

Our Constant Companion

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You and I have the opportunity to have the Holy Ghost as our constant companion.

My beloved brothers and sisters, in this conference we have been blessed with an outpouring of revelation. Servants of the Lord Jesus Christ have spoken and will speak words of truth, encouragement, and direction.

I have been touched by the testimonies borne in this conference that the Lord speaks to us personally through the Holy Ghost. As we pray and then heed the Spirit's promptings, we gain greater insights and blessings to guide us through the increasingly difficult days ahead.

We have heard again President Russell M. Nelson's warning that "in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."¹

That prophetic warning has led me to ponder what I might teach my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren about how to have that crucial guidance in the difficult days ahead for them.

So this message today is a brief letter to my descendants that might help them when I am not with them in the exciting days ahead. I want them to know what I have come to know that could help them.

I have come to better understand what it will take for them to have the constant influence of the Holy Ghost in the days in which they will live. And I have felt impressed to speak today of my personal experience of inviting the Holy Ghost, as nearly as I could, to be my constant companion. My prayer is that I may be able to encourage them.

I would start them to think about and pray about Helaman's sons, Nephi and Lehi, and the other servants of the Lord laboring with them. They faced fierce opposition. They were serving in a wicked place and had to deal with terrible deceptions. I take courage, and you could, from this one verse from the record of Helaman:

"And in the seventy and ninth year there began to be much strife. But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having many revelations daily, therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year."²

This account encourages me, and it could encourage you. Helaman's sons were taught and guided by a series of experiences with the Holy Ghost. This assures me that we can be taught by

and learn from the Spirit line upon line, receiving what we need, and then when we are ready, we will receive more.

I have been encouraged in the same way by the account of Nephi being asked to go back to Jerusalem for the plates of Laban. You remember the choice he made. He said, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.”³

Nephi’s experience with the Holy Ghost on that errand has given me courage many times when I have embarked on tasks I knew were assignments from the Lord but which seemed far beyond my past experience and beyond what I saw as my capacity.

You remember what Nephi said about his experience: “And it was by night; and I caused that [my brothers] should hide themselves without the walls. And after they had hid themselves, I, Nephi, crept into the city and went forth towards the house of Laban.”

He goes on to say, “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.”⁴

I have been encouraged by knowing that Nephi was guided by the Spirit minute by minute through the night on the Lord’s errand.

We need, and you will need, the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Now, we desire it, yet we know from experience that it is not easy to achieve. We each think and say and do things in our daily lives that can offend the Spirit.

When that happens, as it will, we may feel disapproval from the Lord. And we may be tempted to feel we are alone. It is important to remember the sure promise we receive each week as we repent and partake of the sacrament: “That they may always have his Spirit to be with them.”⁵

If you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost today, you may take it as a sweet evidence that the Atonement is working in your life.

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has said: “Whenever these moments of our extremity come, we must not succumb to the fear that God has abandoned us or that He does not hear our prayers. He *does* hear us. He *does* see us. He *does* love us.”⁶

That assurance has helped me. When I feel distant from the Lord, when answers to my prayers seem delayed, I have learned to follow the counsel of President Nelson to review my life for opportunities to repent. He reminds us, “Daily repentance is the pathway to purity, and purity brings power.”⁷

If you find yourself having difficulty in feeling the Holy Ghost, you might ponder whether there is anything for which you might repent and receive forgiveness.⁸ You can pray with faith to know what to do to be cleansed and thus more nearly qualify for that constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

If you want to receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost, you must want it for the right reasons. Your purposes must be the Lord’s purposes. If your motives are too selfish, you will find it difficult to receive and sense the promptings of the Spirit.

The key for me and for you is to want what the Savior wants. Our motives need to be driven by the pure love of Christ. Our prayers need to be “All I want is what you want. Thy will be done.”

I try to remember the Savior’s sacrifice and His love for me. Then, when I pray to Heavenly Father to give thanks, I feel love and assurance that my prayers are heard and that I will receive whatever is best for me and those I love. It strengthens my testimony.

Of all the things of which the Holy Ghost testifies, the most precious for us is that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of God. The Savior promised, “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”⁹

Years ago I received a phone call from a distraught mother. She told me that her daughter had moved far from home. She sensed from the little contact she had with her daughter that something was terribly wrong. She pleaded with me to help.

I found out who the daughter’s home teacher was. You can tell by that name that it was a long time ago. I called him. He was young. Yet he told me that he and his companion both had been awakened in the night with not only concern for the daughter but with inspiration that she was about to make choices that would bring sadness and misery. With only that inspiration of the Spirit, they went to see her.

At first she did not want to tell them about her situation. Under inspiration, they pleaded with her to repent and choose the path the Lord had for her. She realized then, I believe by the Spirit, that the only way they could have known what they knew about her life was from God. A mother turned her loving concerns over to Heavenly Father and the Savior. The Holy Ghost had been sent to those home teachers because they were willing to serve the Lord. They had followed the counsel and promise found in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.”¹⁰

I testify that the Lord has kept His promise. The Holy Ghost is being sent to the faithful covenant members of the Church of Jesus Christ. Now, your experiences will be unique, and the Spirit will guide in the way best suited to your faith and capacity to receive revelation for you and for those you love and serve. I pray with all my heart that your confidence will grow.

I bear my witness that God the Father lives. He loves you. He hears your every prayer. Jesus Christ did pray to the Father to send the Holy Ghost to guide, comfort, and testify of truth to us. The Father and His Beloved Son appeared to Joseph Smith in a grove of trees. The Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God.

Heavenly messengers restored priesthood keys. President Russell M. Nelson is the prophet of God for all the earth.

As a witness of Jesus Christ, I know that He lives and He leads His Church. You and I have the opportunity to have the Holy Ghost as our constant companion and to have those truths confirmed as we remember and love the Savior, repent, and ask for His love to be in our hearts. I pray that we may have that blessing and the companionship of the Holy Spirit this day and every day of our lives. I love you. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.
2. Helaman 11:23.
3. 1 Nephi 3:7.
4. 1 Nephi 4:5–6.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lessons from Liberty Jail” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 7, 2008), 5, speeches.byu.edu.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 68.
8. “An inability to feel the Spirit, or a general feeling of apathy or numbness, [can also be] a symptom of poor mental health” (“At times I have difficulty feeling the Spirit because I feel numb ... ,” in “Mental Health: Help for Me,” Life Help, Gospel Library). If you experience difficulties with your mental or emotional health, please be assured of Heavenly Father’s love for you, and continue to pray to Him and trust in Him.
9. John 15:26.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46.