

# Turn to Him and Answers Will Come

**By Elder James B. Martino**

*Of the Seventy*



Be obedient, remember the times when you have felt the Spirit in the past, and ask in faith. Your answer will come.

When I was a young man, my parents joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We knew that the missionaries had been teaching them, but my parents had taken the missionary lessons alone.

After this surprising announcement, my brothers and I began to listen to the missionaries as well, and they each received the message of the Restoration with gladness. Although I was curious, my heart was not into changing my life. I did, however, accept the challenge to pray about whether the Book of Mormon was the word of God, but I did not receive an answer.

You might ask why Heavenly Father did not answer that prayer; I certainly wondered. I have learned since that the promise made by Moroni is accurate. God does answer our prayers about the truthfulness of the gospel, but He answers them when we have “a sincere heart” and “real intent.”<sup>1</sup> He does not answer just to respond to our curiosity.

Perhaps there is something in your life that you have a question about. Perhaps there is a problem you do not know quite how to answer. Today I would like to share some thoughts that may help you obtain the answers or help you are seeking. The process begins with being converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Receiving Revelation Depends on the Condition and Intent of Our Hearts

I have thought about the accounts of several individuals in the scriptures. Take, for example, Laman and Lemuel. Like Nephi, they were “born of goodly parents” and taught “in all the learning of [their] father.”<sup>2</sup> Yet they murmured because their father was a visionary man. From their point of view, his decisions defied logic, for they knew not the things of God, and therefore they would not believe.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that their choices allowed them access to potentially faith-building experiences. They left their home and their riches. They suffered through wanderings in the wilderness. They eventually helped build the boat, and they agreed to journey to an unknown land.

Nephi passed through these same experiences. But did these actions build their faith? Nephi's faith was made strong, but Laman and Lemuel grew more cynical and angry. These brothers even saw and heard an angel, but alas, they continued to doubt.<sup>4</sup>

Mortal life is not easy for any of us. We are placed on earth to be tried and tested. Our response to life's experiences will often greatly influence our testimonies. Consider some of the reactions of Laman and Lemuel: They murmured when their father asked them to do hard things.<sup>5</sup> They attempted to obtain the brass plates, but when success did not come, they gave up. Their attitude was "We've tried; what more can we do?"<sup>6</sup>

There was even a time when they were sorrowful for doing wrong and asked for forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> They prayed and were forgiven. But the scriptures record that later they returned to complaining and they refused to pray. They came to Nephi and said they could not "understand the words which [their] father [had] spoken."<sup>8</sup> Nephi asked them if they had "inquired of the Lord."<sup>9</sup> Notice their response: "We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us."<sup>10</sup>

## Continuing Obedience Allows Us to Receive Answers

Nephi's reply to his brothers is a key for us to receive continual answers to prayer:

"How is it that ye do not keep the commandments of the Lord? How is it that ye will perish, because of the hardness of your hearts?"

"Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things [will] be made known unto you."<sup>11</sup>

I know some returned missionaries who have had undeniable spiritual experiences, but the lack of certain spiritual habits seems to have caused them to forget the times when God has spoken to them. To those returned missionaries and to all of us, if you "have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?"<sup>12</sup> If you do not feel it now, you can feel it again, but consider Nephi's counsel. Be obedient, remember the times when you have felt the Spirit in the past, and ask in faith. Your answer will come, and you will feel the love and peace of the Savior. It may not come as quickly or in the format you desire, but the answer will come. Do not give up! Never give up!

Let us compare Laman and Lemuel to the sons of Mosiah. Both groups of men were raised in righteous families, yet both strayed. Both were called to repentance by an angel, but what was different about the experience of the sons of Mosiah?

## Trials Will Build Our Faith

Their missionary success is unforgettable. Thousands were converted to the ways of the Lord. However, we often forget that as they began their missions, their “hearts were depressed, and [they] were about to turn back, [but] the Lord comforted [them].” They were counseled by the Lord to “bear with patience [their] afflictions.”<sup>13</sup>

## The Study of the Scriptures Tells Us God’s Will

Why did the trials of these sons of Mosiah strengthen their faith and commitment rather than cause them to murmur or doubt? The key is that “they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.”<sup>14</sup> We will all face trials and have questions, but remember that we must be “continually holding fast to the rod of iron.”<sup>15</sup> “The words of Christ will tell [us] all things what [we] should do.”<sup>16</sup> We must make scripture study a daily part of our lives, as this will open doors of revelation.

## Prayer, Combined with Fasting, Invites Revelation

For the sons of Mosiah, “this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation.”<sup>17</sup> Prayer and fasting will allow us to be susceptible to spiritual promptings. Communicating with Heavenly Father while purposefully abstaining from food and drink allows us to “loose the bands of wickedness [and] to undo the heavy burdens.”<sup>18</sup> Prayer, combined with fasting, will provide so that when we “call, ... the Lord shall answer; ... [and when we] cry, ... he shall say, Here I am.”<sup>19</sup>

## Turn to Him

These personal religious habits—obedience, scripture study, prayer, and fasting—strengthened the sons of Mosiah. The lack of these same personal religious habits was a major reason that Laman and Lemuel were left vulnerable to the temptation to murmur and doubt.

If you have been tempted to murmur, if you have had doubt that leads to unbelief, if trials seem more than you can bear, turn to Him. If you are one who has turned away or rationalized your behavior, turn to Him. Can you remember when He did “speak peace to your mind ... ? What greater witness can you have than from God?”<sup>20</sup> Ask yourself, “Am I as close to living like Christ now as I was before?” Please, turn to Him.

May I return to my personal story. Eventually I began to be sincere. I remember when the missionary who was teaching me asked if I was ready to be baptized. I replied that I still had some questions. This wise missionary told me that he could answer them but that I would have to answer his question first. He asked me if the Book of Mormon was true and if Joseph Smith was a prophet. I told him that I did not know, but I wanted to know.

My questions led to increased faith. For me, the answer came not as an event but as a process. I noticed that as I did “experiment upon [the] words” and began to “exercise a particle of faith,” the Book of Mormon became “delicious to me” and it did “enlighten my understanding” and truly did “enlarge my soul.” Eventually I had that experience the scriptures describe as a swelling within your breast.<sup>21</sup> It was at this point that I desired to be baptized and to commit my life to Jesus Christ.

I truly know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet. Oh, I still have things I do not comprehend, but my testimony of truth draws me closer to the Savior and builds my faith.

Brothers and sisters, remember Nephi and the sons of Mosiah, who had spiritual experiences and then acted in faith so that answers came and their faithfulness grew. Contrast this with Laman and Lemuel, who doubted and murmured. Even though they sometimes acted in worthwhile ways, work without faith is dead. We must have faith with works to receive answers.

I hope as you have listened this morning that the Spirit has impressed on your minds and hearts something that you might do to have your questions answered or to find an inspired solution to the problem you face. I bear a solemn witness that Jesus is the Christ. Turn to Him and your prayers will be answered. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. Moroni 10:4.

2. 1 Nephi 1:1.

3. See 1 Nephi 2:11–12.

4. See 1 Nephi 4:3–4.

5. See 1 Nephi 3:5.

6. See 1 Nephi 3:14.

7. See 1 Nephi 7:20–21.

8. 1 Nephi 15:7.

9. 1 Nephi 15:8.

10. 1 Nephi 15:9.

11. 1 Nephi 15:10–11.

12. Alma 5:26.

13. Alma 26:27.

14. Alma 17:2.

15. 1 Nephi 8:30.

16. 2 Nephi 32:3.

17. Alma 17:3.

18. Isaiah 58:6.

19. Isaiah 58:9.

20. Doctrine and Covenants 6:23.

21. See Alma 32:27–28.

Official Web site of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
© 2015 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All Rights Reserved