faith* in a *trusting* connection. Practicing discernment with child-like faith, and removing all the idols of our heart helps us not be deceived by other voices. It is then that our yes and no answers can turn into sentences and finally conversations. May you be blessed in this endeavor, is my hope and prayer.

Take time to be Holy: Become – “Holy unto the Lord”

1. Love God with all your heart - the first and great commandment

Have charity for your fellow man – love others as yourself.

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (*Matt. 22:36-40*).

2. Set aside time every day to be holy - unto the Lord

Spend time with the Lord to get to know Him, one or more hours, typically early in the morning

He is the Bridegroom, we are the Bride. There can be no engagement (1st Comforter – baptism of fire for the

Gift of the Holy Ghost) or marriage (2nd Comforter) without time to get to know God.

3. Become Clean - so you can approach the Lord boldly (with faith, confidence, and joy)

Sincerely repent, and be willing to change.

Take the Sacrament regularly.

Purify your intentions and actions – acquire a pure heart.

4. Be Child-like

Have faith and trust in God – believe. Eliminate fear. Jump in enthusiastically with both feet.

Be teachable, receptive, and open to new things (a broken heart), not prideful, hard-hearted, and stiff-necked.

Be contrite (humble). Use imagination, creativity, and faith - then let God intervene.

5. Receive the Word of God

Search diligently His written word (scripture) – let it become a personal Urim and Thummim for you.

Receive guidance, knowledge, direction and counsel that will transform your life.

6. Praise, Worship, and Express Gratitude to God

Thank Him, Praise Him, Sing and Dance to or before Him, Please Him, Serve Him, Love Him.

This is a lost key that opens the heavens.

7. Become Charitable with a Pure Heart

Help the poor, the downtrodden, the needy.

Seek to help others as Christ would.

8. Commune with God, enjoy His Presence & the Gifts of the Spirit

Pray for your needs and desires. Pray for others – be an intercessor for them. Become a “savior on Mount Zion” for others.

Transition from a servant, to a friend, then a son or daughter of God (an empowered heir).

Experience Joy and real Happiness no matter your situation, and be confident in your identity and purpose.

Use the Gifts of the Spirit to bless others.