

SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS
VOLUME 1

Prayer Mapping

FOR

Mighty Prayer

*HOW TO PRAY WITH STRENGTH
AND GET ANSWERS TO YOUR PRAYERS*



“Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in MIGHTY PRAYER”

BY

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
SECTION 1: Basics of Prayer.....	9
What is Prayer?	9
What Are the Different Types of Prayer?	12
Why is Prayer Necessary?	14
How and When Should I Pray?.....	17
Where Should I Pray?	21
What Is the Language of Prayer?	22
What Are The Different Sources of Inspiration?.....	25
Inspiration from the Lord	26
Inspiration from Ourselves	30
Inspiration from Satan	30
How Do I Get Answers to My Prayers?.....	34
How Are My Prayers?.....	39
Section 2: Mighty Prayer	41
Introduction.....	41
Examples of Mighty Prayer in the Scriptures.....	43
The Story of Enos.....	43
The Story of Jesus' Disciples in America	44
The Story of the Brother of Jared.....	44

Intercessory Prayer (High Priestly prayer)	50
Recorded Prayers with the Nephites	53
Sacred Prayers which Can't Be Recorded	54
Section 3: Prayer Mapping.....	55
Introduction.....	55
The Birth of "Prayer Mapping"	61
Prayer Maps	61
The Key to Mind Maps – "THE QUESTIONS"	64
Prayer Journals.....	66
Prayer Cycle	67
Working out Your Salvation through Prayer.....	79
Special Mighty Prayers: Annual, Quarterly, Monthly, and Weekly Prayers	80
Additional Possible Prayer Mapping Subjects	82
Section 4: Additional Helps for Mighty Prayer.....	83
Understanding and Using the Gifts of the Spirit.....	83
Helping Each Other with Our Gifts.....	87
Understanding and Coming to Expect Miracles.....	88
Inspiration: Be Ready - Any Time – Any Place	91
Being Specific in Your Prayers	93
Blocks to Inspiration.....	94
Fasting and Prayer.....	95
Sing Hymns of Prayer	104
Conclusion.....	106
Appendix.....	107
Definition of Prayer	107
How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life	108
A Sincere Heart and Real Intent.....	113
Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer.....	116
Keys for Determining If Administrations Are from God	121
The Blessing of a Proper Fast Carl B. Pratt	125
Word of Caution	129

Prayer Mapping

FOR

Mighty Prayer

*How to Begin to Pray with Strength
and Get Answers to Your Prayers*

Introduction

Hi! I am Grandpa Dave.

We are now living in the last days before Christ's Second Coming. Christ has taught us that **If ye are prepared shall not fear**" (D&C 38:30). There are two basic types of preparedness. One is **"Temporal Preparedness"** and the other is **"Spiritual Preparedness"**. This book is the first in a series of books that addresses the **"Spiritual Preparedness"** area.



In September of 2014, I was awakened at about 5am. This is very unusual for me as I like to sleep right up until 8am when I have to walk across to the next room to start working for the day. For the next three hours I sat down at the computer and began to receive two dozen pages of thoughts and ideas about prayer – and more specifically – **'Mighty Prayer'**, and a concept that I term **'Prayer Mapping'**.

I couldn't type fast enough. By the time I was through, I was exhausted, but also amazed at how everything seemed to fit together. **'Prayer Mapping'** is a concept of how to organize your thoughts and ideas about things to pray about, how to receive inspiration about those thoughts, and how to put them into action. I hope that you enjoy some of my insights. 😊

Have you ever ask yourself ...

- Why can't I get answers to my prayers?
- Why does it seem like prayers never make it past the ceiling of my bedroom?

- How do I know if it is the Lord talking to me, or just myself ... or worse ... Satan is giving me suggestions?
- Why do my knees hurt after **30 seconds of praying**?
- Why do I run out of things to pray about after only 2 minutes?
- Why should I even try to pray? I never seem to get any answers.
- Why am I so discouraged about things and feel that the Lord doesn't even know who I am?
- How can I use prayer to overcome some of my real weaknesses and improve my life?
- What is this thing called "personal revelation"? I don't think I have ever experienced it. (No angel has ever come to me. Perhaps I am worthless.)
- What is this thing called '**Mighty Prayer**'? Is it different than regular prayer?



As you will see, this book is more of a '**workbook**', not just one for reading. So get your colored markers and pens out, and let's begin. To start, please **circle** or **highlight** those questions above that you may have had, or are having at this moment. Also, in the margins, write down some of your other questions you have had about prayer.

As inspirations and thoughts begin to come forth, you may find that you will need to capture/record them **immediately** or they may be lost for good. I suggest having a small notebook with you at all times to be able to write them down ... or just record them in your phone to capture them.



Questions are the key to getting understanding! The majority of the revelations given to Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants were because of his questions to the Lord. Think about it ... Joseph received revelations after having questions about baptism, the priesthood, the restoration, the writings in the Bible, and many others.



REMEMBER: There is no such thing as a dumb question ... just dummies that don't ever ask questions. 😊

My oldest son was once playing with his friends at Elder Boyd K. Packer's home with Elder Packer's grandsons. Elder Packer motioned them into the house and sat them down. He then asked the boys (about 18 years old at the time) "**Do any of you have any questions I can answer for you?**" My son reported back that none of the boys had any questions, so Elder Packer just visited with them. When my son visited with me about this experience, I counseled him to begin writing down gospel questions as they come to him, so if he were ever in a similar situation, he would be better prepared.



I also encourage you to get a **notebook** and start writing down all of your questions and leave plenty of space for answers that you will eventually receive ... maybe not immediately ... maybe not for years ... and maybe not in this life ... but once you are on the other side of the veil and the Lord asks you if you have any questions ... **you will be prepared.** 😊

One of the goals of this book is to help you identify your questions, and then petition the Lord for answers to those questions. This book will explore different methods of requesting help from the Lord as well as how to receive answers.

At times, even **Joseph Smith** had problems receiving answers to his questions. One example was when he had been suffering in Liberty Jail for about six months. He finally cried out to the Lord:

**“O God, where art thou?
And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? “**




The Lord finally answered his pleas and gave him instructions.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, but the Lord has given me enough experiences over the past 40+ years since my mission to Brazil that I hope will enlighten and encourage you. I have experienced many miracles and hope some of these may also inspire you. And just like you, I also have had my fair share of down times too. ☹️

There are **four main sections** that will be covered in this book:

- (1) Learn more about **'Prayer'** by examining various examples of prayers in the scriptures.
- (2) Learn about **'Mighty Prayer'** and how to incorporate it into your life.
- (3) Learn a process that I developed called **'Prayer Mapping'**. This process will assist you in knowing what to pray about. This section will also discuss **'Prayer Journals'** and the **'Prayer Cycle'**.
- (4) Learn additional helps in order to increase your effectiveness in **'Mighty Prayer'**.

Please Challenge everything I say ... research the references I include to make sure the concepts have not been taken out of context, and that you come to a full and complete understanding the concepts have. My goal is not to have you accept and believe what I write, but that you simply understand my ideas and start thinking for yourself.

Along the way, I will be pointing out  **IDEAS** that I recommend to assist you. Hopefully some of these may be useful for you.

I must warn you ... one brother who I shared these thoughts with stopped me on the side of the road one day and said that his life had not been the same since he learned these concepts. He said that he had never in his life received so many inspirations and directions as he had over the past few weeks. So prepare yourself ... as you begin to learn 'line upon line' ... a whole new world may just be opening up to you!!

The opinions expressed in this book are mine and mine alone (though it would be great if you agreed with them). 😊

NOTE: In many of the quotes and scriptures, I will highlight certain words or phrases. These are my emphasis only, and are to help point out areas that I feel are very important.

You will also notice that all the words of the **Savior** are in **RED** so that they stand out. I also formatted the scriptures so they are a little easier to read and understand. If you enjoy this literary style, you may also enjoy my **Red-Letter Reader's Edition of the Book of Mormon**. It is free and downloadable on my website. www.GrandpaDave.com



ADDED BONUS FEATURE:

If you go to my website, www.GrandpaDave.com, I have included my piano/vocal arrangements for eight of my most favorite hymns focusing on **PRAYER**. The lyrics for the hymns are in this book. These lovely hymns will help you get the Spirit and prepare yourself for having 'Mighty Prayer'. I hope you will enjoy them.

This book and musical albums are dedicated to my beloved wife and companion, Lurlynn, with a special thanks for her love, support and help, and for encouragement to publish my thoughts in the first place.



I would also like to dedicate this to my mission president, George A. Oakes, whose teachings about prayer on my mission have inspired me to write this book.

Good Luck!!

Grandpa Dave 😊



SECTION 1:

Basics of Prayer



Let's begin by first understanding a few basics concerning prayer. We will start by answering the following questions:

- What is prayer?
- What are the different types of prayer?
- Why is prayer necessary?
- How and when should I pray?
- Where should I pray?
- What is the language of prayer?
- What are the different sources of inspiration?
- How do I get answers to my prayers?
- How are my prayers?

What is Prayer?

Okay, so what is prayer? Everyone may have a different picture that comes to mind when they think of prayer. Many religious denominations have their own styles of praying.



Elder Bruce R. McConkie described prayer this way:



*“To pray is to **speak with God**, either **vocally** or by forming the thoughts involved in the **mind**. Prayers may properly include expressions of **praise, thanksgiving, and adoration**; they are the solemn occasions during which the children of God petition their Eternal Father for those things, both temporal and spiritual, which they feel are needed to sustain them in all the varied tests of this mortal probation. Prayers are occasions of **confession** – occasions when in humility and contrition, having broken hearts and contrite spirits, the saints confess their sins to Deity and implore him to grant his cleansing forgiveness.”*

I personally think the best description of prayer is contained in the following hymn. Listen to this hymn on my special musical album just for you, and study the words!

“Prayer Is the Soul’s Sincere Desire”

(LDS Hymn 145)

Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner’s voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice
And cry, “Behold, he prays!”

The Saints in prayer appear as one
In word and deed and mind,
While with the Father and the Son
Their fellowship they find.

No prayer is made on earth alone:
The Holy Spirit pleads,
And Jesus at the Father’s throne
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself has trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.



I encourage you to memorize this hymn and other similar hymns.

Begin using hymns in your efforts to receive answers to your prayers.

In the preface to the **LDS Hymn Book**, it states:

*“The **hymns** invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.*

Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end.

In addition to blessing us as Church and family members, the hymns can greatly benefit us as individuals. Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace.

*Let us memorize and ponder them, recite and sing them, and partake of their spiritual nourishment. **Know that the song of the righteous is a PRAYER unto our Father in Heaven, ‘and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads.’”***

The First Presidency



What Are the Different Types of Prayer?

Some people only think of prayer as kneeling down on 'sore' knees and begging for forgiveness or asking for help. Well, maybe this is true in some respects, but there is a whole world of different ways in which we can pray.

Elder McConkie also taught:

*"There are two basic categories of prayer ... **public** and **private or secret**.*

***Public prayers** would include prayers spoken at formal gatherings where one person acts as the spokesperson.*

***Private prayers** include those given by themselves and also family prayers and blessings on the food. These can be vocal or given silently."*

One of the ways we have already mentioned praying, is by singing ...

*"Know that the song of the righteous is **a PRAYER** unto our Father in Heaven, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads."*

Right now, let's just focus mainly on "**Secret Prayer**". As it infers, secret prayer is usually given when no one else is around and you can pour your heart and soul out to the Lord. Once again, let's go back to the hymns for another beautiful sermon on prayers.

Secret Prayer

(LDS Hymn 144)

There is an hour of peace and rest,
Unmarred by earthly care;
'Tis when before the Lord I go
And kneel in secret prayer.

The straight and narrow way to heaven,
Where angels bright and fair
Are singing to God's praise, is found
Thru constant secret prayer.

When sailing on life's stormy sea,
'Mid billows of despair,
'Tis solace to my soul to know
God hears my secret prayer.

When thorns are strewn along my path,
And foes my feet ensnare,
My Savior to my aid will come,
If sought in secret prayer.

May my heart be turned to pray,
Pray in secret day by day,
That this boon to mortals given
May unite my soul with heaven.



Secret prayers can also be uttered at any time and any place. It can be uttered while driving in a car, while beginning a test at school, or while being thankful for some unexpected blessing. Secret prayers should come directly from the heart.

Interestingly enough, **Secret Prayers** can be given in a crowd and at any time. It can be as simple as **“Lord, please help me”** or **“Lord, I thank thee”**. During the day, try saying several short **‘secret prayers’**. These will help you stay closer to the Lord.

The **sin of ingratitude** is very prevalent today. Recognizing the Hand of the Lord in all your doings during the day, and giving a silent **“thank you”**, will assist you in recognizing the answers to your prayers.



Express your gratitude throughout the day and begin to recognize the Hand of the Lord in your life. Each night write these down and remember them again.

Why is Prayer Necessary?



This is not only a good question ... **it is a GREAT QUESTION!**

Some people wonder why they should even pray.

“If there is a God, doesn’t He love me? Why should I have to pray?”

“Doesn’t He already know what I need and want?”

“Why can’t He just help me out?”

“Isn’t He going to do what He wants to do anyway?”

Joseph Smith felt very strongly about the necessity of praying.

“The Lord cannot always be known by the thunder of His voice, by the display of His glory or by the manifestation of His power, and those that are the most anxious to see these things, are the least prepared to meet them, and were the Lord to manifest His powers as He did to the children of Israel, such characters would be the first to say,



‘Let not the Lord speak any more, lest we His People die.’

“We would say to the brethren,

- *Seek to know God in your closets,*
- *Call upon him in your fields.*
- *Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon,*
- *and pray over, and for your families, your cattle,*
your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess:
- *Ask the blessing of God upon all your labors and everything that you engage in.*
- *Be virtuous and pure; and men of integrity and truth;*
- *Keep the commandments of God;*

AND THEN

- ***you will be able more perfectly to understand the difference between right and wrong – between the things of God and the things of men;***

- ***and your path will be like that of the just, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.***

(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 247.)

Joseph has given us tremendous guidance here on prayer. Look at the key action words he lists:

SEEK, CALL, FOLLOW, PRAY, ASK, BE, and KEEP.

We will be studying this more in depth in the coming chapters.



Try for one day to follow Joseph Smith's process!!

In Alma 37:37, the prophet Helaman admonishes us to:

“Cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

“Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good. Yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.”

So why don't most people pray? Well, ask yourself...

“Why am I not praying as much as I should?”

In 2 Nephi 32:8, the prophet Nephi taught:

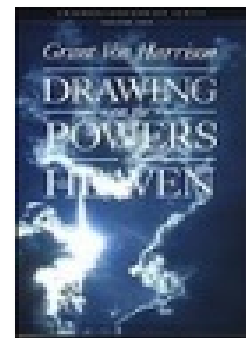
“For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.”

Grant Von Harrison wrote a very powerful book called **“Drawing on the Powers of Heaven”**. I try to reread it every couple of years. It provides wonderful insights into prayer. He teaches:

“It is man's tendency to forget his dependence upon God when he is not faced with hardships.”

Here are a few scriptures he referenced which explain this statement:

“And because of this their great wickedness, and their boastings in their own strength,



they were left in their own strength;
therefore they **did not prosper**,
but were afflicted and smitten,
and driven before the Lamanities,
until they had lost possession of almost all their lands.” (Helaman 4:13)

“And thus we can behold how **false**,
and also the **unsteadiness of the hearts** of the children of men;
yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness
doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.” (Helaman 12:1)

How and When Should I Pray?

This may seem like a very unusual question. But some people really don't know how to pray, or they feel so uncomfortable praying that they avoid doing so. Some feel so guilty that they don't feel worthy to pray. In this section we will begin exploring how one can pray. We will explore what guidance the Lord has given to us.

When I was growing up, my father was an inactive member of the LDS church and my mother was a member of another church, but was not religious. My parents wanted to make sure we "covered all the bases" ☺ ... so we went to the Catholic Church at Christmas, the Baptist Church on Easter, the Mormon Church when the neighbors would come and get us, and the Presbyterian Church when my mother felt like it.

Every night without fail, my father would come down and say prayers with my four sisters and me. His heart was good ... and he tried to teach us to pray ... but no one had ever taught him how to pray. This is the prayer we recited:



***"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.***

***God bless mommy, and daddy, and Toni, and Nici, and David, and
DeeDee, and Tam.***

Amen."

A couple of times when my father's business was not doing so well, or someone was really sick, my father would add a few additional words at the end such as ... "please bless daddy's business" or "please bless mommy that she can get better..."

For dinner, our blessing on the food was always the same. It went:

***"Our Heavenly Father,
We thank thee for this food which has been prepared for us.
We ask thee to bless it that it will nourish and strengthen
our bodies.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."***





And for some unknown reason, when my sisters and I were ever sick, my parents would bring out a wooden statue of **Don Quixote** ... as though he would somehow watch over us. We didn't pray to the statue... but he was there to "protect" us. 😊

For nearly 18 years, these were the only prayers I ever uttered. My parents did the best they could with the limited light and knowledge that they had, but I never grew up knowing the Lord. I never grew up really getting a relationship with the Lord, never grew up with the idea that I could really converse with the Lord, feel of His love, His mercy, His tenderness, and His forgiveness.

While these types of simple prayers were good... they never really allowed me to pray with real intent and develop the relationship I so desired with my Savior and Heavenly Father.

Let's look at a simple 4-step prayer, just to lay a proper foundation:

Simple Prayers

Step 1: Dear Heavenly Father

Step 2: We thank thee for....

Step 3: We ask thee for....

Step 4: In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Lord understands our hearts and needs ... but He wishes **us to express them** even in a very simple manner. The sheer intent of humbling ourselves and offering up a prayer makes the angels in heaven sing. 😊

Examples in the Scriptures

Through the years I have found excellent examples of prayers in the scriptures. These prayers opened my eyes and understanding of how one could really communicate with the Lord, how one could draw down the powers of heaven, and how one could truly develop a loving relationship with the Lord.

I also found guidelines hidden in these prayers. I began to realize that not all scripture was of equal value. I learned that the words of the Savior are the most precious of all. His council, guidance, and examples of prayer, are worth more than the treasures of the earth.

Let's explore and ponder some of Christ's words that are quoted in the scriptures. In Third Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, the Savior taught the members of the church and instructed them on some **DOs and DON'Ts when praying.**

DO NOT

**"And when thou prayest
thou shalt not do as the hypocrites,
for they love to pray,
standing in the synagogues
and in the corners of the streets,
that they may be seen of men.
Verily I say unto you,
they have their reward.**



DO

**"But thou, when thou prayest,
enter into thy closet,
and when thou has shut thy door,
pray to thy Father who is in secret;
and the Father, who seeth in secret,
shall reward thee openly.**

DO NOT

**"But when ye pray,
use not vain repetitions, as the heathen,
for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
Be not ye therefore like unto them,
for your Father knoweth what things you have need of
before ye ask him.**

DO

**"After this manner therefore pray ye:
'Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever,
Amen.'"**

In D&C 101:7-8, the Savior explains why prayers are sometimes not answered:

“They were slow to hearken
unto the voice of the Lord their God,
therefore, the Lord their God is slow
to hearken unto their prayers,
to answer them in the day of their trouble.
In the day of their peace
they esteemed lightly my counsel;
but, in the day of their trouble,
of necessity they feel after me.”

Inspired Prayers

Sometimes in prayers, the Spirit can actually reveal the words which should be uttered in the prayer.

“And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father,
he came unto his disciples and behold,
they did still continue, without ceasing,
to pray unto him;
and they did not multiply many words,
for it was given unto them what they should pray,
and they were filled with desire.” (3 Nephi 19:24)

In May 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio, the Savior told the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“**And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin,
ye shall ask whatsoever you will
in the name of Jesus
and it shall be done.**
But know this,
it shall be given you what you shall ask.”
(D&C 50:29-30)

The Lord’s prophets have given us excellent council in this regard. They indicate not only **where** but **when** and **how often** we should pray.

In **Romans 8:26** the apostle Paul taught:

“for we know not what we should pray for as we ought
but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us
with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Where Should I Pray?

This may seem like an unusual question. However, when I explored the scriptures I found that sometimes there are special places in which we can pray. Many of the prophets, and even Christ himself, enjoyed going to the **tops of the mountains** to pray.



The phrase “**Pray in your closet**” is used throughout the scriptures. What exactly do you think this means? Each person probably will have to decide for themselves and to determine where their “closet” is.

I remember once when I was driving. I was thinking about writing a hymn for the handcart trek that my family was going to participate in. All of a sudden, a flood of ideas came to me concerning this hymn. The lyrics and the music just seem to be flowing to me. I had to pull over to the side of the road so I could write down all that was being given to me. A half hour later, I had the complete hymn written down. So in this case, I was in a car on the side of the road and received mighty inspiration.

There is no set place in which we need to pray. However, having a special place you can go to, one that is quiet and away from everyone and everything (yes ... even cell phones), will allow you to better hear and understand the sweet soft whisperings of the Spirit. Many people enjoy spending quiet moments in the ‘**Celestial**’ rooms of the LDS temples. Here, one can truly feel of the Spirit of the Lord, and be in a beautiful serene and sacred place.



What Is the Language of Prayer?

Let's review some other scriptures and gain some additional insights about the 'Language of Prayer'.

In **Alma 33**, Alma is teaching the poor and he refers to the Old Testament prophet named **Zenos**. Pay special attention to how grateful Alma is for the Lord hearing his prayers.

The Lord has also asked us to be respectful when praying. He asks us to use words such as, **Thee, Thine, Thou, Thy**, etc. as a sign of respect. Though it may be difficult in the beginning to use such words, when the Lord sees you doing this, He will see that you are trying to show honor and respect while approaching Him. Notice how Alma uses this language in his prayer.

"Do ye remember to have read what **Zenos**, the prophet of old,
has said concerning prayer or worship?

For he said:

"**Thou** art merciful, O God,
for **thou** hast heard my prayer,
even when I was in the wilderness;
yea, **thou** wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies,
and **thou** didst turn them to me.

"Yea, **O God**, and **thou** wast merciful unto me
when I did cry unto **thee** in my field;
when I did cry unto **thee** in my prayer,
and **thou** didst hear me.

"And again, **O God**,
when I did turn to my house
thou didst hear me in my prayer.

"And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord,
and prayed unto **thee**, **thou** didst hear me.
Yea, **thou** art merciful unto **thy** children
when they cry unto **thee**,
to be heard of **thee** and not of men,
and **thou** wilt hear them.

"Yea, **O God**, **thou** hast been merciful unto me,
and heard my cries in the midst of **thy** congregations.

"Yea, and **thou** hast also heard me
when I have been cast out



and have been despised by mine enemies;
yea, **thou** didst hear my cries,
and wast angry with mine enemies,
and **thou** didst visit them in **thine** anger
with speedy destruction.

“And **thou** didst hear me
because of mine afflictions and my
sincerity;
and it is because of **thy** Son
that **thou** has been thus merciful unto me,
therefore I will **cry** unto **thee** in all mine afflictions,
for in **thee** is my joy;
for **thou** hast turned **thy** judgments away from me,
because of **thy** Son.” (Alma 33:3-11)



Afterwards, **Almulek**, who was Alma's missionary companion, gave these instructions:

“Yea, **cry** unto him for mercy;
for he is mighty to save.
Yea, humble yourselves,
and continue in prayer unto him.
Cry unto him when ye are in your fields,
yea, over all your flocks.
Cry unto him in your houses,
yea, over all your household,
both morning, mid-day, and evening.
Yea, **cry** unto him against the power of your enemies.
Yea, **cry** unto him against the devil,
who is an enemy to all righteousness.
Cry unto him over the crops of your fields,
that ye may prosper in them.
Cry over the flocks of your fields,
that they may increase.



“But this is not all:
Ye must **pour out your souls** in your closets,
and your secret places,
and in your wilderness.
Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord,
let your hearts be full,
drawn out in prayer unto him continually

for your welfare,
and for the welfare of those who are around you.” (Alma 34:18-27)

Go back now, and circle the following items in these prayers with different colors:

- Every use of the word **'cry'**
- Every **place** that is indicated that you could pray
- Every time the prophet expresses **gratitude** for the Lord hearing his prayers
- Everything that you are to **'pray over'**

Do these passages answer a few of the questions we had earlier?



Perhaps you should mark these in your scriptures for future reference.

What Are Different Sources of Inspiration?

This is another great question!! There are three basic sources of inspiration when we pray:

- (1) Inspiration from the Lord (His Spirit, the Holy Ghost)**
- (2) Inspiration from Ourselves**
- (3) Inspiration from Satan**

Our biggest challenge is learning how to discern which source is inspiring us. Do you ever have that problem? I sure do.

Each of our prayers need to come from the heart and, if possible be inspired by the Lord as to what you should say.

As you pray, thoughts and ideas will come to you. For me, this is the way the Holy Ghost communicates with me through His sweet, quiet whisperings. You will need to write these down **immediately** so you don't forget them. If you don't, chances are they will just slip through your mind later.

These thoughts, ideas and whisperings, however, may be coming from any of three sources ... or a combination of the three. At first, they may all seem to sound alike. Over time however, with trial and error and a lot of experience, you will begin to **'discern'** how to **'tune into the right source'**



When I was growing up, many many years ago, we had old **crystal radios**. Each radio station had its own **'frequency'** or **'wave length'**. I would have to turn a knob to **'tune'** into the right radio frequency or station. I would hear phrases like ***'Tune in tomorrow for the next exciting adventure of Superman!'***

Each day I would have to turn the knob back and forth until I could hear a station coming in clearly and without any static. But just because a station was coming in clearly didn't mean it was the right station!

Many times several radio stations would be right next to each other and it would be very hard to know if I was listening to the right one. So I would have to listen very carefully. I would try to hear a familiar voice, or try to find out if what they were talking



about was what I wanted to listen to. So if I weren't careful, I would find myself listening to the wrong channel for a long time. In prayer, it is very similar.

Over time and with experience you will be able to immediately recognize the whisperings of the Lord ... and be able to **'tune out'** the other voices.

Just because you are hearing a clear and distinct voice, doesn't mean it is from the Lord. If it is hard to distinguish which source of inspiration is speaking to you, then I encourage you to start asking for one of the greatest Gifts of the Spirit: the **Gift of Discernment**. This gift will allow you to understand and know where these thoughts are coming from through the power of the Spirit. I will discuss more of this in the section dealing with the Gifts of the Spirit later on.

If you feel that the thoughts you are receiving are coming from **Satan**, immediately **'cry'** unto the Lord and **'plead'** with Him to take these thoughts from you. If you feel that they are just coming from yourself, and you find yourself doubting that they are from God, write them down anyway and perhaps put a **'?'** next to them.

After you have prayed you need to go out and **'DO'** what you were asked to do. Then the **'fruits'** of your efforts will help you to discern whether the inspirations were from the Lord or not.

Inspiration from the Lord

One of our goals should always be to listen to the inspirations from the Lord. God answers our prayers through personal inspiration and revelation. Through the Holy Ghost, He will guide us in receiving the help that we need. Our main responsibility is to live worthily, pray fervently, and learn to recognize and courageously follow the Spirit's guidance.



President Boyd K. Packer has taught:

“The voice of the Spirit is described in the scriptures as being **neither ‘loud’ nor ‘harsh.’** It is **‘not a voice of thunder, neither ... voice of a great tumultuous noise.’** But rather, **‘a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper,’** and it can **‘pierce even to the very soul’** and **‘cause [the heart] to burn.’**

“The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. (No wonder that the Word of Wisdom was revealed to us, for how could the drunkard or the addict feel such a voice?)

“Occasionally, it will press just firmly enough for us to pay attention. But most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw and wait until we come seeking and listening and say in our manner and expression, like Samuel of ancient times, **‘Speak [Lord], for thy servant heareth.’** (1 Sam. 3:10.)”

(“The Candle of the Lord,” Ensign, Jan. 1983, 53).

President Gordon B. Hinckley answered this question, “How do we recognize the promptings of the Spirit?” by reading **Moroni 7:13, 16-17**

“But behold,
that which is of God **inviteth and enticeth**
to do good continually;
wherefore,
everything which
inviteth and enticeth to do good,
and to love God,
and to serve him,
is inspired of God.

“For behold,
the **Spirit of Christ is given to every man,**
that he may know good from evil;

wherefore, I show unto you **the way to judge;**
for **everything** which **inviteth to do good,**
and **to persuade to believe in Christ,**
is sent forth by the power and the gift of Christ;
wherefore ye may know with a **perfect knowledge**
it is of God.

“**But** whatsoever thing **persuadeth men to do evil,**
and believe not in Christ,
and deny him,
and serve not God,
then ye may know with a **perfect knowledge**
it **is of the devil;**
for after this manner doth the devil work,
for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one;
neither do his angels;
neither do they who subject themselves unto him.”



President Hinckley then said:

“That’s the test, when all is said and done.”

*“Does it persuade one to do good, to rise, to stand tall, to do the right thing, to be kind, to be generous?
Then it is of the Spirit of God. ...*

***“If it invites to do good, it is of God.
If it inviteth to do evil, it is of the devil. ...***

*“And if you are doing the right thing
and if you are living the right way,
you will know in your heart
what the Spirit is saying to you.*

*“You recognize the promptings of the Spirit by the **fruits of the Spirit**
—that which **enlighteneth**,
that which **buildeth up**,
that which is **positive and affirmative**
and **uplifting**
and leads us to **better thoughts** and **better words** and **better deeds**
is of the Spirit of God”
(*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 260–61).*

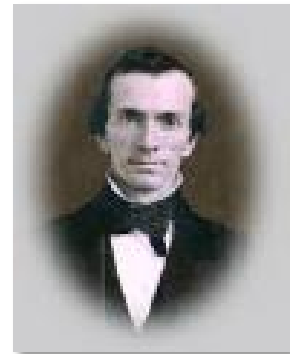


In D&C 6, the Lord reassures **Oliver Cowdery** about the inspiration he had already received:

***“Verily, verily, I say unto you,
if you desire a further witness,
cast your mind upon the night
that you cried unto me in your heart,
that you might know concerning the truth of these things.***

***Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?
What greater witness can you have than from God?***

***And now, behold, you have received a witness;
for if I have told you things
which no man knoweth have you not received a witness?”*** (D&C 6:22-24)



Later, in **D&C 9**, the Lord gives **Oliver** additional instructions.

***“But, behold, I say unto you,
that you must study it out in your mind;
then you must ask me if it be right,
and if it is right***

**I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you;
then, you shall feel that it is right."**

**"But if it be not right
you shall have no such feelings,
but you shall have a stupor of thought
that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong;
therefore, you cannot write
that which is sacred save it be given you from me."** (D&C 9:8-9)

Let's look at the **'logic flow'** of this last instruction from the Lord:

IF "you study it out in your mind" and "ask me if it be right"

THEN

IF "it be right"

THEN

"I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you" and
"you shall feel that it is right."

ELSE

"you shall have no such feelings" and
"you shall have a stupor of thought" and
"you shall forget the thing which is wrong"

Inspiration from the Lord can come in many ways. But the majority of the time it comes through the **soft sweet whisperings** of the quiet Spirit. If we are not careful, the sounds of daily life can drown out these quiet whisperings ... or if we are too busy to notice them. Sometimes thoughts will come to our minds and the Lord would like us to act upon them immediately. Unfortunately, if we don't, the inspiration will leave as quickly as it comes.

Inspiration from the Lord can also come from **reading the scriptures**. As we study gospel topics the Lord can inspire us with additional insights and knowledge. The Lord asks us to also write these down in our **personal journals** so we can refer back to them at other times in our lives. Normally these types of inspiration are for our own personal edification and instruction, and **should not be shared with others**.

Inspiration from the Lord can also come through **other people** that He sends to us. They are acting as **'angels'** from God as He inspires them to give us help, counsel, and comfort. We too can serve as the Lord's agents if He inspires us to help others.

Inspiration from Ourselves

Sometimes we feel that the Lord is inspiring us when all along it is **just ourselves** providing the guidance. Let me give you an example. There was a young lady who went to her bishop with a very difficult problem. She said she had been dating five LDS returned missionaries. All had powerful testimonies and all had served valiant missions. The problem was that each one of them told her that the Lord told them that she was to marry him. The bishop just smiled and said that some, if not all, were probably receiving **'hormonal' revelations'** ... and that she needed to get her own witness and make her own decision.



Sometimes we are so sure that a feeling we are receiving must be right (and therefore it must be coming from the Lord) when in reality, it is just from within ourselves. Sometimes we can be emotionally upset, and this can dramatically influence us and possibly block out the true promptings from the Lord. Being **overanxious, overzealous, nervous, or scared**, can cause us to block out the promptings of the Lord and only pay attention to ourselves.

Inspiration from Satan

This last type of inspiration is real, but not too many people fully understand it. As President Hinckley quoted **Moroni** in the previous section:

“But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil,
and believe not in Christ,
and deny him,
and serve not God,
then ye may know with a **perfect knowledge**
it is of the devil;
for after this manner doth the devil work,
for he **persuadeth no man to do good**, no, not one;
neither do his angels;
neither do they who subject themselves unto him.” (Moroni 7:17)

Since the pre-mortal life, Satan has been waging a war against all the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. This war is continuing here on earth today. Satan and his followers are doing everything they can to try to influence us and to try to destroy us. Yes, I said **destroy us and our families!**

In the New Testament, **Paul** warns us about Satan and encourages us to put on **“the whole armor of God”**—



**“Finally, my brethren,
be strong in the Lord,
and in the power of his might.**

Put on the whole armor of God,

that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God,
that** ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:12-13)

Savior’s Warnings to Us about Satan

When the Savior appeared to the Nephites in the Americas after His resurrection, He gave specific instructions to the Nephites about why they needed to pray. He first spoke to his 12 disciples.

**“Verily, verily, I say unto you,
ye must watch and pray always,
lest ye be tempted by the devil,
and ye be led away captive by him.**

**“And as I have prayed among you
even so shall ye pray in my church,
among my people who do repent
and are baptized in my name.**

**Behold I am the light;
have set an example for you.”** (3 Nephi 18:15-16)



The Savior then turned to speak to the congregation.

**“Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you,
ye must watch and pray always
lest ye enter into temptation;
for Satan desireth to have you,
that he may sift you as wheat.**

**“Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father
in my name;**

**“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,
which is right,
believing that ye shall receive,
behold it shall be given unto you.**

**“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name,
that your wives and your children may be blessed.”**

(3 Nephi 18:18-21)

The Savior is very direct in His statement:

“YE MUST WATCH AND PRAY ALWAYS.”

But why? Notice that the Savior mentions several crucial reasons why we need to pray:

- **“Lest ye be tempted by the devil”**
- **“And ye be led away captive by him”**
- **“Lest ye enter into temptation”**
- **“For Satan desireth to have you that he may sift you as wheat”**
- **“That your wives and your children may be blessed”**

It appears that the Savior is very concerned about the **influence of Satan.**

This sounds like very good reasoning for us to learn how to pray, and to pray often. 😊



Bishop Richard C. Edgley warned us of the reality of the attacks of the adversary:

“We have ... had very specific warnings regarding Satan’s power, influence, and determination. Nephi prophesied more than twenty-five hundred years ago of the trials and turbulence that you would face. You all know the scripture. It is found in the 28th chapter of 2 Nephi: [2 Nephi 28:20–21]

*“For behold, at that day
shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men,
and stir them up to **anger** against that which is good.
“And others will he **pacify**,
and lull them away into carnal security,
that they will say:
All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well
– and thus the devil cheateth their souls,
and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.”*

“I believe this scripture is true. I believe the time is now. And I believe the target is you. For the most part, Satan has made great strides in establishing and selling his value system, which is based upon the son of man, not the Son of God: **‘Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die’** (2 Nephi 28:7) and **‘There is no hell’** (2 Nephi 28:22).

“His is a value system based upon selfishness, self-indulgence, and immediate gratification. Thus we see devastating decisions constantly being made by those of your age. We see cultures infested with drugs, sex, alcohol, pornography, laziness, and many other spiritually devastating practices. But that does not have to be you.

“President Gordon B. Hinckley has warned us and pleaded with us: ‘I wish to say in the strongest language of which I am capable, stay away from moral iniquity. You know what is right and wrong. You cannot use ignorance as an excuse for unacceptable behavior. ...

“I beg of you, my dear young friends, to avoid such behavior. It will not be easy. It will require self-discipline... You need the strength that comes of prayer’ (“To Men of the Priesthood,” Ensign, Nov. 2002, 58–59)” (“Becoming You” [CES fireside for young adults, Nov. 3, 2002], 4, www.ldsces.org).

Satan also uses many tools to deceive people today. He is using his followers to try to influence us. He uses things like **“crystal balls”, “Tarot cards”, “astrology” or “Ouija boards”** to deceive the children of God. These are items that **must never** be played around with ... even in jest or experimentation.

How Do I Get Answers to My Prayers?

Let's now look at the positive side of inspiration and how we can get answers to our prayers. **Elder Richard G. Scott** gave a marvelous conference address in October 2014 entitled **“Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer”**. It is one of the greatest talks ever given on how to learn to recognize answers to prayers.



He speaks of a woman sobbing by his side telling him:

*“I don’t know what I believe anymore.
... God told us He would help us.
He answers everybody else’s prayers.
Why won’t He answer mine?”*

He then goes on to say:

*“Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter.
It is a sacred privilege.
It is based upon unchanging principles.
When we receive help from our Father in Heaven,
it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.”*

Please read this talk (in the **Appendix**). Underline it, mark it up, ask questions about prayer, and seek answers to your questions from it.

One question that comes up is: **“How do we learn?”** Well, we learn from experience ... **both bad and good experiences**. We were put on this earth to learn **good from evil, right from wrong, sweet from bitter**. The Lord’s plan is for us to struggle and learn from both the good and the bad experiences.

We learn **“good from evil”** by having opposition in all things.

So our challenge is to **LEARN HOW TO LEARN FROM OUR EXPERIENCES**.

Don’t feel badly if you are having bad experiences and making a lot of mistakes ... just pick yourself up and figure out what you have learned from all of this so that it won’t happen again.

Promises from the Lord:

**“Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father
in my name;**

**“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,
which is right,
believing that ye shall receive,**

behold it shall be given unto you.

“Pray in your families unto the Father,
always in my name,
that your wives and your children may be blessed.”

(3 Nephi 18:19-21)

Elder Richard G. Scott gave a talk about receiving **line-upon-line** in his conference address in **April 2012**. It is entitled “**How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for your Personal Life.**” If you read nothing else in this book, please read and reread (and underline) Elder Scott’s talk (**see Appendix**).

Elder Scott explained:

“**One of the great lessons that each of us needs to learn is to ask.**
Why does the Lord want us to pray to Him and to ask?
Because that is how revelation is received.”

Remember some of those questions I gave you in the introduction? Hopefully we can begin to answer some of them here.

In life it seems there is always a **cause and effect** relationship between things.

I am a computer nerd ... so I like to refer to these things in ‘**logic format**’:

IF you do this and this
THEN this and this will happen
ELSE
THEN this and this will happen.

A lot of scriptures and blessings seem to follow this pattern. For example, in the **Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21** it states:

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in Heaven
before the foundations of this world,
upon which all blessings are predicated –

“And when we obtain **any blessing** from God,
it is by **obedience** to that law upon which it is **predicated.**”



If you want any blessing, identify the law that is associated with it.
Then obey the law and expect the blessings.

Did I say **EXPECT** the blessings?

Is that not too bold of a statement?

Isn’t that ‘**binding**’ the Lord?

The answer is a resounding 'YES'.

Don't take it from me, take it from the Lord:

**"I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say;
but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."** (D&C 82:10).

Let's put this into my "logic format" as given above:

IF "ye do what I say"
THEN "I, the Lord, am bound"
ELSE
THEN "ye have no promise".

Can it be that simple? Can we take the Lord at His word?

In the LDS church's student handbook for the Doctrine and Covenants it talks about this scripture:

"This verse shows a part of God's basic nature: the way He deals with His children and the reason they can trust Him.

Elder James E. Talmage said:

"'Mormonism' has taught me that **God holds himself accountable to law even as he expects us to do**. He has set us the example in obedience to law. I know that to say this would have been heresy a few decades ago. But we have the divine word for it:

'I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.'

(Doc. and Cov. 82:10.)

"He operates by law and not by arbitrariness or caprice." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1930, p. 96.)

So why should we pray? Well, one answer comes from Elder Scott's talk:

"Because that is how revelation is received."

So if we want revelation ... **we MUST PRAY!**

But what if I don't believe?

What if I don't even believe in God?



Great questions!!

Are you writing down all of your questions???

Elder Scott also taught:

*“This guidance about prayer given to **Oliver Cowdery** can also aid you:*

***’Behold, ... you have supposed that I would give it unto you,
when you took no thought save it was to ask me.***

***’... You must study it out in your mind;
then ... ask me if it be right,
and if it is right ... your bosom shall burn ... ;
therefore, you shall feel that it is right.’’***

Then the answer comes as a feeling with an accompanying conviction. The Savior defines two separate ways that this can happen:

“I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost.”

Answers to the mind and heart are messages from the Holy Ghost to our spirits. For me, a response to the **mind** is very specific, **like dictated words**, while a response to the **heart** is generalized, like a **feeling to pray more**.

Then the Lord clarifies:

**“But if [what you propose] be not right you
... shall have a stupor of thought.”**

That, for me, is an unsettling, discomfoting feeling.

Dreams

Elder Scott also spoke about **dreams**.

“Revelation can also be given in a **dream** when there is an almost imperceptible transition from sleep to wakefulness. If you strive to capture the content immediately, you can record great detail, but otherwise it fades rapidly.

“Inspired communication in the night is generally accompanied by a sacred feeling for the entire experience. **The Lord uses individuals for whom we have great respect to teach us truths in a dream because we trust them and will listen to their counsel.**

“It is the Lord doing the teaching through the Holy Ghost. However, He may in a **dream** make it both easier to understand and more likely to touch our hearts by **teaching us through someone we love and respect**”.



During the night and in the morning, write down your dreams immediately so that it doesn't fade away. Then pray to have the right interpretation of the dream. Ask Heavenly Father each night that if it be his will, that he reveal things to you through your dreams.

Is There a God?

Here is a question that a lot of people are asking: **“Is there really a God?”** This is probably one of the most important questions we need to personally get an answer to.

Let’s turn to the scriptures and look to a wicked king that didn’t even know that there was a God.

Aaron, one of the sons of Mosiah, had taught and converted a king by the name of **Lamoni**.

Lamoni’s father was also a king and he was very upset over Lamoni’s conversion. Aaron began teaching Lamoni’s father about the Lord and the great blessings of the gospel. Lamoni’s father’s heart was softened ... so much so ... that he was willing to offer up a very simple and honest prayer.

*“O God,
Aaron hath told me that there is a God;
and if there is a God,
and if thou art God,
wilt thou make thyself known unto me,
and I will give away all my sins to know Thee,
and that I may be raised from the dead,
and saved at the last day.”* (Alma 22:18)



Note the **honesty** in his prayer. At this time he doesn’t even know that there is a God.

This king felt it was crucial to find out if there was a God and he was willing to do anything to know it.

Remember in your prayers ... **always be honest** with the Lord. Don’t try to put things past Him and don’t try to pretend you are something you are not. The Lord is looking at your heart.

The Lord already knows what you need ... He just wants you to begin to express your needs to Him.

At first, this may be the simplest prayer you need to utter. Your answer probably won’t come as forcefully as it did to Lamoni’s father ... but if you have doubts about there even being a God, then this is a great place to start.



I love **Mark Twain’s** portrayal of **Huckleberry Finn** in **“The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”**, Huck simply and honestly states:

“You can’t pray a lie – I found that out.”



Elder James B. Martino also gave a great talk on this subject (see “A Sincere Heart and Real Intent” in the Appendix). He explains:



“Moroni tells us that **“by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things”** (Moroni 10:5). But he **does not promise** that you’ll know something is true just because you’re curious.

“You have to have a sincere heart and real intent. You have to be willing to make a commitment to change once you receive your answer.

“Revelation is a gift from God, and it’s not to be taken lightly. When we receive revelation, we also receive a responsibility to do something with that revelation.”



Always pray with a sincerity of heart ... and always be honest with the Lord.

Ask yourself ...

“Am I willing to make a commitment to change if I receive an answer?”

If not, why not?

If not, tell the Lord you can’t and that you need a change of heart.

What are you willing to do in your life in order to be eligible to receive the Lord’s direction?

How Are My Prayers?

Now that we have talked about prayers, let’s look at how you are doing with your prayers.

In the LDS church’s missionary handbook called **“Preach My Gospel”**, there is a complete section dealing with prayers. I highly recommend that you read and study this. Here are a few thoughts from it.



*“The **trouble with most of our prayers** is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. **We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another.**” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 469).*

“If prayer is only a spasmodic cry at the time of crisis, **then it is utterly selfish**, and we come to think of God as a repairman or a service agency to help us only in our emergencies.

“We should remember the Most High day and night—always—not only at times when all other assistance has failed and we desperately need help.” (Howard W. Hunter, *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1997], 39).

“Using the following scale, privately evaluate your prayers. In your study journal, write answers to questions like these:

Where would you place yourself on this scale?

Where would you like to be on this scale?

How are you going to change?”



Are your prayers making it past the ceiling of your bedroom?

Are you allowing time for inspiration to come through the ceiling to inspire you?

Are you ready to learn how?

With all of this in mind, let's now learn about **'Mighty Prayer'**.

Section 2:

Mighty Prayer

Introduction

'**Mighty Prayer**' is a type of prayer where there is a two-way communication between ourselves and our Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost is involved in this process ... and at times, He will inspire us what to say and ask for.



'**Mighty Prayer**' is a higher and more powerful type of prayer than the simple rote prayers we may be accustomed to. It requires a great deal of effort, desire, and preparation. If we are not willing to pay the price to have such a communication with our Heavenly Father, then we will fail in our attempts.

'**Mighty Prayer**' is mentioned **six times** in the Book of Mormon and **four times** in the Doctrine and Covenants.

2 Nephi 4:24

"And by day have I waxed bold in **MIGHTY PRAYER** before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me."

Enos 1:4

"And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in **MIGHTY PRAYER** and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens."

Alma 6:6

"Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and **MIGHTY PRAYER** in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God."

Alma 8:10

"Nevertheless Alma labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in **MIGHTY PRAYER**, that he would pour out his Spirit upon the people who were in the city; that he would also grant that he might baptize them unto repentance."

3 Nephi 27:1

"And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things

which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in **MIGHTY PRAYER** and fasting.”

Moroni 2:2

“And he called them by name, saying:

“Ye shall call on the Father in my name,

in **MIGHTY PRAYER**;

and after ye have done this

ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands,

ye shall give the Holy Ghost;

and in my name shall ye give it,

for thus do mine apostles.”

Doctrine and Covenants 5:24

“Behold, I say unto him,

he exalts himself

and does not humble himself sufficiently before me;

but if he will bow down before me,

and humble himself in **MIGHTY PRAYER** and faith,

in the sincerity of his heart,

then will I grant unto him a view of the things

which he desires to see.”

Doctrine and Covenants 21:7

“For thus saith the Lord God:

“Him have I inspired

to move the cause of Zion in **MIGHTY** power for good,

and his diligence I know,

and his **PRAYERS** I have heard.”

Doctrine and Covenants 29:2

“Who will gather his people

even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,

even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me,

and call upon me in **MIGHTY PRAYER**.”

I encourage you to look up each of these passages and gain a better understanding of each of them.

Let’s look at some of these examples see what insights we can gain from them.

Examples of Mighty Prayer in the Scriptures

The following are stories in the scriptures in which individuals experienced 'Mighty Prayer'.

The Story of Enos

In the Book of Mormon, **Enos** was the son of **Jacob**, who was the brother of **Nephi**. He was given the responsibility to maintain the sacred records from his father. They were engraved upon a set of metal plates containing the spiritual and secular history of the Nephites. Both Nephi and Jacob had this responsibility before Enos. Enos' record is called the **Book of Enos** and consists of a single chapter, told in the first person, describing his own conversion and subsequent ministry.



Here is an extract of that record:

“Behold, it came to pass that I **Enos**, knowing my father that he was a just man – for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – and blessed be the name of my God for it –
And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins...
And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I **cried** unto him in **MIGHTY PRAYER** and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

And there came a voice unto me, saying:

‘Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.’

And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

And I said:

‘Lord, how is it done?’

And he said unto me:

**‘Because of thy faith in Christ,
whom thou hast never before heard nor seen.
And many years pass away
before he shall manifest himself in the flesh;
wherefore, go to,
thy faith hath made thee whole.’ ”**

(Enos 1:1-2, 4-8)

During this time of **'Mighty Prayer'**, Enos received a forgiveness of his sins and promises from the Lord about his family, his brethren, and his enemies. He also received promises concerning the preservation of the records he was keeping.

If he had not dedicated himself to this time of **'Mighty Prayer'**, none of these blessings would have come about.

The Story of Jesus' Disciples in America

In this story, the 12 Disciples of Christ were engaged in **'Mighty Prayer'** and were greatly blessed by a personal visitation of the Savior.

“And it came **to pass** that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in **MIGHTY PRAYER** and fasting.



“And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of the, and said unto them:

‘What will ye that I shall give unto you?’”

Here the Lord is about to give them additional **“light and knowledge”** because of their prayers.

The Story of the Brother of Jared



One of the greatest stories in the **Book of Mormon** is about the Jaredites. Many years after the flood in Noah's time, the people came together to build a tower which would be so high so as to protect them from any additional floods. This tower was known as the **Tower of Babel**.

The Lord was not pleased with this so He decided to confound the languages that people spoke so that they couldn't understand each other. In this way, the Lord was going to scatter the people around the world.

There was one group of people that were very righteous and desirous that the Lord would bless and protect them and keep their language from being confounded. **Jared** and his brother (**Mahonri Moriancumer**) were the righteous leaders of this group. In the **Book of Ether** it records:

“Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered.

“And the brother of Jared being a large and mighty man, and a man highly favored of the Lord, Jared, his brother, said unto him:

**‘Cry unto the Lord, that he will not confound us
that we may not understand our words.’**

“And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did **cry** unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon Jared: therefore he did not confound the language of Jared; and Jared and his brother were not confounded. Then Jared said unto his brother:

**‘Cry again unto the Lord,
and it may be that he will turn away his anger
from them who are our friends,
that he confound not their language.’**

“And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did **cry** unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded.

And it came to pass that Jared spake again unto his brother, saying:

**‘Go and inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land,
and if he will drive us out of the land,
cry unto him whither we shall go.
And who knoweth but the Lord will carry us forth into a land
which is choice above all the earth?
And if it so be, let us be faithful unto the Lord,
that we may receive it for our inheritance.’**

“And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did **cry** unto the Lord according to that which had been spoken by the mouth of Jared. And it came to pass that the Lord did hear the brother of Jared, and had compassion upon Him, and said unto him:

**‘Go to and gather together thy flocks,
both male and female, of every kind;
and also of the seed of the earth of every kind;
and thy families;
and also Jared thy brother and his family;
and also thy friends and their families,
and the friends of Jared and their families.
And when thou hast done this
thou shalt go at the head of them down into the valley which is northward.’**

And there will I meet thee,
and I will go before thee into a land
which is choice above all the lands of the earth.
And there will I bless thee and thy seed,
and raise up unto me of thy seed,
and of the seed of thy brother,
and they who shall go with thee, a great nation.
And there shall be none greater than the nation
which I will raise up unto me of thy seed,
upon all the face of the earth.
And thus I will do unto thee because this long time
ye have **cried unto me.**' (Ether 1:33-43)

As you can see, when the Brother of Jared **"cried"** unto the Lord, he received instructions for his family and friends.

"It came to pass that the Lord did bring Jared and his brethren forth even to that great sea which divideth the lands. And as they came to the sea they pitched their tents; and they called the name of the place **Moriancumer**; and they dwelt in tents, and dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the **space of four years**.

"And it came to pass at the **end of four years** that the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the **space of three hours** did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and **chastened him because he remember not to call upon the name of the Lord.**

"And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren who were with him.

"And the Lord said unto him;

**'I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins;
but thou shalt not sin anymore,
for ye small remember
that my Spirit will not always strive with man;
wherefore, if ye will sin
until ye are fully ripe
ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.'** "

Let me ask you, do you think that the Brother of Jared forgot to say a blessing 'over his morning cornflakes'? Do you think he forgot to have family prayer at night?"

I don't think so! I think the Brother of Jared did all the basic types of praying and service. However, I think the Brother of Jared didn't take the necessary time to **'cry'** unto the Lord and to experience **'Mighty Prayer'** with the Lord. It appears that the Lord had things to tell him, but he did not dedicate himself enough to be able to receive those instructions.

Can you image being **"chastened"** by the Lord for **three hours** for not saying your prayers?

How are you in your prayers?

Do you ever hop back into bed at night and have the blankets wrapped around you and your head snuggled securely in our pillow just seconds after saying "Amen" to your 15 second prayer?

Do you allow the Lord to communicate with you, to tell you all the things He has for you to learn and to do ... or are your prayers only one-sided?

Have you ever experienced the additional **'light and knowledge'** the Lord has for you ... or are you in too much of a hurry to get to the next thing?

The Brother of Jared repented of this **'sin'**. And as he began having **'Mighty Prayer'** again with the Lord, he ended up being bless by actually **'seeing'** the Lord.

The Lord told him that they were to build ships and sail to a promised land where they would be richly blessed. The Lord then instructed the Brother of Jared on how to build 16 ships and what to store in them. The Brother of Jared realized that in the design of the ships, there was no light. So, he asked the Lord what he should do. The Lord, rather than giving him a solution, asked him to think and ponder on this issue and come up with his own solution.

The following passage is the Brother of Jared's prayer to the Lord after he came up with an idea. Read the following passage and notice several things:

- (1) his humility,
- (2) his sincere desire for help,
- (3) the type of prayer he is now doing,
- (4) the logic he uses in the prayer,
- (5) the responses from the Lord, and finally
- (6) the veil being taken from his eyes.

"And it came to pass that the brother of Jared ... (went) upon the top of the mount, and **cried** again unto the Lord, saying:

'O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods.

'Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.



'Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock.

'And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea.

'Behold O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.'

“And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the **veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared**, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.



“And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him;

'Arise, why hast thou fallen?'

“And he saith unto the Lord:

'I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.'

“And the Lord said unto him:

‘Because of thy faith

**thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood;
and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast;
for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger.**

Sawest thou more than this?’

“And he answered: ***‘Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me.’***

“And the Lord said unto him:

‘Believest thou the words which I shall speak?’

“And he answered:

‘Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.’

“And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said:

**‘Because thou knowest these things
ye are redeemed from the fall;
therefore ye are brought back into my presence;
therefore I show myself unto you.**

‘Behold, I am he

**who was prepared
from the foundation of the world
to redeem my people.**

Behold, I am Jesus Christ.

**I am the Father and the Son.
In me shall all mankind have life,
and that eternally,
even they who shall believe on my name;
and they shall become my sons and my daughters.**



**‘And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created,
for never has a man believed in me as thou hast.
Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image?
Yea, even all men were created in the beginning
after mine own image.**

**‘Behold this body, which ye now behold,
is the body of my spirit;
and man have I created after the body of my spirit;**

**and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit
will I appear unto my people in the flesh.’ ” (Ether 3:1-16)**

In this situation, the brother of Jared had done several things.

- He prepared himself.
- He went to a special place to pray.
- He used the proper prayer language.
- He acknowledged his weaknesses and faults.
- He submitted his request in faith.
- He acknowledged that the Lord can do anything and everything.
- He had developed a plan and was acting upon it.
- He was honest with the Lord.

Can you see how this is a type of **“Mighty Prayer”**?

Intercessory Prayer (High Priestly prayer) – John 17



One of the greatest reported prayers of all time is called **‘The Intercessory Prayer’**. It was given by the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion. It is another example of a **‘Mighty Prayer’**. It gives us some excellent insights in to how the Savior was feeling and His love for His disciples and us. It also gives us another example of **‘Mighty Prayer’**.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,

‘Father, the hour is come;

glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh,

that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

‘And this is life eternal,

that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

whom thou hast sent.

I have glorified thee on the earth:

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

'And now, O Father,

glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory
which I had with thee before the world was.

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:

thine they were, and thou gavest them me;
and they have kept thy word.

'Now they have known that all things

whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

and they have received them,
and have known surely that I came out from thee,
and they have believed that thou didst send me.

'I pray for them:

I pray not for the world,
but for them which thou hast given me;
for they are thine.

'And all mine are thine,

and thine are mine;
and I am glorified in them.

'And now I am no more in the world,

but these are in the world,
and I come to thee.

Holy Father,

keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me,
that they may be one, as we are.

'While I was with them in the world,

I kept them in thy name:
those that thou gavest me I have kept,
and none of them is lost,
but the son of perdition;
that the scripture might be fulfilled.

'And now come I to thee;
and these things I speak in the world,
that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

'I have given them thy word;
and the world hath hated them,
because they are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.

'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,
but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

'They are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth:
thy word is truth.

'As thou hast sent me into the world,
even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself,
that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

'Neither pray I for these alone,
but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
That they all may be one;
as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,
that they also may be one in us:
that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;
that they may be one, even as we are one:

'I in them, and thou in me,
that they may be made perfect in one;
and that the world may know that thou hast sent me,
and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

'Father, I will that they also,
whom thou hast given me,

be with me where I am;
that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me:
for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

'O righteous Father,
the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee,
and these have known that thou hast sent me.

'And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith
thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

Recorded Prayers with the Nephites

There are several prayers by the Savior that were recorded in the Book of Mormon. These will provide us with additional samples of **'Mighty Prayer'**.

"And it came to pass that Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and went a little way off from them and bowed himself to the earth, and he said:

'Father, I thank thee
that thou hast given the Holy Ghost
unto these whom I have chosen;
and it is because of their belief in me
that I have chosen them out of the world.

'Father, I pray thee
that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost
unto all them that shall believe in their words.

'Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost
because they believe in me;
and thou seest that they believe in me
because thou hearest them,
and they pray unto me;
and they pray unto me
because I am with them.

'And now Father, I pray unto thee for them,
and also for all those who shall believe on their words,
that they may believe in me,
that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me,
that we may be one. ' "

(3 Nephi 19:20-23)



Here is an example of one of Christ's prayers that was recorded in **Third Nephi** in the Book of Mormon.



**“Father, I thank thee
that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen,
because of their faith, and I pray for them,
and also for them who shall believe on their words,
that they may be purified in me,
through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me.**

**“Father, I pray not for the world,
but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world,
because of their faith,
that they may be purified in me,
that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me,
that we may be one,
that I may be glorified in them.”**

(3 Nephi 19: 28-29)

Sacred Prayers which Can't Be Recorded

There were also several times when the Savior's prayers were so sacred that the words could not be written.

“And it came to pass that when they (the Nephities) had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said:

‘Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.’

“And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, **and the things which he prayed cannot be written**, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. And after this manner do they bear record:

*‘The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and hear Jesus speak unto the Father; **and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man**, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.’”* (3 Nephi 17:14-17)

Now that we had reviewed several examples of ‘**Mighty Prayer**’, let's look at a technique that will assist us in knowing how to obtain ‘**Mighty Prayer**’. I called this **‘Prayer Mapping’**.

Section 3:

Prayer Mapping

Introduction

Prayer Mapping is an exciting new method of organizing your thoughts and ideas about the various areas and stewardships in your life. It will assist you in being able to go before the Lord to request and receive help and guidance. It will also help you to learn how to listen for and receive inspiration and revelation from the Lord. **It is simple and easy to learn and will change your life!**

The **Prayer Cycle** is another method which, when used with **Prayer Mapping**, will allow you to receive on-going and continued inspiration and revelation as it says in the scriptures, **'line upon line'**.

These methods will teach you how to **'study things out in your mind'**, come up with plans, and then **'return and report'** to the Lord, so you can receive additional **'light and knowledge'**.

Challenge from my Mission President

I served a mission from 1971-73 in Brazil. My mission president, George A. Oakes, taught us missionaries a lot about prayer which I have never forgotten. He recently passed away, and at his funeral the missionaries were still talking about the great lessons he taught us about prayer.

At one of our missionary conferences, he challenged us about **'Mighty Prayer'** as contained in the scriptures and challenged each of us to pray for **2 hours** during our next P-Day. We were then to report back to him about how it went.

We were all excited about this challenge, and set some high expectations. However, I and the greater majority of the missionaries, reported back things like the following:

- I ran out of things to pray about in only 2 minutes. What was I supposed to do for the other 118 minutes?
- I looked over at my companion and after about 5 minutes he was asleep (or maybe he was just caught away in a dream like Lehi. 😊)
- I didn't feel any different after praying than I did before.
- I didn't realize how hard it would be.
- I didn't receive any insights or inspirations like I thought I would have received.

Before starting to pray, I had thoughts that I could pray just like Enos ... all day long ... that I would receive a forgiveness of my sins and great promises would be made to me. I had hopes that I would possibly see the finger of God like the Brother of Jared did. But instead, I came away feeling much like Laman and Lemuel when they told Nephi **"the Lord won't make it known to me, why ask?"**

Over the years, I have taken what my mission president taught me and combined it with some techniques and methods about learning new subjects in school and in business.

MIND MAPPING

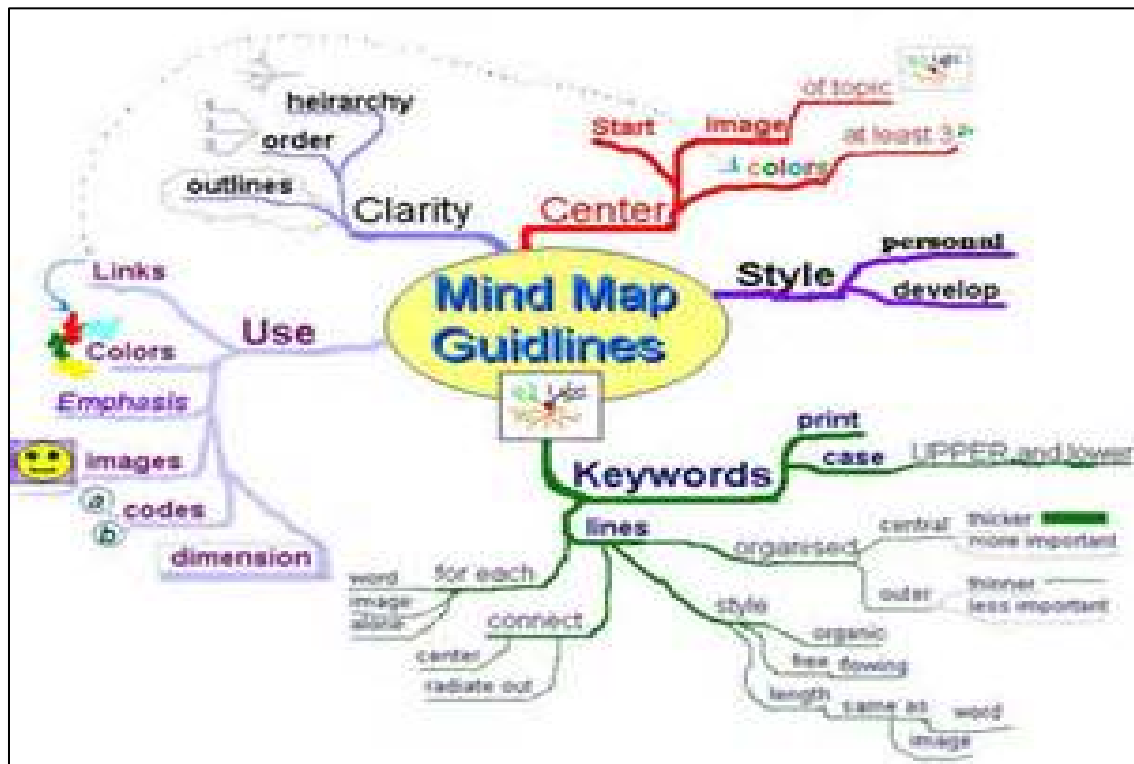
Many years ago I learned a technique called “**Mind Mapping**”. It is basically a technique to organize your thoughts and ideas, and to create a diagram to display these. It is often created around a single concept drawn as an image in the center of blank landscaped page. Major ideas are then connected directly to the central concept, and other sub-ideas branch out from them. Images, words, and parts of words are then added to these ideas.

It can be easily and quickly drawn by hand. There are even computer programs and phone apps that will assist you in creating them. This technique can replace the usual method of taking notes during lectures, meetings, or planning sessions. It can also be used to ‘**brain storm**’ ideas by recording thoughts that come to you as you think about an idea.

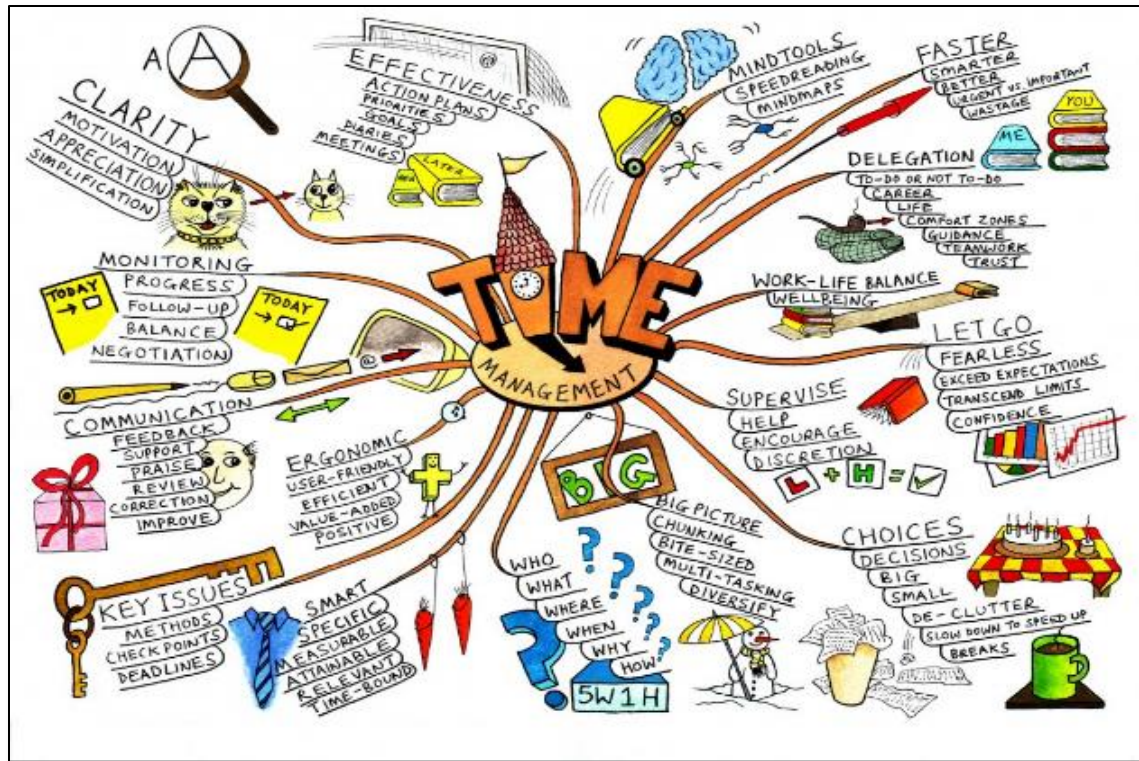
Mind Mapping is a very effective way for students of all ages to learn how to take notes in school and in business. Though this technique has been used for hundreds of years, **Tony Buzan**, a popular British psychology author and television personality coined the term “**Mind Mapping**” for this technique. I have taught his method to high school students, college students, and business people for over 20 years.

The end result is called a ‘**Mind Map**’ and it is created by using colors, pictures, single words or short phrases. It allows the mind to better remember and recall things. Here are a couple of examples:

Here is an example of a 'Mind Map' which explains the various guidelines for how to create a Mind Map.

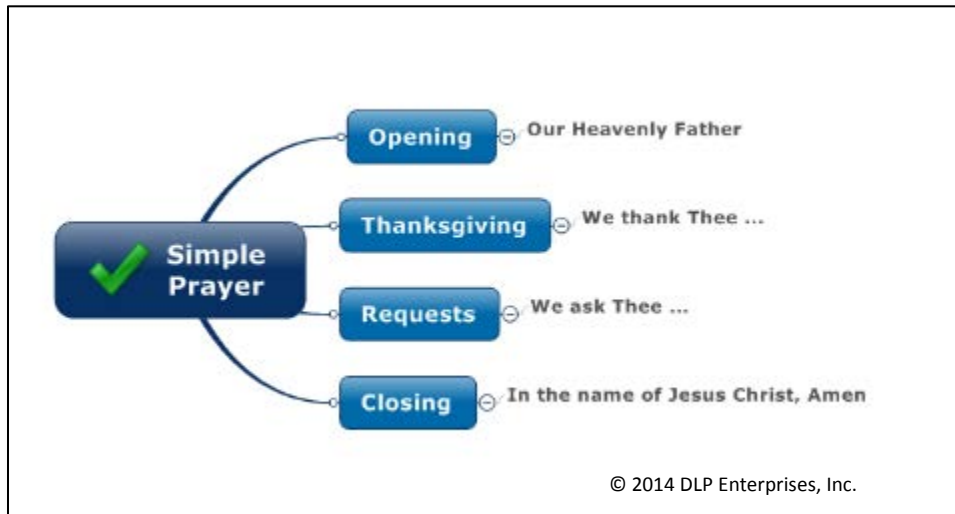


Here is another example of a 'Mind Map' which shows various concepts of Time Management.

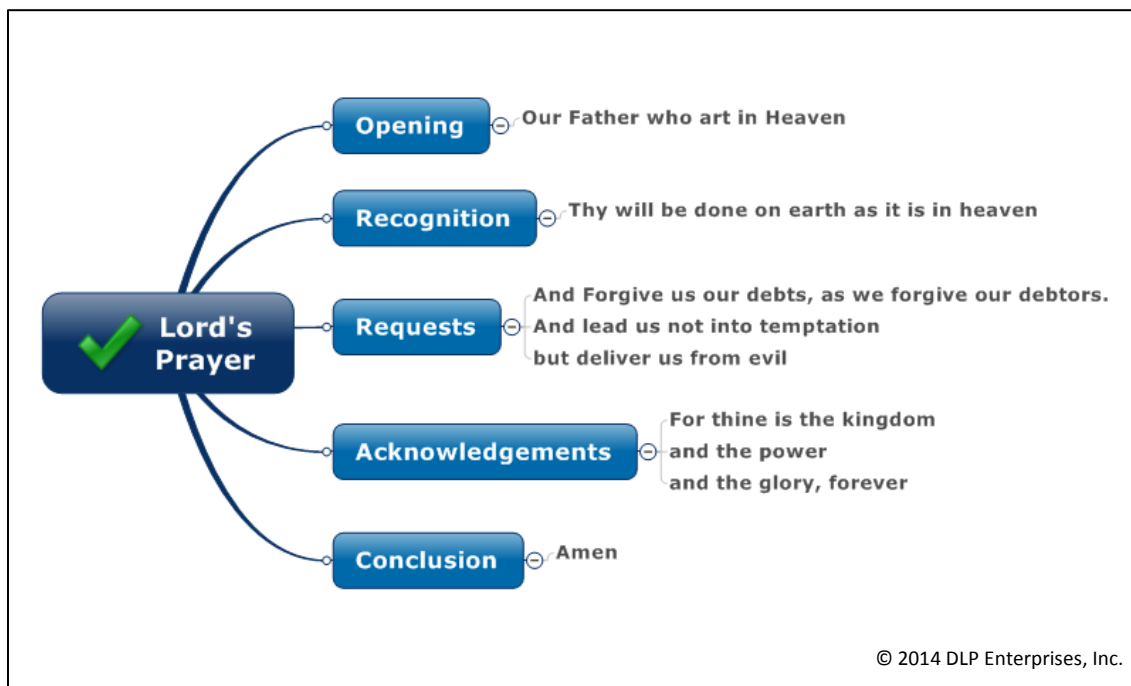


You can use 'Mind Mapping' to display and organize any type of information.

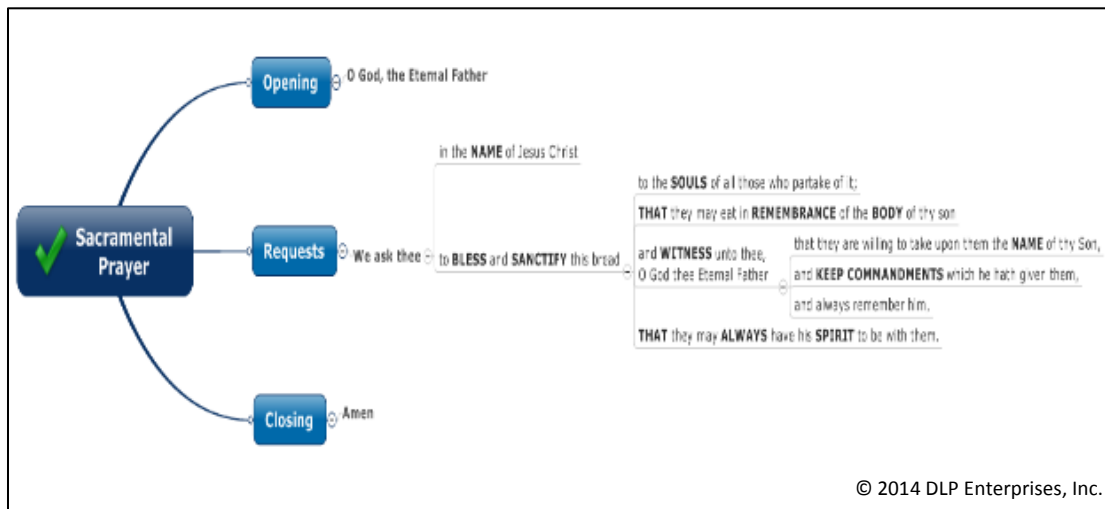
Here is a more formal example of a mind map that I created dealing with a **'Simple Prayer'**.



Here is a Mind Map of the Lord's Prayer:



Here is another one dealing with the Sacramental prayer.

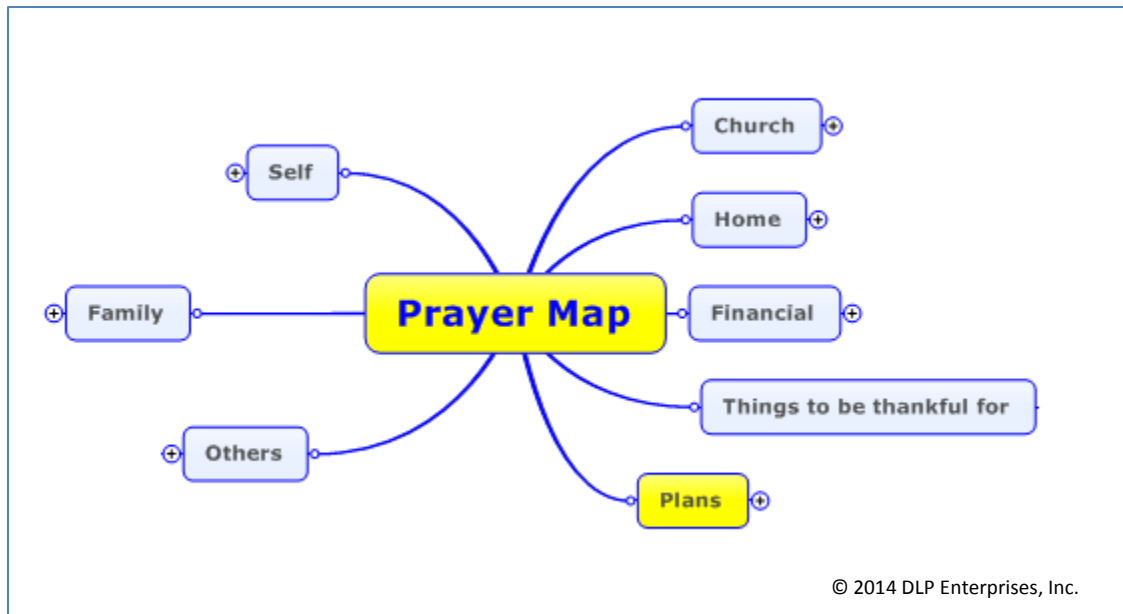


The Birth of “Prayer Mapping”

Prayer Maps

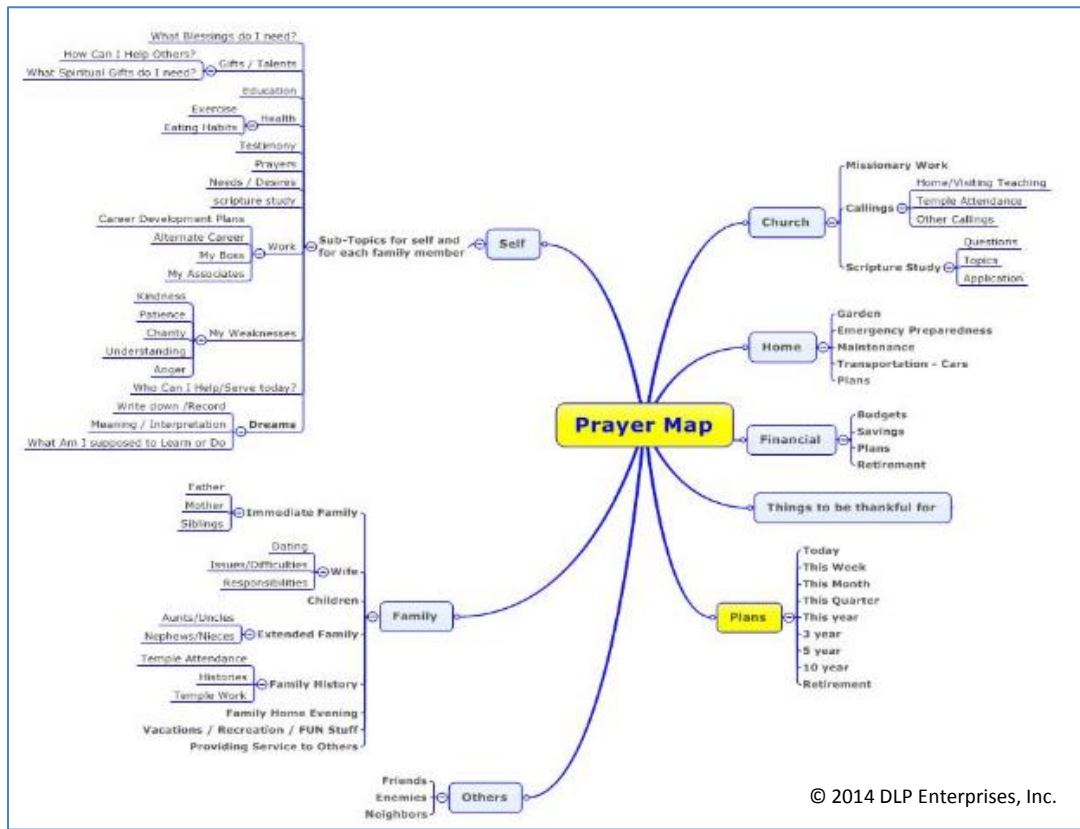
When I was studying about ‘**Mighty Prayer**’, the thought came to me that ‘**Mind Mapping**’ would be a very useful tool in organizing my thoughts and ideas concerning what I should be praying about. As a result I have been able to come up with some very useful maps which I refer to as ‘**Prayer Maps**’.

Basically, these are major areas and sub areas that I may want to ask Heavenly Father about in my prayers. These could be areas where there is a need, a concern, or where there is something I should be thankful for. It has helped me to better organize my thoughts, and as I come up with additional thoughts, I simply add them to my maps. These areas should include every part of your life and the life of your family members. Here is a simple example. It includes eight basic categories.



Each of these areas can then be expanded into sub-categories ... and then ‘sub’ sub-categories.

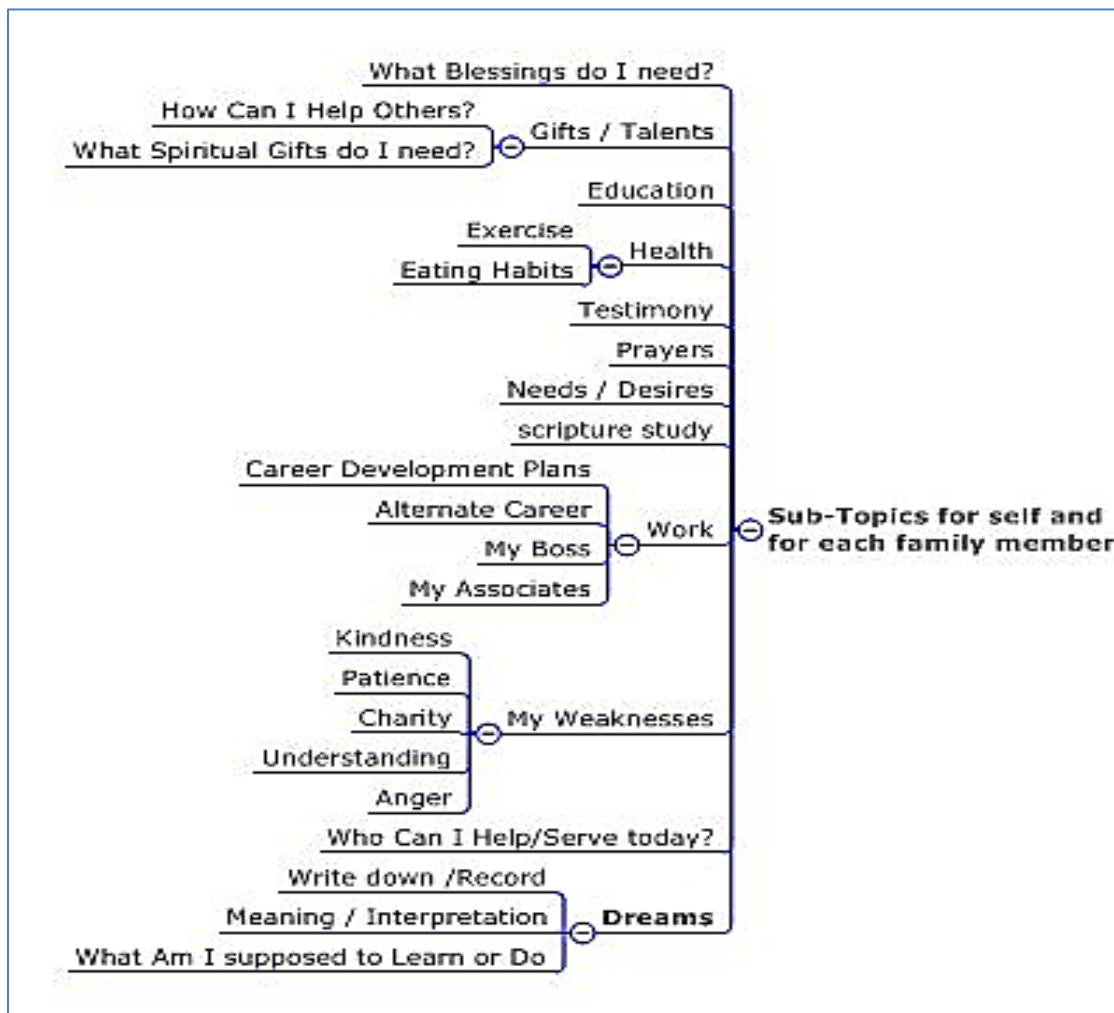
Here is an example:



I found that when I started creating separate maps for myself and for each member of my family, most of the areas were similar. So I made **one common map** and then I modify it as needed for each person. On the next page you will see this basic template.

I created one of these maps for myself, and for each member of my family. In my prayers, I would then concentrate on each of these areas and formulate questions and seek inspiration. It would also assist me in identifying areas to be thankful for.

Let the spirit guide you as you create your own **'Prayer Maps'**. You might ask a family member to review them with you to see if there are additional areas they think would be important to include.



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I find that if I use **ledger-size paper** I have more room for creating my **'Prayer Maps'**. To build yours, start by **'Brain Storming'** areas that you want to include in your map. **'Brain Storming'** is just a technique where you jot down any and all ideas that come to you. **No idea is stupid**. One idea may lead to another idea, and that, to yet another idea. In the end, when you have all these ideas ... then, formulate them into a more formal **'Prayer Map'**. You may want to have a separate **'Prayer Map'** for each major idea ... such as one for each member of your family.

Once you have your **MASTER PRAYER MAP** drawn, then it is time to select a few of those areas that you want to pray about for just that day. This **'Prayer Map'** is a sub-map of the larger map. On this map, we will be adding questions to ask the Lord.

The Key to Mind Maps – “THE QUESTIONS”

Once your smaller ‘**Prayer Map**’ is completed, then, the next step is thinking of a series of **questions** for each item. Let’s look at an example. Suppose I am looking at the area dealing with my spouse. I could start ‘**brain storming**’ questions to ask the Lord, such as:

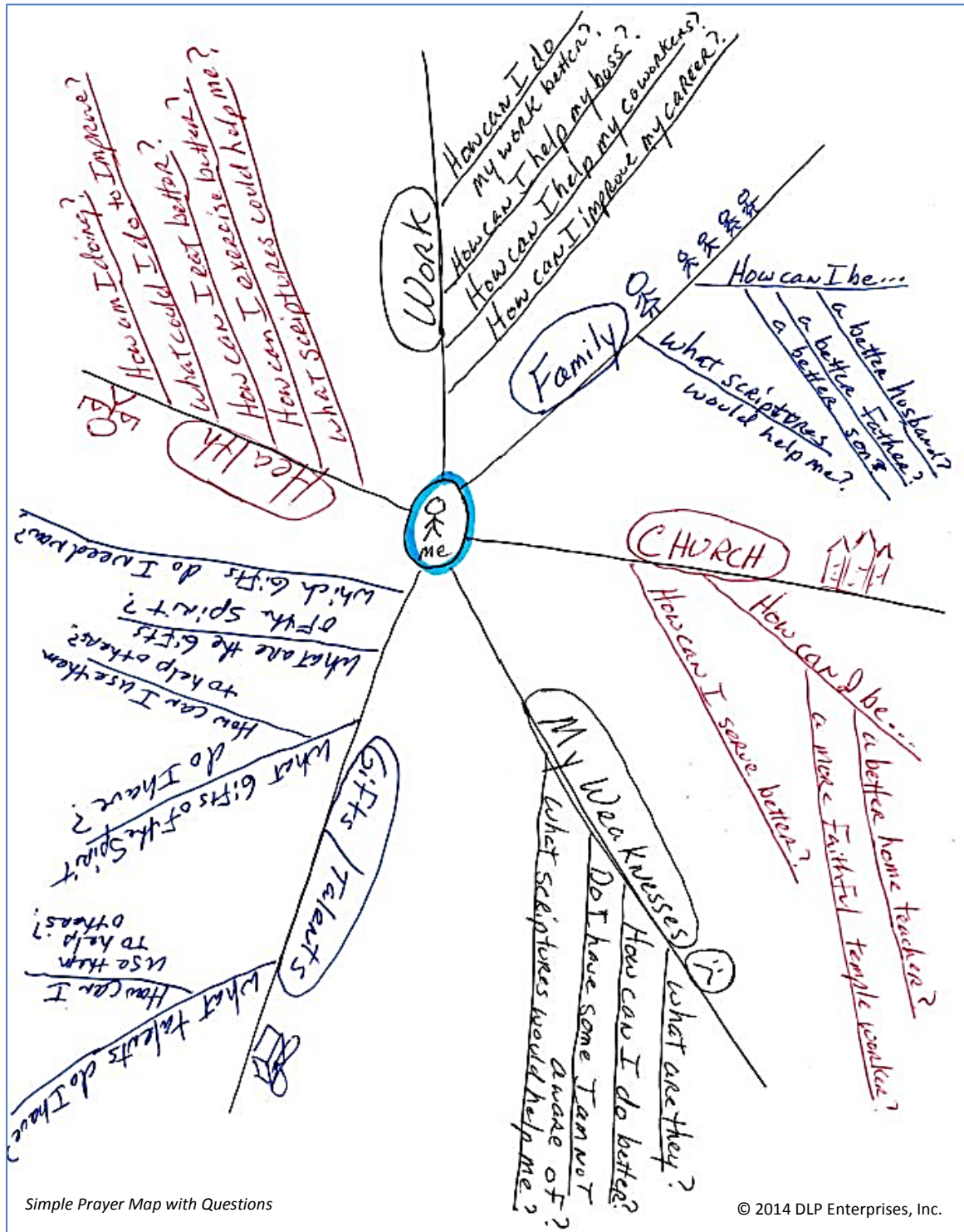
- How can I better show my love to my wife?
- How can I help with her responsibilities?
- How can I help her magnify her church callings?
- What issues is she struggling with?
- How can I help her with these issues?

The Spirit will guide and direct you in coming up with these questions. These questions can then be added to your ‘**Prayer Map**’.

On the next page is an example which is not too pretty because of my handwriting ... and you may have to turn it around to read some of the questions. I usually choose six basic areas, and then add my questions.

By the time I ask the Lord each of these questions, ponder on them, and then write down the thoughts and inspirations that come to me ... I can find myself on my knees for quite a while (try using a pillow or cushion for your knees ☺).

Notice that using different **pen colors** can help as well as drawing simple pictures. I share this one with you so you don't think you have to be an artist! ☺



Simple Prayer Map with Questions

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Prayer Journals

Now that you have all your questions outlined in your **'Prayer Map'**, you are ready to start your prayer. As you go through each question, the thoughts and inspiration will begin to flow to you. **It is essential that you begin to record these.**



One suggestion is to write these down in some type of notebook or journal. I call mine my **'Prayer Journal'**. I have used several different types of journals and notebooks over the years. You may want to use your own personal journal. Make sure you leave plenty of room for additional thoughts and inspirations that may come to you during the prayer, and for recording additional thoughts and results later on.

Learn to record the first thoughts and impressions that come to your mind. As you do this day after day, these ideas and impressions will come faster and become easier for you to discern.



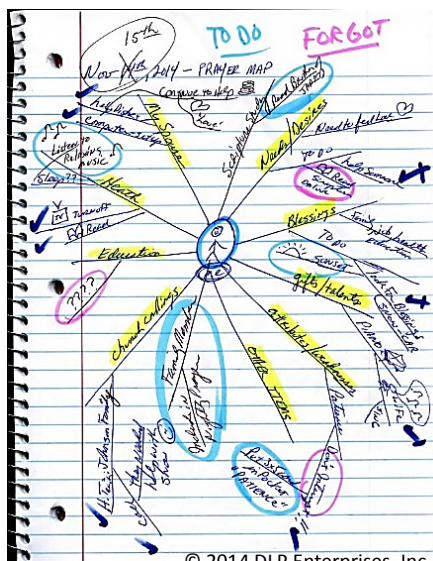
Recording these thoughts and inspirations is a very important part of MIGHTY PRAYER!!

This journal is for your eyes only! These are for your thoughts and inspirations that you receive, and will be considered as your personal inspirations and revelations from the Lord. By writing these things down, you can review them later.

As you review your writings in the future, you can continue to learn from them and recommit yourself to doing some of the things you haven't done yet.

If you don't like writing in the journal, you can simply add your thoughts and inspirations to your **'Prayer Maps'**.

Here is a sample **'Prayer Map'** after just one day. I checked off the items I had done, identified the areas I forgot to do, and added additional items to do.



I remember one time when I was asking the Lord what I should be doing in order to solve a problem. A very strong impression came to me that I hadn't done the things He had already asked me to do. **Twenty minutes later** I had written down dozens of things I still needed to accomplish before I could ask the Lord for more ... so I recommitted to doing them and told the Lord how sorry and neglectful I had been, and promised that I would try harder.

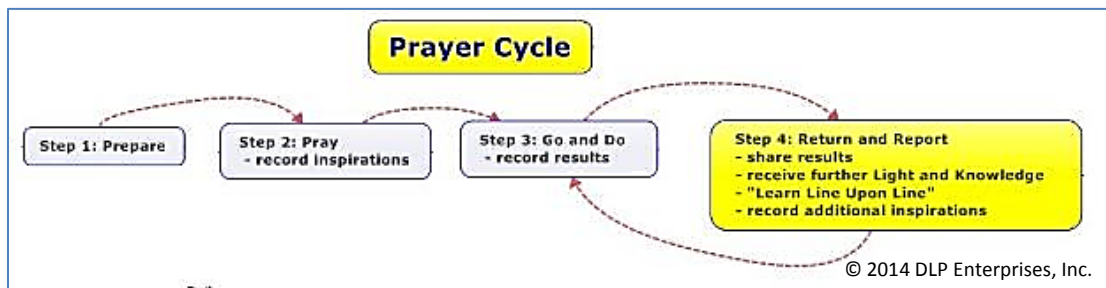
'**Prayer Journals**' will also be used to record how you did on the things the Lord asked you to do, as you will see in this next section. Sometimes, I have written 5-10 pages of thoughts and ideas that have come to me while praying.

Prayer Cycle

The '**Prayer Cycle**' is what I refer to as the process of creating and using the '**Prayer Maps**' and '**Prayer Journals**'.

There are four basic steps:

1. **Preparing to Pray**
2. **Praying**
3. **Doing**
4. **Returning and Reporting**



Let's look at each of these steps:

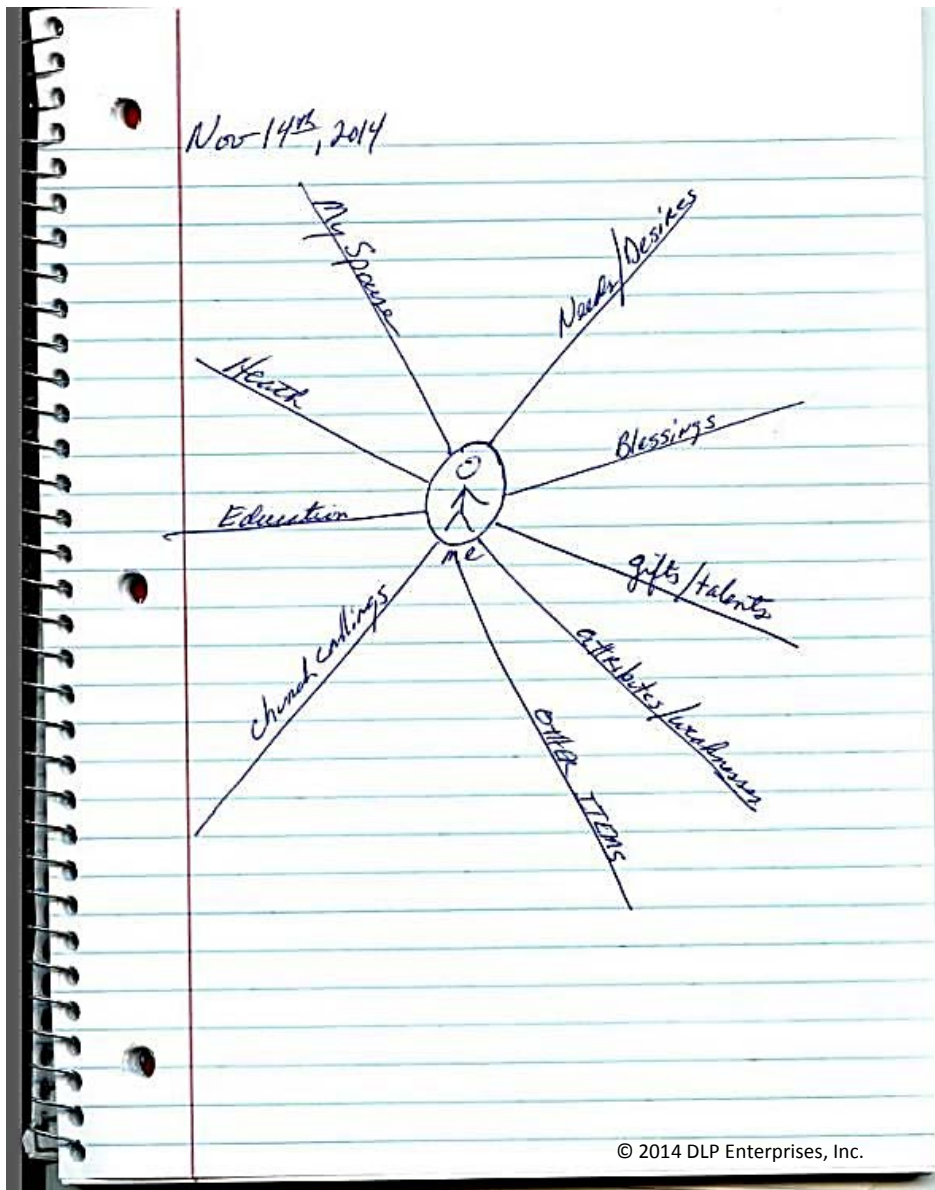
STEP 1: Preparing to Pray

In this step, you will decide what areas you feel impressed to pray about and create your '**Prayer Map**'. You also need to get yourself ready for your prayer. You may want to read a few scriptures or listen to inspirational music. You may want to just close your eyes and relax for a moment. You need to find your '**closet**' in which you can pray so that you will not be disturbed. You may want to tell others to leave you alone... put a '**Do not disturb – talking with the Lord**' sign on your

bedroom door knob.☺ Turn off your cell phone. Have your **'Prayer Journal'** and **'Prayer Maps'** ready. Once this is done you are ready for **Step 2**.

Let's do a sample **'Prayer Map'** so you can see the basic ideas. Here is a simple **'Prayer Map'**. This one doesn't have the questions on it because it will be used for recording the inspirations that come later.

Here are the basic areas I want to visit with the Lord about:



STEP 2: Praying

Here is a sample prayer to go along with the 'Prayer Map'. A lot of these things will just pertain to me ... but it will give you some ideas. Note that it is not a complete prayer ... just enough so you can get the feel of how one might go.

My Heavenly Father,

*I come before **Thee** tonight seeking **Thy** spirit and seeking to know **Thy** will in my life. **Thou** hast so richly blessed me, and I pray I can draw nearer unto **Thee** now. Please bless me that I might hear the sweet whisperings from **Thy** Spirit.*

*Today I need **Thy** help in a few matters. I am trying out a new technique in order that I might better understand **Thy** will and **Thy** thoughts. Please understand the intent of my heart and forgive me of my weaknesses. I so want to please **Thee** and do **Thy** will. Help me to be honest in my prayer and be receptive to **Thy** inspiration. Help me to discern between my own promptings, **Thy** promptings, and most assuredly the promptings from Satan. I don't want to be deceived but to follow **Thy** promptings only.*

*Here are some of the areas I would like **Thy** help with tonight.*

(After each item I am praying about, you will need to pause and let the Spirit speak to you. Note that the items in green are the thoughts that came to my mind.)

Blessings

*I thank **Thee** for my many blessings. Thou hast given me my family, my health, my job, my education, my home, my friends Help me to better appreciate and recognize all that Thou hast given me and my family. What is one thing I can do tomorrow to help me appreciate my blessings more?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- **In the morning, look around and see if you can recognize some blessings from the Lord.**

Needs/Desires

*I need to feel of **Thy** love and to know that Thou art near me and hearing my prayers. Wilt **Thou** please touch my heart that I might feel of **Thy** love? I desire to know **Thy** will and to do it. Please humble me that I might be receptive to **Thy** inspiration. What are **two things** I could do to feel more of **Thy** love?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down the first two thoughts that come to you.)

- Help someone tomorrow.
- Read some scriptures on love.

Gifts/Talents

Father, Thou hast blest me with the gift of music. I appreciate it and I really enjoy playing the piano. How can I use this gift this week to bless others?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Offer to play the piano while your wife sings her favorite hymn.

Church Callings

Thou hast called me to serve as a Home Teacher for the Johnson family. I really enjoy visiting with them and wish to serve them better. What is something that I could do this week to serve them better?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Call the Johnson family tomorrow just to check in with them.

Education

Thou hast blessed me with an inquisitive mind. I want to further my education so I can provide better for my family. What is something I can do to begin gaining a better education?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Nothing is coming to mind ... think more about this.

Health

I pray that *Thou* might bless me with increased health. I am having trouble sleeping. Wilt *Thou* please bless me with a good night's sleep tonight. What is something that I could do to sleep better tonight?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Turn off TV 1 hour before bed and read some scriptures.

Attributes/Weakness

Please forgive me of my weakness. I fail in so many areas but I am wanting to improve. I am trying to be more patient. I struggle with this. I am trying to understand people better. I am trying to not interrupt them when they are speaking. Wilt *Thou* please help me in my efforts to do this tomorrow? I will report back **tomorrow night**. Is there anything else I should be doing?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Try not to interrupt people when they speak to you.

My Spouse

*Father, I thank **Thee** for my spouse. She is a special person whom I love very much. I wish to serve her better and make her life happier. She is under a lot of stress and pressure at times. What are a couple of things I can do to help her out in this area?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Help with the dishes.
- Set up the computer that she is wanting to have set up.

Conclusion

*I thank **Thee** for this time and for the thoughts and ideas I have received. I will begin working on these and will report back to **Thee** tomorrow about how they went. Is there anything else that **Thou** wouldst have me do tomorrow? Is there someone out there that I should be helping tomorrow?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

*I love **Thee**. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*

As you can see, I could have gone on in all the various areas that I outlined in my '**Prayer Map**'. If you are like me, my knees probably can't hold on for that long ... so at times I will just sit on the floor in order to be able to concentrate better. 😊

This was just to give you an example, or idea. If no thoughts or ideas immediately come to your mind ... don't worry ... just ask those same questions the next day.

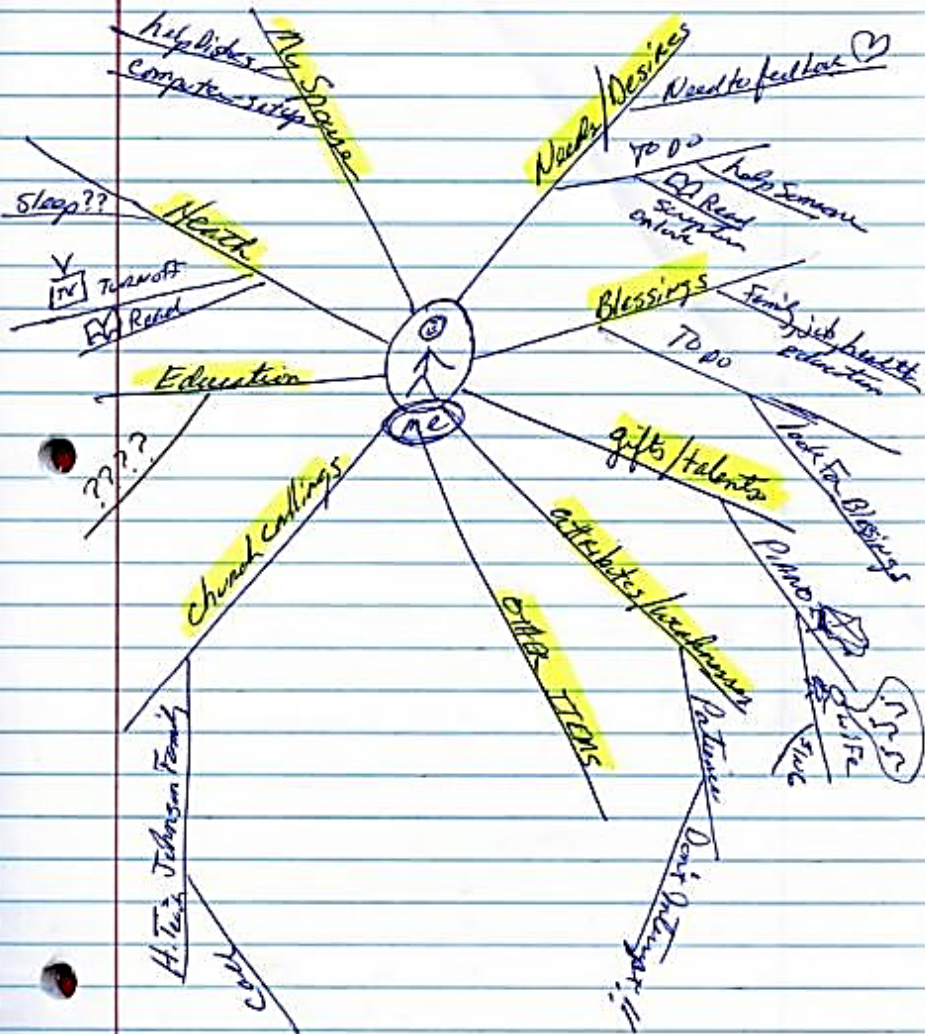
Can you also see that the commandment to avoid **vain repetitions** is easy to obey using this method? Each topic is unique to itself; each one needing specific help and inspiration.

During the prayer I find myself very busy writing down all the things that come to my mind. On the next page is the '**Prayer Map**' with some of the thoughts that came to me during this prayer. I added **color** to make the areas stand out better. I also used some small pictures ...



"A picture is worth a thousand words."

Nov 14th, 2014 - PRAYER MAP



STEP 3: DOING

“**DOING**” may be the hardest step. For in this the Lord will see how committed we are in doing the things He asks of us. It takes **discipline, courage, faith, and determination**. We must never give up! We must never get discouraged! If we are to truly achieve the benefits of ‘**Mighty Prayer**’, then this step must be done!!



President Spencer W. Kimball taught us a lot about ‘**doing it**’.

“We must lengthen our stride and must do it now.

*“We have a commitment to serve our Lord. We have an assurance that the cause is just and worthy. But, above all, we have a knowledge that God lives and is in His Heaven and that His Son Jesus Christ has laid out **a plan** for us which will bring us and our loved ones eternal life if we are faithful. **That life will be a busy, purposeful life with accomplishments and joys and development.**”*

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:

*“We have work to do, you and I, so very much of it.
Let us roll up our sleeves and get at it,
with a new commitment,
putting our trust in the Lord.*

*“Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day.’*

*“We can do it, if we will be prayerful and faithful.
We can do better than we have ever done before.*



During the day, mentally record (or even better yet, write it down) how successful you were or were not in doing these. During the day, take out your ‘**Prayer Journal**’ and review it and see what things you still need to do. This simple act will demonstrate to the Lord your sincerity.

In **1 Thessalonians 5**, Paul admonishes us to:

“Rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing.

In everything give thanks:

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thes. 5:16-18)

This step is where having a prayer throughout the day will help you to remember. I also find it helpful to have a little notebook with me so I can record any additional inspirations the Lord may have for me during the day.

STEP 4: RETURNING and REPORTING

At the end of the day, you are now ready to ‘Return and Report’ back to the Lord on how it went, and to seek ‘further light and knowledge’ that He has for you. You will be learning ‘line upon line’.



Before starting in your ‘Prayer Journal’, summarize how each idea went that you did ... or if you didn’t do it ... mark it down. Be honest with yourself and with the Lord.

Review your ‘Prayer Map’ and determine which additional areas (if any) you want to visit with the Lord about tonight.

A sample of your second prayer might go something like this:

My Heavenly Father,

*I kneel before **Thee** again, and express my gratitude for my many blessings. I wish to report back to **Thee** on how things went today, and humbly ask for additional guidance so that I might better please **Thee**.*

Blessings

*Yesterday I asked for **Thy** help in recognizing more of these blessings.*

- **Today, I recognized and appreciated the magnificent sunrise in the morning that Thou provided. I had forgotten how beautiful they were. It made me feel good.**
- **It was snowy today and the roads were bad. I appreciate Thou watching over me and getting me to work on time and safely.**

*Please help me to continue to recognize **Thy** hand in all things tomorrow.
What else can I do to recognize my blessings?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- **See if you can see other things in nature.**
- **Think about your health and how much better it is.**

Needs/Desires

*Yesterday, I felt impressed to do two things in order to start feeling more of **Thy** love.*

- I tried helping a friend at work. They were very appreciative and helped me to remember that I was helping them because Thou lovest me and Thou helps me.
- I need to be honest, I forgot to read some scriptures about love.

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down the two thoughts that come to you.)

- I will continue to find someone else in need.
- I will read some scriptures on love at lunch time.

Gifts/Talents

Father, yesterday I had just one impression:

- I felt impressed that I should play the piano while my wife sang one of her favorite hymns. She was greatly surprised when I approached her. It helped bind us closer together and I thank Thee for this idea.

Is there another way that I can use my music now to bless others?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

Church Callings

- Yesterday I felt impressed to call the Johnson family and see how they were doing. I called them and found that Brother Johnson was out of town and that no one was able to clear the snow from their walks. So I got my coat and boots and cleared the snow for them. They were very appreciative and it made me feel good too.

Is there something else that I could do this week to serve them better?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into you mind)

Education

- I need to be honest. I didn't do anything in this area. I don't have any ideas at this point. My goal is to improve my education.

*Canst **Thou** please help me with some ideas?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

Health

- Last night I was impressed to turn off the TV an hour before going to bed and to read my scriptures. This seemed to relax me and I had a very good night's sleep. I thank Thee for these ideas. I plan to continue this pattern. Wilt Thou please continue to help me be disciplined to do this?

Is there something else that I could do to sleep better tonight?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Listen to some relaxing music as you prepare for bed.

Attributes/Weakness

- I tried not interrupting some people at work today. It worked a couple of times, but I did lose my patience once. Please forgive me. However, I did remember that we talked last night about it and I recommitted to try harder.

Is there anything else I should be doing?

(Pause for a while and think. Here I have given a plan that I have come up with and am asking for assistance with ... I am also seeking additional ideas.)

- Write on a 3x5 card the word "PATIENCE" and keep it in your pocket.

My Spouse

- Father, I realize that my wife does a lot around the house. I felt impressed that I needed to do just one thing better to help her. I decided to help with the dishes. I hate doing the dishes but I did it for her. She was very grateful and gave me a big kiss.
- I also set up the computer for her.

Is there something else I could help her with? (Please not the dishes! 😊)

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Do the dishes again. 😊
- Tell her you love her.

Scripture Study

- I read a few scriptures on ‘Mighty Prayer’. It appears this could be very time consuming. Please bless me that I might have a greater desire to have ‘Mighty Prayer’ and that I can dedicate the needed time and effort to do it.

Is there something I can do tomorrow that would help me understand this better?

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Reread the story of the Brother of Jared and ponder about it.

CONCLUSION

*I thank **Thee** again for this time and for the thoughts and ideas I have received. I will begin working on these new items and do the ones I didn’t do today. I will report back again to **Thee** tomorrow about how they went.*

*Is there anything else that **Thou** would have me be doing? Is there someone out there that I should be helping tomorrow?*

(Pause for a while and think, then jot down what comes into your mind.)

- Include each member of the Johnson family in your nightly personal prayers.
- From the Lord: “Just know that I love you ... keep up the good work!”

*I love **Thee**.*

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Okay ... did this give you a better feel for what I am talking about?

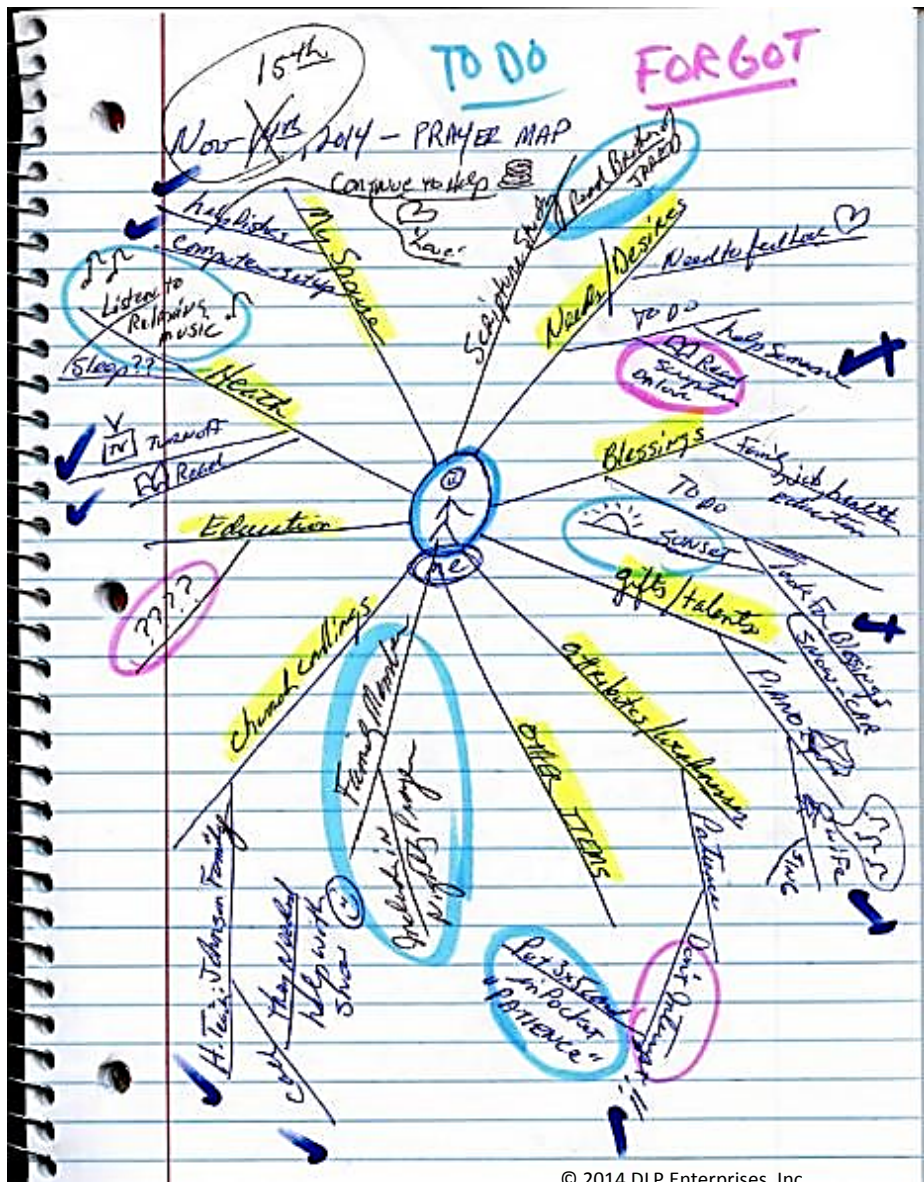
Can you see that with each prayer you must ‘**Return and Report**’ and then receive additional guidance?

The concept is that after a while your ‘**Prayer Map**’ will be in your mind at all times and you will be able to refer back to it without even having to look at it. Also, the Spirit will help guide you in which areas you need to be praying about.

On the next page is my updated ‘**Prayer Map**’ with the additions dealing with what I did and did not do ... plus new items. You may find using **ledger-size** paper will give you more room.

Each day you can either create a new ‘**Prayer Map**’ or simply add on to your **existing ‘Prayer Map’**.

Note that I used **purple** to highlight things I **didn't do**, **blue** for new items, and a **check mark** for those things I did. Come up with whatever system works best for you. ☺



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In my personal 'Prayer Map' last night, I ended up with **four pages** of writings in my 'Prayer Journal'. In my prayers I felt impressed to create a calendar for the rest of the week to review my activities and see when and how I was going to accomplish the various things the Lord wanted me to do.

I also created a **master list** of my 17 children (yes, my wife and I have a blended family of 29 children and 30 grandchildren) ... it came to me that I thought I should pray for each of them **EVERY NIGHT**. (I probably should do just a few each night!)

I also had another page of more in-depth thoughts about additional items that were not on **my 'Prayer Map'**, but came to me as being very important. It took about **30-40 minutes** for this prayer time.

It was very interesting how tempted I was earlier to just turn on the TV and get into bed. Then the Spirit reminded me of the writings in this book and told me to not get into bed until I had my special time with the Lord. When I was finished with my prayer, I was very grateful because the Lord shared some very special things with me. He could not have done so, had I not been willing to listen.

Working out Your Salvation through Prayer

You may be saying to yourself **"This is a lot of work!"**

You are right, and the Lord would agree with you.

In **Philippians 2:12** it states:

*"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed,
not as in my presence only,
but now much more in my absence,
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."*

Here are some additional words of the Lord concerning **work**:

- "The Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his **work** (D&C 1:10)
- "If ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the **work**" (D&C 4:3)
- "Stand fast in the **work** wherewith the Lord has called you" (D&C 9:14)
- "This is your **work**, to keep my commandments (D&C 11:20)
- The Lord to "bring about [His] righteous purposes ... in this **work**" (D&C 17:4)
- Every man to be judged "according to his **works**" (D&C 19:3)
- "He who does **works** of righteousness shall receive his reward" (D&C 59:23)
- In the Lord's name believers "shall do many wonderful **works**" (D&C 84:66)
- "I must **work** the works of him that sent me" (John 9:4)
- "I will **work** a **work** in your days, which ye will not believe." (Habakkuk 1:5)
- "And I send messengers unto them, saying, "I am doing a great **work**." (Nehemiah 6:3)

Special Mighty Prayers: Annual, Quarterly, Monthly, and Weekly Prayers

I have learned that I can't possibly pray every day in depth on every item on my 'Prayer Map'. Sometimes, one 'Prayer Map' can last you for a whole week or longer. However, I did come up with a solution. I could identify those areas that I want to concentrate on during **special prayer times**.

I hold a special prayer once a **month**, another on a **quarterly** basis, and the last on a **yearly** basis. Fast Sundays are a great day to hold these types of prayers. They usually take a much longer time than daily prayers and require a little more preparation.

One of the hardest parts is deciding what areas I want to cover in each of these prayers. You may want to make this a matter of prayer and indicate which areas are to be covered in each type of prayer. **To prepare more fully for these, you may want to Fast along with the prayer (see the section on Fasting).**



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Here are some possible suggestions on how you might break up your various areas:

Area	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annual
My children & spouse (in detail)	X	X	X	X
My extended family		X		
Church callings		X		
My major weaknesses/faults		X	X	
My work		X	X	
Gospel topics (choose one)		X		
Family vacations			X	X
Family Home Evenings		X	X	
Home projects	X	X		
Financial planning			X	X
Friends / Neighbors			X	
Enemies				X
Just thankfulness				X
My hobbies		X	X	X

You may want to dedicate one **'Mighty Prayer'** to express thanks in each of the areas in your **'Prayer Map'**. Do not ask for anything ... but just recognize all the blessings the Lord has provided for you in each of those areas. I love the LDS hymn number 241: **"Count Your Blessings"**.

Count Your Blessings

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings;
Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings;
every doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
think that Christ has promised you his wealth untold.
Count you many blessings;
money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged;

God is over all.
Count your many blessings;
angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.



Additional Possible Prayer Mapping Subjects

Here is a list of some possible subjects you might include in your **'Prayer Maps'**.

- Family: yourself, spouse, children, siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, etc.
- Business / Work
- School / Study Maps
- Time Management
- Gospel Study / Missionary Work
- Gardens / Home Repair
- Family History / Temple Work
- Emergency Preparedness
- Health / Exercise
- Home Teaching / Visiting Teaching Families
- Community Service
- Conference Talks (Now what am I to do?)
- Changing: softening your heart and someone else's heart
- Helping Others
 - Who am I to help today?
 - Who did I help today?
 - Inspire me to be an instrument in Thy hands today.
- Family Finances:
 - To benefit my family and others
 - How can I share?
 - Fast Offerings 10x if possible
- Adversity: protection from
- Relationship with God/Jesus
 - What can I do?
 - I know of Him ... but I don't KNOW Him.
- Sacrifices: What is it? What can I sacrifice? Results of broken heart...
- Trials / Tribulations / Discouragement
- Forgiveness: yourself / others
- Disasters: warnings / protections
- Thanksgiving
- Repentance: How and what do I need to repent of?
- How do I increase my Faith?
- Praying for church leaders (prophet, apostles, stake leadership, ward leadership, ...)
- Praying for civic leaders (president of country, the governor, etc.)
- Time Management
- Hobbies / Relaxation / Joy in life

Section 4:

Additional Helps for Mighty Prayer

This last section is just a collection of some of my additional thoughts and ideas about how to have more effective **‘Mighty Prayers’**.

Understanding and Using the Gifts of the Spirit

The Lord has given us **‘Gifts of the Spirit’** to help one another. He asks us to use the gifts we have in behalf of others. He also asks us to **‘seek ye after the best gifts’** and to **‘always retain’** in our minds what those gifts are. In D&C 46, the Lord speaks about these gifts.

“And again, verily I say unto you,

**I would that ye should always remember,
and always retain in your minds what those gifts are,
that are given unto the church.**

“For all have not every gift given unto them;

**for there are many gifts,
and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.**

To some is given one,

**and to some is given another,
that all may be profited thereby.**



“To some it is given by the Holy Ghost

**to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,
and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.**

To others it is given to believe on their words,

that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.

“And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost

**to know the differences of administration,
as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord,
according as the Lord will,**

suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men.

“And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost

**to some to know the diversities of operations,
whether they be of God,**

that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given
to every man to profit withal.

And again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God,
the word of wisdom.

To another is given the word of knowledge,
that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge.

“And again, to some it is given
to have faith to be healed;

And to others it is given
to have faith to heal.

“And again, to some is given the working of miracles;
And to others it is given to prophesy;
And to others the discerning of spirits.

“And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues;
And to another is given the interpretation of tongues.

“And all these gifts come from God,
for the benefit of the children of God.”

In **Moroni Chapter 10**, additional gifts are listed.

“And again, I exhort you, my brethren,
that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many;
and they come from the same God.

And there are different ways that these gifts are administered;
but it is the same God who worketh all in all;
and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men,
to profit them.

For behold,

to one is given by the Spirit of God,
that he may **teach the word of wisdom**;

“And to another,
that he may **teach the word of knowledge** by the same Spirit;

And to another, exceedingly **great faith**;
and to another, the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit;
And again, to another, that he may **work mighty miracles**;
And again, to another, that he **may prophesy** concerning all things;
And again, to another, the **beholding of angels** and ministering spirits;
And again, to another, **all kinds of tongues**;
And again, to another, the **interpretation of languages** and of divers kinds of tongues.

“And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ;
and **they come unto every man** severally, according as he will.
And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren,
that ye remember that **every good gift cometh of Christ.**”

In the scriptures there are more gifts that are mentioned such as:

- The gift of having dreams
- The gift to interpret dreams
- The gift of being a peacemaker
- The gift of sharing love
- The gift of charity

In the gift of charity, the Lord specifically asks us to pray for that gift.

***“Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart,
that ye may be filled with his love,
which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ;
that ye may become the sons of God;
that when he shall appear we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is;
that we may have this hope;
that we may be purified even as he is pure.
Amen.”*** (Moroni 7:48)

Do you know what special gifts of the Spirit that the Lord has given you?

If not, you might reread your **Patriarchal Blessing**. Sometimes they are enumerated in there. Regardless of your age, if you haven't received this special blessing, please ask your Bishop about getting one. This is a marvelous gift from the Lord to us. It can help strengthen and guide us in our lives. It may reveal what **'Gifts of the Spirit'** the Lord has given us.

You might ask members of your family which **spiritual gifts** they think you have that you may not be aware of. **We have a solemn responsibility to know what our own personal gifts are and how**

to use them. We will be held accountable for how we bless others with these. And if we don't use them, the Lord will take the gifts away from us.

There are **many ways** that we can obtain '**Gifts of the Spirit**'. Here are four ways:

1. Sometimes, the Lord will just **give us** one or more of the '**Gifts of the Spirit**'.
2. Sometimes, He makes them **conditional**. We have to do certain things, and then He will give us that gift.
3. We can '**seek after the best gifts**' on our own.
4. As you faithfully use the gifts you have, **the Lord may bless you** with other gifts you may stand in need of.

One of the keys in '**Mighty Prayer**' is the proper utilization of the '**Gifts of the Spirit**'. Let me explain.

Suppose you have a problem with one of your children. You just don't seem to communicate well with each other. In your prayers about this child you might ask the Lord these types of questions:

***"Heavenly Father, I really love my child ... but we are really struggling.
We seem to push each other's buttons and can't communicate very well.***

Are there any of my 'gifts of the spirit' I have that could help us out?

Are there any 'gifts of the spirit' that I should be seeking after?

Are there any 'gifts of the spirit' that my wife has that could help us out?

Are there any 'gifts of the spirit' that my child has that could help us out?

When you get impressions on any of these types of questions, then ask follow up questions such as:

How can I use this 'gift'?

Canst Thou help me understand how this 'gift' would be useful?

When the Lord sees you trying to use these '**gifts**', He will bless you and you will come to rely more and more on them in other aspects of your life. You will also help others begin to utilize their '**gifts**'.

Another suggestion on how to use a specific gift would be something like this:

***"Father, Thou hast given me the Gift of Discernment,
the ability to read people's heart and to help them.***

I haven't used this gift in a long time.

Canst Thou please help me to start utilizing it?

Are there ways I can utilize it this week?"

Now a word of caution about our spiritual gifts.



Elder Dallin H. Oaks warns us about using our gifts inappropriately:

“Satan will also attempt to cause our spiritual downfall through tempting us to misapply our spiritual gifts. The revelations tell us that ‘there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God’ (D&C 46:11).

“All of these gifts ‘come from God, for the benefit of the children of God’”(D&C 46:26).

“Most of us have seen persons whom the adversary has led astray through a corruption of their spiritual gifts.

“My mother shared one such example, something she had observed while she was a student at BYU many years ago.

*A man who lived in a community in Utah had a mighty **gift of healing**. People sought him out for blessings, many coming from outside his ward and stake. In time, he made almost a profession of giving blessings. As part of his travels to various communities, he came to the apartments of BYU students, asking if they wanted blessings. This man had lost sight of the revealed direction on spiritual gifts: **“always remembering for what they are given”** (D&C 46:8).*

*A spiritual gift is given to benefit the children of God, **not to magnify the prominence or gratify the ego of the person who receives it**. The professional healer who forgot that lesson gradually lost the companionship of the Spirit and **was eventually excommunicated** from the Church...*

A desire to know is surely a great strength. A hunger to learn is laudable, but the fruits of learning make a person particularly susceptible to the sin of pride.

Dallin H. Oaks, *“Our Strength Can Become Our Downfall,”* BYU fireside address (7 June 1992).

Helping Each Other with Our Gifts

Earlier I talked about the **Brother of Jared** and his gift to receive revelation from the Lord. I would like to talk about Jared. He also had a special gift. He could discern that there were certain needs that needed to be met, and questions answered. He went to his brother, who he knew had the gift of revelation, and asked him to find the answers. Note that it was not the Brother of Jared that came up with these questions, but it was Jared. So, you see, Jared, and his brother helped each other out with their individual gifts.

We should not be jealous because someone has a gift we don’t have. We should strive to use our gifts to the best of our abilities to bless others.



In summary, seek after the best gifts and then use them wisely.

Understanding and Coming to Expect Miracles

Many people believe that Miracles have ceased to occur; that we shouldn't expect to see any more miracles. If in fact miracles have ceased in our lives, then according to **Moroni**, we are in trouble and need to repent.

“And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with power and great glory at the last day, that they are true, and if they are true **has the day of miracles ceased?**” (Moroni 7:35)

“And Christ hath said:

**If ye will have faith in me
ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing
is expedient in me.**

And he hath said:

**Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me,
and be baptized in my name,
and have faith in me,
that ye may be saved.**



“Or have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men?
Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them?
Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand,
or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved?”

“Behold I say unto you, Nay;
for **it is by faith that miracles are wrought;**
and **it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men;**
wherefore,
if these things have ceased
wo be unto the children of men,
for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.

“For no man can be saved,
according to the words of Christ,
save they shall have **faith in his name;**

wherefore,

if these things have ceased,

then has **faith ceased** also;

and awful is the state of man,

for they are as though there had been no redemption made.

“But behold, my beloved brethren,

I judge better things of you,

for I judge that ye have faith in Christ because of your meekness;

for if ye have not faith in him

then ye are not fit to be numbered among the people of his church.”

(Moroni 7:33-39)

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren,

have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven,

and hath sat down on the right hand of God,

to claim of the Father his rights of mercy

which he hath upon the children of men?” (Moroni 7:27)

In your ‘**Prayer Map**’, you might include a whole section just dealing with **miracles**.

I testify that they still do occur.

My wife and I have been blessed to experience many many miracles and have seen miracles in the lives of our loved ones and friends.

Here are a few miracles that have happen to us lately.

Miracle of the Charcoal Briquettes

My wife and I were trying to figure out what items we needed for our emergency preparedness.

We created a ‘**Mind Map**’ of all the basic areas dealing with preparedness. One area dealt with

fuel. The Lord has counseled us to obtain a year’s supply of fuel where possible. We began to ‘**brain storm**’ about all the different types of fuel there are and what applications they could be used for. We felt that **charcoal briquettes** would be a safe and manageable type of fuel to store. Then we found out that a bag would cost around \$8-9. We calculated how many bags we would need and realized it was not an affordable item. We went to the Lord and shared our plans and ideas and requested His Divine intervention.



A few days later, I went down to the store, and there – in the back of the store – was a full pallet of bags of charcoal briquettes. There was a sign next to it that I couldn't believe. It said: **"Clearance: 25 cents a bag"**. I called the manager over and verified the price. He said that they just lowered the price that day and wanted to get rid of the bags before winter. I told him I would buy the entire pallet. To us it was a miracle. It was a direct answer to a prayer we had, and an answer to a plan that we were trying to put into place.

Miracle of the Winter Tent

We live in Utah where the winters can be very cold. In our emergency preparedness plan, there is a concern with shelters. I felt impressed that if there were an earthquake, we would need to leave the home and find shelter outside. In the winter time, this could be very difficult, especially if we had a lot of our kids and grandkids with us. I felt impressed that perhaps a good artic-type tent would be useful ... one that could have a stove in it.



The next week, my wife and I were serving in the temple and I discussed some of my thoughts with a friend. He said he had received the same impression and had just bought a number of tents for his family. These were brand new and were very expensive ... several thousands of dollars. I was wondering whether we should invest in one even though the expense was so great. The next day, I received a strong impression to look on the internet at our local newspaper site where they advertised things that are for sale. There, (to my amazement) was a large 16 foot by 16 foot army tent for sale with all the poles and the ability to have a stove inside ... and **it only cost a few hundred dollars**. I immediately called and bought the tent. Again, the Lord had performed a miracle for us and answered our prayers.

These are but a few of the many miracles we have been blessed with in our lives. I know that miracles exist today and that the Lord will bless us so that we can do His work here on earth.

In your **'Mighty Prayers'**, learn to call upon the Lord and ask for His divine intervention in your lives. Learn to do everything you can, and then rely on the Lord for those things which are out of your hands. Become like the **Brother of Jared**, when he went before the Lord and cried:

*"Now behold, O Lord,
and do not be angry with thy servant
because of his weakness before thee;
for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens,
and that we are unworthy before thee;
because of the fall our natures have become evil continually;
nevertheless, O Lord,
thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee,*

that from thee we may receive according to our desires ...

“And I know, O Lord,

that thou hast all power,

and canst do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man ...

“Behold O Lord,

thou canst do this.

*We know that thou art able to show forth **great power,***

which looks small unto the understanding of men.” (Ether 3:2, 4-5)

Please note that because the Brother of Jared actually **recorded** his prayer, we are able to read it and learn from it. So... Keep your **‘Prayer Maps’** and **‘Prayer Journal’** so that perhaps someday, your descendants can gain strength and wisdom from your prayers!

Inspiration: Be Ready - Any Time - Any Place

As you begin to make **‘Might Prayer’** a part of your everyday life, you will become more and more in tune with the Lord. He will be able to call upon you at any time and in any place. Once you receive these promptings, then it behooves you to act immediately upon them. I would like to share a few experiences that I have had in this regard.

The Inspiration about the killed Coal Miners

In 1900, 200+ coal miners died in a mining disaster near Price, Utah. This is a story about how the Lord prompted me to assist with their temple work.

A few years ago my wife’s step-mother passed away. She lived in New Mexico. On our way down there, we drove through the city of Price, Utah. My ancestors helped settle that area. My great-grandfather and his father were converts from England and they started as coal miners in Price.

I have gone to the cemetery there many times. On our trip, the Spirit said that I needed to visit it again. I first ignored it because I had been there so many times. But as the thought kept coming back to me, I made the turn off into Price. I normally would be able to drive right to the cemetery, but this time for some reason I was lost.



Funeral of the coal miners.

The Spirit then said to turn into the visitor center to get directions. We did so and while I was getting directions I noticed two books for sale that dealt with the history of Price. I felt impressed

to buy them, and thought nothing more about it. We went to the cemetery and nothing special occurred. We then went on to New Mexico and returned home later the next week.

A few weeks later, I received a strong prompting that I needed to read those books. As I read them, I learned about a terrible mine disaster that happened at the turn of the century. Hundreds of minors were killed. Most of them were immigrants from England. My great grandfather was a bishop of the ward down there at that time. It was quite a hardship for everyone there.

The Spirit then prompted me to go onto **Family Search** to see if the temple work had been done for those miners. The books contained lists of all the miners that had died. I started looking each name up. It was strange that I was seeing that the baptisms and confirmations had been done, but not the other ordinances. I felt another prompting that I needed to investigate this. I noticed that it was the same person who had submitted the names of these miners. I was able to get her email and I sent off a brief note to her asking if she needed help in getting the rest of the work done for the miners.

A few days later I received a response saying that all the work had been done. This really confused me, so I found her phone number and called her. I explained who I was and my connections to that area. I expressed my puzzlement about how the work could be done and yet not show up as completed in the system. She indicated that her stake had done all the work about ten years ago on the anniversary of the accident ... then I interrupted her and asked about the endowments. There was silence on the other end ... she then said ***“You mean we can do the endowment work for them too?”*** She had thought that only the baptism and confirmations needed to be done. She apologized profusely and said she would take care of it right away.

A feeling of happiness came over me. I felt as if my great-grandfather had inspired me to stop there that day, blocked my memory of how to get to the cemetery just so that I would go to the information center and buy the books. The Lord works in mysterious ways. Had I not listened to the Spirit not just once, but many times during this experience, the work for these miners might still remain unfinished.

The Inspiration about the Near Flood

I work out of my home but my wife worked in downtown Salt Lake City which is about 25 miles away. One day about 10 am I heard the front door open and my wife showed up. I was kind of surprised. She said she had this prompting that she needed to return home as something was not right. As she went through the house everything was okay until she went into the unimproved area of our basement. It was beginning to be flooded. The sprinklers outside were dumping water into the window sill and that water was now coming into the house. The flooding had only just begun, so we were able to



mop up the water and stop additional water from coming into the basement. I was grateful for the sensitivity my wife has and her desire to follow those promptings immediately.



President Monson

President Thomas S. Monson in his conference talks, refers quite often to how the Spirit had directed him to go visit some widow or someone in the hospital. He would drop everything and follow that prompting. We must learn how to do this and learn to be receptive at all times to follow the promptings of the Lord.

Being Specific in Your Prayers

As I mentioned earlier, I served a mission in **Brazil**. I learned a lot on my mission and will be forever grateful for the patience of my companions who literally had to convert me in those beginning months. When I left on my mission, I didn't really know who Joseph Smith was, nor what the Book of Mormon was. For years I had gone to a Southern Baptist church and picked up some of their beliefs. When my bishop called me in for an interview, I had long "hippie" hair and hadn't been to church in a long time. While going to the Baptist church I felt I wanted to be a Baptist minister one day. When a friend of mine helped bring me back into the LDS Church I still wanted to be a minister ... so when the bishop asked me about going on a mission, I surprised him and my parents by saying "yes". It took five different haircuts before my stake president would approve of my new look.



Anyway, on my mission I learned (the hard way) to always be specific in your prayers; and if you're not, you may never know what you will receive.

I was serving in a small town called **Goiania** in the middle of Brazil... it was about 6 hours away from the capital city of **Brasilia**. For months I had been working with the branch choir to sing a special number in the District Conference in Brasilia. The day came to take a bus there, and we found out that all the buses were sold out, and there were no tickets for us four elders.

We couldn't get there!

The buses left on-the-hour until midnight. So every hour we would go down to the bus station to see if there were any empty seats. As the day wore on, we became more and more worried. Finally, the midnight bus pulled away and our hopes were dashed. We felt impressed to go the side of the bus terminal and offer a heartfelt prayer. We told the Lord we were sorry for not

buying the tickets earlier, and that we had tried all day to buy other people's tickets. We now needed Him to step in and help us. As soon as we finished praying, a man came up to us and asked if we needed a ride to Brasilia. We were excited. The Lord had answered our prayers. The only problem was, we weren't specific enough about how we wanted to get there.

The man took us over to his car, **a very old Volkswagen**. Standing beside the car was his 8 month pregnant wife and his 10 year old son. We looked at each other and wondered how this was going to work. The man said his wife and son would sit in the front seat and we would have to fit in the back seat. The only problem was that my companion was 200 + pounds and a football player, another elder was over 6 feet tall and a basketball player, and the third elder was . I wa little larger than I was. I was only about 120 lbs at the time ... so the three elders got in and told me to sit on their laps.

We were like sardines in a tin can ... but we weren't complaining ... the Lord had answered our prayers. Well, after about 2 hours we stopped to stretch ... When we went to get back into the car the elders looked at each other and then at me and said **"Elder Potter, you can't fit on our laps anymore ... you will need to fit in the small space behind the back seat!!"**

For those not familiar with that area of a Volkswagen Bug, it is barely big enough to hold a small dog. Well, they pushed me gently into that space ... with my head at an angle, and right next to the back window. For the next 4 hours, my head would bang against the window as we traversed the steep winding mountain roads. I was sore for a whole week afterward, but I did learn an unforgettable lesson ...

This is where they stuck me!



"ALWAYS BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR PRAYERS."

Blocks to Inspiration

In today's hectic electronic environment, the **'noise'** of the world is one of Satan's greatest tools. He uses this to block out the quiet soft whisperings of the Lord. **TV, the Internet, video games, etc. are all addicting!!** People can waste hour after hour using these devices. While they can be used for some good, it is also used by Satan to keep us from doing the **"more important"** things the Lord would have us do. I have seen marriages in my family destroyed because of the addictiveness of video games by their spouses. When we more fully understand how Satan is using these instruments to keep us from God, then we will be awakened to the fact that we are still at war with **Satan**.



Some people fall asleep each night watching the **TV** or listening to music ... essentially numbing

themselves to sleep. Their prayers are so short that by the time they barely start they have said amen and have hopped back into bed and turned the TV on.



During the day, the headphones are worn while loud music or radio shows are blaring in their ears. When people get into their cars, the CD or radio immediately gets turned up full blast... with the woofers pounding in the back seat.

There is no way the Lord can speak to any of us with all this external noise going on. **How can the Lord inspire us to do something immediately when we can't even hear ourselves think?** Are we too busy and too involved with the TV and the reality shows to spend the time preparing ourselves for **'Mighty Prayer'**? Perhaps we need to step back and analyze whether we really want to have a close personal relationship with the Lord, and what we are willing to sacrifice to obtain it.

It may be a good idea to include a section called **'Time Management'** into your **'Prayer Maps'**. Examine how you are spending your time. Are there ways you could improve in this area so you would be more in tune with the Spirit?

Fasting and Prayer

What is fasting?

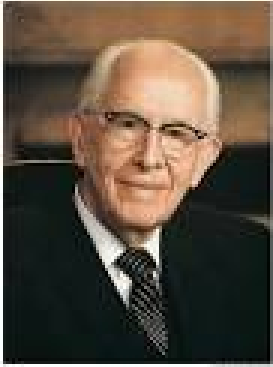
Elder Carl B. Pratt of the First Quorum of the Seventy gave a tremendous talk on **"The Blessings of a Proper Fast"** (see **Appendix**).



"Fasting has always been a practice among God's people. In our day it is a commandment given by the Lord to all members of the Church. In addition to occasional special fasts that we might have for personal or family reasons, we are expected to fast once a month on the first Sunday. We are taught that there are **three aspects to a proper Fast Day observance**:

- **First**, abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals or, in other words, 24 hours;
- **Second**, attending Fast and Testimony meeting;
- And **third**, giving a generous Fast Offering."

The prophet **Ezra Taft Benson** gives a beautiful summary about Fasting.



“A certain kind of devil goes not out except by fasting and prayer, the scripture tells us. (See Matt. 17:21.) **Periodic fasting** can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit. The usual fast, the one we are asked to participate in for fast Sunday, is for 24 hours without food or drink. Some people, feeling the need, have gone on longer fasts of abstaining from food but have taken the needed liquids. Wisdom should be used, and the fast should be broken with light eating. **To make a fast most fruitful**, it should be coupled with **prayer and meditation**; physical work should be held to a minimum, and it’s a blessing if one can **ponder on the scriptures** and the reason for the fast”

(Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 66–67).

Note that he said:

“Periodic fasting can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit.”

Why should I Fast?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

“Fasting, with prayer as its companion, is designed

- to **increase spirituality**;
- to **foster a spirit of devotion** and love of God;
- to **increase faith** in the hearts of men, thus assuring divine favor;
- to **encourage humility** and **contrition of soul**;
- to aid in the **acquisition of righteousness**;
- to **teach man his nothingness** and dependence upon God;
- and to **hasten** those who properly comply with the law of fasting along the path to salvation”

(McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 276).



Fasting, combined with prayer, also helps foster spiritual growth and conviction, and hence brings needed blessings. Here are some examples from the scriptures which speak about this.

“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.” (Omni 1:26)

“Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, **I have fasted and prayed many days** that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me.” (Alma 5:46)

“Nevertheless **they did fast and pray oft**, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.” (Helaman 3:35)

“And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and **were united in mighty prayer and fasting.**” (3 Nephi 27:1)

The Lord has also given commandments dealing with fasting and praying.

**“Also, I give unto you a commandment
that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting
from this time forth.”**

(D&C 88:76)

**“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing,
only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart
that thy fasting may be perfect,
or, in other words,
that thy joy may be full.**

**“Verily, this is fasting and prayer,
or in other words, rejoicing and prayer.”**

(D&C 59:13-14)

In **Matthew 17:20-21**, the Savior speaks to some of his disciples who were unable to cast out certain devils. He teaches them that certain things can ONLY be done by prayer and fasting.

“And Jesus said unto them,

**‘Because of your unbelief:
for verily I say unto you,
If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,
ye shall say unto this mountain,
Remove hence to yonder place;
and it shall remove;
and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**

**‘Howbeit this kind goeth not out
but by prayer and fasting.’”**

In **Isaiah 58**, Isaiah also speaks about fasting, what should be done, and what the resulting blessings can be. He emphasizes the importance of helping others and the resulting blessings. Note how he uses the logic patterns mentioned before. Watch for the words **“WHEN”** and **“THEN”** in these passages.

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen?

**To loose the bands of wickedness,
to undo the heavy burdens,
and to let the oppressed go free,
and that ye break every yoke?**

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?
When thou seest the naked,
that thou cover him;
and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
and thine health shall spring forth speedily:
and thy righteousness shall go before thee;
the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.

“Then shalt thou call,
and the Lord shall answer;
thou shalt cry,
and he shall say,
“Here I am”.

“If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke,
the putting forth of the finger,
and speaking vanity;
And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,
and satisfy the afflicted soul;
then shall thy light rise in obscurity,
and thy darkness be as the noonday:

**“And the Lord shall guide thee continually,
and satisfy thy soul in drought,
and make fat thy bones:
and thou shalt be like a watered garden,
and like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.**

“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places:
thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations;
and thou shalt be called,
The repairer of the breach,
The restorer of paths to dwell in.” (Isaiah 58:6-12)

If we fast properly the Lord promises:

**“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
and thine health shall spring forth speedily:
and thy righteousness shall go before thee; ...**

**“Then shalt thou call,
and the Lord shall answer;
thou shalt cry,
and he shall say, Here I am. ...**

**“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,
and satisfy the afflicted soul;
then shall thy light rise in obscurity,
and thy darkness be as the noonday:**

**“And the Lord shall guide thee continually,
and satisfy thy soul in drought,
... and thou shalt be like a watered garden,
and like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.”** (Isaiah 58:8–11)

What if I have a medical problem or have small children?

There are many people with medical conditions that cannot go without food nor water for 24 hours. Some sisters may be pregnant or nursing newborn infants. There are some with diseases such as diabetes that require regular meals at regular times. Can these people still participate in a fasting? **Yes!!**

They can participate in many other ways in the **‘Spirit of the Fast’**. It is the desire and the intent of our hearts that the Lord looks upon; and not the **‘Letter of the Law’**. These people need to ask the Lord for inspiration on how best they can fast. It will not be the same for each person. There is no right or wrong way ... there is only following the promptings of the Spirit. They could possibly abstain from eating certain types of special foods ... desserts, ice cream, soda pop ... and just eat

simple plain food which would allow them to stay healthy. They are fasting in their heart and are sacrificing in ways that they can. These people can still help the sick and needy, give a generous fast offering, and anything else that the Spirit may dictate to them.

When my wife was pregnant, she would eat a small meal, and then fast and pray until it was time for the next small meal. No snacks. That was the best she could do.

Elder Carl B. Pratt's talk states:

“For those who are **physically able, fasting is a commandment.**

Speaking of our monthly fast day, **President Joseph F. Smith** said:

‘The Lord has instituted the fast on a reasonable and intelligent basis.

... Those who can are required to comply ... ;

it is a duty from which they cannot escape;

*... it is left with the people as a matter of conscience,
to exercise wisdom and discretion. ...*

**“But those should fast who can. ... None are exempt from this;
it is required of the Saints, old and young, in every part of the Church”**

(Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 244).

Here are his suggestions about **young children.**

“We should not expect our young children to fast for the recommended two meals. **But let us teach them the principles of fasting.** If fasting is discussed and planned in a family setting, the small children will be aware that their parents and older siblings are fasting, and they will understand the purpose of the fast. They should participate in the family prayers to begin and end the fast. This way, when they reach the proper age, they will be eager to fast with the rest of the family. In our family, we have done this by encouraging **our children between 8 and 12 years of age to fast for one meal**; then as they have turned 12 and received the Aaronic Priesthood or entered Young Women, we have encouraged them to fast for two complete meals.”



What if I don't want to fast and don't do it?

As we have read, the Lord has commanded us to fast. But this is between you and the Lord. If we are wanting blessings, then we must obey the Lord. The prophet **Spencer W. Kimball** addressed this question by saying:

“Failing to fast is a sin. In the 58th chapter of Isaiah, rich promises are made by the Lord to those who fast and assist the needy. Freedom from frustrations, freedom from thralldom, and the blessing of peace are promised. Inspiration and spiritual guidance will come with righteousness and closeness to our Heavenly Father. To omit to do this righteous act of fasting would deprive us of these blessings” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 98).

When and how long should I fast?

The Lord has asked us to fast once a month for a period of 24 hours. This usually occurs on the **first Sunday of the month**. However, depending on circumstances, it could be any day of the month. Sometimes around General Conference time, **‘Fast Sunday’** (as it is called) is moved to from the first Sunday to a different Sunday of the month. When the pioneers first settled in the west, the fasting was done on the first Thursday of the month.



“The usual fast, the one we are asked to participate in for Fast Sunday, is for **24 hours without food or drink**.

Some people, feeling the need,
have gone on **longer fasts** of abstaining from food
but have taken the needed liquids.

Wisdom should be used,
and the fast should be broken with light eating.

To make a fast most fruitful,
it should be coupled with prayer and meditation;
physical work should be held to a minimum,
and it’s a blessing if one can ponder on the scriptures and the reason for the fast”
(**Ezra Taft Benson**, in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 66–67).

You will be depriving yourself of special blessings if you **only fast** on **“Fast Sunday”** where you may have a routine which allows you to go without food during that time. By doing it on another day of the week, and all by yourself, you will find that it may be a struggle at first but will be very rewarding. This will help demonstrate your faith and your sincere desires to the Lord in a very powerful and personal way.

Elder Pratt in his talk states:

“Let us begin our fasts with prayer. **This could be kneeling at the table as we finish the meal with which we begin the fast.** That prayer should be a natural thing as we speak to our Heavenly Father concerning the purpose of our fast and plead with Him for His help in accomplishing our goals. Likewise, **let us end our fasts with prayer.** We could very appropriately **kneel** at the table before we sit down to consume the meal with which we

break our fast. We would thank the Lord for His help during the fast and for what we have felt and learned from the fast.

In addition to a beginning and ending prayer, we should seek the Lord often in personal prayer throughout the fast.”

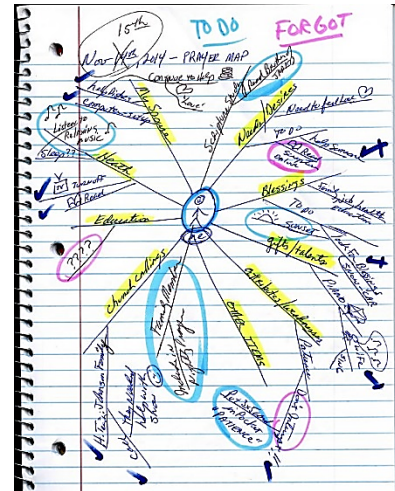
What should I fast for?

This is a great question! Unfortunately, a lot of people fast with no purpose and deprive themselves and their families of blessings. Someone once said,

“Fasting without a purpose is just going hungry for 24 hours.” ☺

There is no limit to the things one could fast for. One could fast for better health for themselves or others, inspiration, a job, more faith, protection, forgiveness, help overcoming personal flaws, help at school, help at work, help with other members of the family, guidance in our callings, etc. I recommend going through your **“Prayer Maps”** and pray about which areas should be included in your fast.

Some families get together before their monthly fast and talk about what things they should fast about. Each family member can provide suggestions. The Spirit will lead and guide you as thoughts come into your mind of areas that need special blessings. In your personal and family prayers, ask the Lord what is the best way for you and your family to come up with reasons for fasting.



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Some families share this with family members not living in the home. In this way the prayers of many can avail much.

**“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick,
and the Lord shall raise him up;
and if he have committed sins,
they shall be forgiven him.”**

(James 5:15)

Here is an example of the priests praying and fasting for Alma. Notice the use of the word **“THAT”** ... These are the reasons they fasted:

**“And he caused that the priests should assemble themselves together;
and they began to fast,
and to pray to the Lord their God
that he would open the mouth of Alma,**

that he might speak,
and also **that** his limbs might receive their strength
—**that** the eyes of the people might be opened to see
and know of the goodness and glory of God.

“And it came to pass **after they had fasted and prayed
for the space of two days and two nights**,
the limbs of Alma received their strength,
and he stood up and began to speak unto them,
bidding them to be of good comfort.”

(Mosiah 27:22-23)

Elder Pratt also stated in his talk:

“If all we do is abstain from food and drink for 24 hours and pay our fast offering, we have missed a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth. On the other hand, if we have a **special purpose** in our fasting, the fast will have much more meaning.”

Fasting and Mighty Prayer

Now, let's discuss '**Mighty Prayer**' and fasting.

The scriptures often associate these two terms together.



“And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united **in mighty prayer and fasting**. “
(3 Nephi 27:1)

If we are truly desirous of obtaining '**Mighty Prayer**', fasting at times may be a key component. It allows us to be more receptive to the Spirit. It reflects our true desires to be humble before the Lord; and it can also help us to humble ourselves more.

In '**Mighty Prayer**', the Lord will help inspire you to know when certain blessings will require '**Fasting**'.

Remember: *The ultimate goal is to have the Lord inspire you to know*

- *what to do,*
- *how to do it and*
- *when to do it.*

Sing Hymns of Prayer

As mentioned earlier, singing hymns can greatly help you to get the Spirit and to prepare to have 'Mighty Prayer'. On my website (www.GrandpaDave.com), I have arranged several of my favorite hymns dealing with prayer. The lyrics of several of these hymns have been previously listed earlier. Here are the lyrics to the remaining ones. As you listen to these, go over the lyrics in your mind and ponder upon them. Try memorizing them and sing along as you listen to them.

**“Know that the song of the righteous is a PRAYER unto our Father in Heaven,
and it shall be answered with a blessing upon [your] heads.”** FIRST PRESIDENCY

Oh May My Soul Commune with Thee

1. Oh, may my soul commune with thee
And find thy holy peace;
From worldly care and pain of fear,
Please bring me sweet release.
2. Oh, bless me when I worship thee
To keep my heart in tune,
That I may hear thy still, small voice,
And, Lord, with thee commune.
3. Enfold me in thy quiet hour
And gently guide my mind
To seek thy will, to know thy ways,
And thy sweet Spirit find.
4. Lord, grant me thy abiding love
And make my turmoil cease.
Oh, may my soul commune with thee
And find thy holy peace.

Come Unto Him

1. I wander through the still of night,
When solitude is ev'rywhere--
Alone, beneath the starry light,
And yet I know that God is there.
I kneel upon the grass and pray;
An answer comes without a voice.
It takes my burden all away
And makes my aching heart rejoice.
2. When I am filled with strong desire
And ask a boon of him, I see
No miracle of living fire,
But what I ask flows into me.
And when the tempest rages high
I feel no arm around me thrust,
But ev'ry storm goes rolling by
When I repose in him my trust.
3. It matters not what may befall,
What threat'ning hand hangs over me;
He is my rampart through it all,
My refuge from mine enemy.
Come unto him all ye depressed,
Ye erring souls whose eyes are dim,
Come unto him! Come unto him!

Sweet Hour of Prayer

1. Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!
2. Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
Believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my ev'ry care
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!
I'll cast on him my ev'ry care
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Did You Think to Pray?

1. Ere you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ, our Savior,
Did you sue for loving favor
As a shield today?

[Chorus]
Oh, how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day.
So, when life gets dark and dreary,
Don't forget to pray.
2. When your heart was filled with anger,
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another
Who had crossed your way?
3. When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was full of sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow
At the gates of day?

Be Thou Humble

1. Be thou humble in thy weakness,
and the Lord thy God shall lead thee,
Shall lead thee by the hand
and give thee answer to thy prayers.
2. Be thou humble in thy pleading,
and the Lord thy God shall bless thee,
Shall bless thee with a sweet
and calm assurance that he cares.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to thank you for spending some of your valuable time to read some of my thoughts and ideas in these important areas. I have a strong testimony of the gospel of **Jesus Christ**. I know that He and **Heavenly Father** love us. They both wish only the best for each of us. They want to have relationships with us. They have saved us to come to the earth in these last days so that we can enjoy all the benefits of the restored gospel. They also are counting on us to help Them with Their other children. They want us to be instruments in Their hands to do much good in the earth ... and to be valiant warriors in the on-going war with Satan.



I would love to hear from you and your thoughts. My email is davidjohnpotter@hotmail.com. Please refer to the book title in the subject line so that I am sure to see your message.

In closing, I hope that we all can be like **Nephi**. His father, **Lehi**, received various visions and instructions. He taught his children. Nephi believed his father, but he wanted more. He wanted to **see, hear, and know** the things his father had experienced. His desire and righteousness was great enough that he was blessed with that privilege. Here are his words and his promises to us.



“I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might **see, and hear, and know of these things**, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.

“For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and the way is prepared for **all men** from the foundation of the world, **if it so be that they repent and come unto him**.

“**For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them**, by the power of the Holy

Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in time to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

(1 Nephi 10:17-19)

Good Luck ... and may God Bless You!!

Grandpa Dave Potter

Appendix

Definition of Prayer

(from **LDS Bible Dictionary** pages 752-753)

“Before the first generation of mankind had passed away, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. **Prayers**, whether with or without sacrifice, were constantly offered by the patriarchs to God. The efficacy of the intercession of good men was recognized.

“Prayer is nowhere specifically commanded as a duty in the law, and prayers were not prescribed at the sacrifices except on two occasions: a confession of sin on the Day of Atonement, and a thanksgiving when offering the first-fruits and tithes. It is, however, certain from the nature of things, and from the custom in later times, that prayer accompanied sacrifice.

“As soon as we learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God (namely, God is our Father, and we are his children), then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part (Matt. 7:7-11). Many of the so called difficulties about prayer arise from forgetting this relationship. Prayer is the act by which the will of the father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part before we can obtain them. **Prayer is a form of work, and is an appointed means for obtaining the highest of all blessings.**”

How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life

BY [ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT](#)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Why does the Lord want us to pray to Him and to ask? Because that is how revelation is received.



Anyone who stands at this pulpit to deliver a message feels the strength and support of members throughout the world. I'm grateful that that same support can come from a beloved companion on the other side of the veil. Thank you, Jeanene.

The Holy Ghost communicates important information that we need to guide us in our mortal journey. When it is crisp and clear and essential, it warrants the title of revelation. When it is a series of promptings we often have to guide us step by step to a worthy objective, for the purpose of this message, it is inspiration.

An example of revelation would be the direction that President Spencer W. Kimball received after his long and continued supplication to the Lord regarding providing the priesthood to all worthy men in the Church when at the time it was available to only some of them.

Another example of revelation is this guidance given to President Joseph F. Smith:

"I believe we move and have our being in the presence of heavenly messengers and of heavenly beings. We are not separate from them. ... We are closely related to our kindred, to our ancestors ... who have preceded us into the spirit world. We cannot forget them; we do not cease to love them; we always hold them in our hearts, in memory, and thus we are associated and united to them by ties that we cannot break. ... If this is the case with us in our finite condition, surrounded by our mortal weaknesses, ... how much more certain it is ... to believe that those who have been faithful, who have gone beyond ... can see us better than we can see them; that they know us better than we know them. ... We live in their presence, they see us, they are solicitous for our welfare, and they love us now

more than ever. For now they see the dangers that beset us; ... their love for us and their desire for our wellbeing must be greater than that which we feel for ourselves.”

Relationships can be strengthened through the veil with people we know and love. That is done by our determined effort to continually do what is right. We can strengthen our relationship with the departed individual we love by recognizing that the separation is temporary and that covenants made in the temple are eternal. When consistently obeyed, such covenants assure the eternal realization of the promises inherent in them.

Elder Scott's Wife

A very clear case of revelation in my life occurred when I was strongly prompted by the Spirit to ask **Jeanene Watkins** to be sealed to me in the temple.

One of the great lessons that each of us needs to learn is to ask. “Why does the Lord want us to pray to Him and to ask?” Because that is how revelation is received.

When I am faced with a very difficult matter, this is how I try to understand what to do. I fast. I pray to find and understand scriptures that will be helpful. That process is cyclical. I start reading a passage of scripture; I ponder what the verse means and pray for inspiration. I then ponder and pray to know if I have captured all the Lord wants me to do. Often more impressions come with increased understanding of doctrine. I have found that pattern to be a good way to learn from the scriptures.

There are some practical principles that enhance revelation. First, yielding to emotions such as anger or hurt or defensiveness will drive away the Holy Ghost. Those emotions must be eliminated, or our chance for receiving revelation is slight.

Another principle is to be cautious with humor. Loud, inappropriate laughter will offend the Spirit. A good sense of humor helps revelation; loud laughter does not. A sense of humor is an escape valve for the pressures of life.

Another enemy to revelation comes from exaggeration or loudness in what is stated. Careful, quiet speech will favor the receipt of revelation.

Good Health Practices

On the other hand, spiritual communication can be enhanced by good health practices. Exercise, reasonable amounts of sleep, and good eating habits increase our capacity to receive and understand revelation. We will live for our appointed life span. However, we can improve both the quality of our service and our well-being by making careful, appropriate choices.

It is important that our daily activities do not distract us from listening to the Spirit.

Dreams

Revelation can also be given in a dream when there is an almost imperceptible transition from sleep to wakefulness. If you strive to capture the content immediately, you can record great detail, but otherwise it fades rapidly. Inspired communication in the night is generally accompanied by a sacred feeling for the entire experience. The Lord uses individuals for whom we have great respect to teach us truths in a dream because we trust them and will listen to their counsel. It is the Lord doing the teaching through the Holy Ghost. However, He may – in a dream – make it both easier to understand and more likely to touch our hearts by teaching us through someone we love and respect.

When it is for the Lord’s purposes, He can bring anything to our remembrance. That should not weaken our determination to record impressions of the Spirit. Inspiration carefully recorded shows God that His communications are sacred to us. Recording will also enhance our ability to recall revelation. Such recording of direction of the Spirit should be protected from loss or intrusion by others.

Scriptures

The scriptures give eloquent confirmation of how truth, consistently lived, opens the door to inspiration to know what to do and, where needed, to have personal capacities enhanced by divine power. The scriptures depict how an individual’s capacity to conquer difficulty, doubt, and seemingly insurmountable challenges is strengthened by the Lord in time of need. As you ponder such examples, there will come a quiet confirmation through the Holy Spirit that their experiences are true. You will come to know that similar help is available to you.

I have seen individuals encountering challenges who knew what to do when it was beyond their own experience because they trusted in the Lord and knew that He would guide them to solutions that were urgently required.

The Lord has declared: **“And ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken.”** The words *sanctify yourselves* may appear puzzling. President Harold B. Lee once explained that you can replace those words with the phrase **“keep my commandments.”** Read that way, the council may seem clearer.

One must be ever mentally and physically clean and have purity of intent so that the Lord can inspire. One who is obedient to His commandments is trusted of the Lord. That individual has access to His inspiration to know what to do and, as needed, the divine power to do it.

For spirituality to grow stronger and be more available, it must be planted in a righteous environment. Haughtiness, pride, and conceit are like stony ground that will never produce spiritual fruit.

Humility

Humility is a fertile soil where spirituality grows and produces the fruit of inspiration to know what to do. It gives access to divine power to accomplish what must be done. An individual motivated by a desire for praise or recognition will not qualify to be taught by the Spirit. An individual who is arrogant or who lets his or her emotions influence decisions will not be powerfully led by the Spirit.

When we are acting as instruments in behalf of others, we are more easily inspired than when we think only of ourselves. In the process of helping others, the Lord can piggyback directions for our own benefit.

Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail but to succeed gloriously. It may seem paradoxical, but that is why recognizing answers to prayer can sometimes be very difficult. Sometimes we unwisely try to face life by depending on our own experience and capacity. It is much wiser for us to seek through prayer and divine inspiration to know what to do. Our obedience assures that when required, we can qualify for divine power to accomplish an inspired objective.

Like many of us, Oliver Cowdery did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his and our eyes, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:

“Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

“Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth.”

If you feel that God has not answered your prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life that He may have already answered you.

Two indicators that a feeling or prompting comes from God are that it **produces peace in your heart and a quiet, warm feeling**. As you follow the principles I have discussed, you will be prepared to recognize revelation at critical times in your own life.

The more closely you follow divine guidance, the greater will be your happiness here and for eternity—moreover, the more abundant your progress and capacity to serve. I do not understand fully how it is done, but that guidance in your life does not take away your agency. You can make the decisions you choose to make. But remember, the disposition to do right brings peace of mind and happiness.

Should choices be wrong, they can be rectified through repentance. When its conditions are fully met, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, our Savior, provides a release from the demands of justice for the errors made. It is wondrously simple and so incomparably beautiful. As you continue to live righteously, you will always be prompted to know what to do. Sometimes the discovery of what action to take may require significant effort and trust on your part. Yet you will be prompted to know what to do as you meet the conditions for such divine guidance in your life, namely, obedience to the commandments of the Lord, trust in His divine plan of happiness, and the avoidance of anything that is contrary to it.

Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based upon eternal, unchanging principles. We receive help from our Father in Heaven in response to our faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

May the Lord inspire you to understand and use the principles that lead to personal revelation and inspiration, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

A Sincere Heart and Real Intent

BY ELDER JAMES B. MARTINO

Of the Seventy



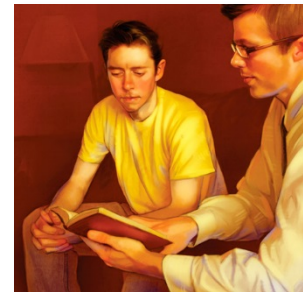
I learned as a teenager that curiosity alone is insufficient reason for the Lord to answer our prayers.

When I was 16 years old, my parents joined the Church. After they were baptized, they invited the missionaries to begin teaching me and my three brothers. Two of my brothers were soon baptized, and my younger brother was baptized as soon as he turned 8. I chose not to get baptized, however, because I still had a lot of unanswered questions about the Church.

Illustrations by Craig Stapley

Finding Out for Myself

As time went on, I continued to meet with the missionaries, and on one occasion, they asked me if I had any questions. When I said that I did, he replied, “Before I answer your questions, I want you to first answer one of mine. If you can answer it, then I will answer yours.”



I said, “That’s fair.” So he asked, “Can you tell me if the Book of Mormon is the word of God?” When I responded that I didn’t know, he said, “Then I can’t answer your questions yet. You have to find out for yourself if it’s true. I don’t know if you’re sincere in wanting to know or if you’re just curious. If you’re sincere, you’ll find out.”

I’d heard enough people tell me that the Book of Mormon is true, but I knew I had to find out for myself. Sadly, I wasn’t sure at the time whether God even heard our prayers, let alone answered them. That’s probably because the first time I prayed about the Book of Mormon, I prayed to know that it isn’t true. No wonder I never got an answer!

Clearly, I had not asked “with a sincere heart [and] with real intent,” as Moroni teaches (Moroni 10:4). That real intent meant that I couldn’t find out just because I was curious to know. I had to really *want* to know. And if I found out it is true, I asked myself, was I willing to be baptized? Was I willing to change my life? Was I willing to do the things the Lord wanted me to do?

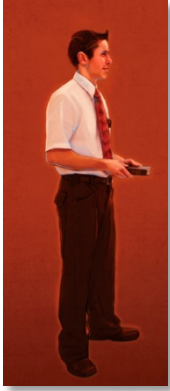
Experimenting on the Word

Fortunately, that wise elder returned the following day and said, “Let’s talk about how you’re going to get your answer.” I said, “Good,” because I really didn’t know how to get an answer. He opened up the Book of Mormon to Alma 32, and we started in verse 27. We talked about how the seed would grow and about the things I would feel. I didn’t have that swelling in the breast that Alma describes. But Alma also said the seed, or the word, would begin to “enlarge my soul” and “enlighten my understanding” and become “delicious to me” (Alma 32:28). I understood those feelings.

From that day on, I began reading the Book of Mormon with a sincere heart. And I told myself, “If I find out it’s true, then yes, I’ll join the Church. I’ve got to; I’ve got to follow what I know is true.” As I continued to study the Book of Mormon, I knew that my mind was being enlightened with an understanding of the Atonement of the Savior that I had never had before. I felt good when I was reading, and what I read began to be delicious to me. It began to enlarge my soul with an understanding of the plan of salvation. I even began to have that swelling of the breast that Alma talks about. I knew it was true; and so, as promised, I was baptized.

“You Already Know You’re Supposed to Go”

I started college at the University of Texas in Austin and began to contemplate serving a full-time mission. This became another test of how well I could couple a sincere heart with real intent. I was definitely curious to know the Lord’s will about my missionary service. But as I had learned while investigating the Church, curiosity alone is not sufficient. I was convinced that the answer to my question about serving a mission would be revealed in my patriarchal blessing, so I traveled to San Antonio, where the patriarch pronounced my blessing. There was, however, no mention of a mission. Driving home, I reasoned that maybe the Lord didn’t want me to serve. But then I felt impressed to pull off the road. I walked over to a grove of trees and knelt down. As soon as I commenced my prayer, the words that came into my mind were very clear: “I didn’t have to tell you to go. You already know you’re supposed to go.”



I'd been a member only about a year and 10 months when I went into the mission field in Guatemala and El Salvador. It was there that I learned what it meant to consecrate my life to do what the Lord wanted me to do. My mission was my preparation for the rest of my life. Had I not gone on a mission and learned what I did there, I might never have had the opportunities that I have today. Today I am living in Guatemala again, where I serve in the Central America Area Presidency. I love being back among the people who meant so much to me in the development of my own testimony.

The Responsibility of Revelation

Moroni tells us that “by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5). But he does not promise that you’ll know something is true just because you’re curious. You have to have a sincere heart and real intent. You have to be willing to make a commitment to change once you receive your answer. Revelation is a gift from God, and it’s not to be taken lightly. When we receive revelation, we also receive a responsibility to do something with that revelation.

I believe that Heavenly Father, in a merciful way, does not give us revelation when we’re just curious and not willing to act upon it, because then we’d be held accountable if we failed to make the change. In His own way, as a loving Father, He’s given us the opportunity to find out for ourselves if these things are true, but we have to be willing to say, like Lamoni’s father, the king of the Lamanites, “I will give up all that I possess” to know that these things are true (Alma 22:15).

Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer

Richard G. Scott
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Across from me a woman sat sobbing. With tear-filled eyes, she told me, “I don’t know what I believe anymore.” She spoke of having struggled and prayed many days to know how to make a vitally important decision in her life, without success. She anguished, “I don’t know what to do. If you’ll tell me what to do, I’ll do it.” With her hand on the scriptures, she said, “God told us He would help us. He answers everybody else’s prayers. Why

won’t He answer mine?”

When one is caught in a whirlpool of emotion, it is difficult to find a way out alone. My prayer is to help you who have similar feelings.

When answers to urgent prayer don’t seem to come, it can be that we don’t understand some truths about prayer, or because we don’t recognize answers when they come.

Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail but to succeed gloriously. It may seem paradoxical, but that is why recognizing answers to prayer can sometimes be very difficult. Some face life with only their own experience and capacity to help them. Others seek, through prayer, divine inspiration to *know* what to do. When required, they qualify for power beyond their own capacity to do it.

Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based upon unchanging principles. When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

It is a mistake to assume that every prayer we offer will be answered immediately. Some prayers require considerable effort on our part. True, sometimes impressions come when we have not specifically sought them. They generally concern something we need to know and are not otherwise able to find out.

We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness.

To better understand prayer, I have listened to the counsel of others, pondered the scriptures, and studied the lives of prophets and others. Yet what seems most helpful is seeing in my mind a child approaching trustingly a loving, kind, wise, understanding Father, who wants us to succeed.

Don't worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way.

When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because He loves us—perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us.

I have described the absolute reality of our relationship with our Father. There is nothing about us He does not know. He is conscious of our every need and could provide all of the answers. Yet, because His purpose is our eternal happiness, He encourages us to make the correct choices.

Sometimes, like a child, we misbehave, act unwisely, and feel we cannot approach our Father with a problem. When communication is strained, how wonderful it is to have a Mediator who works things out when we obey His counsel and repent. Such is our Elder Brother, the Savior.

Perhaps Oliver Cowdery's experiences were recorded for us to understand how to pray and how to recognize answer to prayer. Oliver was told: ***"That assuredly as the Lord liveth, ... even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive. ... "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost."*** (D&C 8:1–2; italics added.)

When we receive an impression in our *heart*, we can use our *mind* either to rationalize it away or to accomplish it. Be careful what you do with an impression from the Lord.

Oliver was further taught: ***"Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. ...***

"According to your faith shall it be done unto you." (D&C 8:10–11; italics added.)

"Ask in faith" means ask with confidence in our holy Father. Like many of us, Oliver did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his, and our, eyes, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:

“Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, *as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction* of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

“Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth.” (D&C 6:14–15; italics added.)

If you feel that God has not answered *your* prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life of His having already answered you.

To help each of us recognize answers given, the Lord said: **“If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.**

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?” (D&C 6:22–23; italics added).

The Lord provides further insight by counseling us to study a problem out in our mind and then to ask if it be right: “If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall *feel* that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such *feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought.” (D&C 9:8–9; italics added.)

It is vitally important to recognize that the Lord also responds a third way to prayer by *withholding an answer* when the prayer is offered. Why would He do that?

He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience:

When He answers *yes*, it is to give us confidence.

When He answers *no*, it is to prevent error.

When He *withholds an answer*, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

Most often what we have chosen to do is right. He will confirm the correctness of our choices His way. That confirmation generally comes through packets of help found along the way. We discover them by being spiritually sensitive. They are like notes from a loving Father as evidence of His approval. If, in trust, we begin something which is not right, He

will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubled or uneasy feelings.

Nephi's efforts to obtain the plates of brass show how the principles work. When the older brethren were asked to go, they "murmured" and received no help. Nephi was assured, "Thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured." (1 Ne. 3:6.) Nephi's words, "I will go and do," reveal a positive commitment to act and to succeed by using spiritual law. (1 Ne. 3:7.)

After two unsuccessful attempts, Nephi remained confident. He crept into the city toward the house of Laban without all the answers. He observed, "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do," significantly adding, "*Nevertheless I went forth.*" (1 Ne. 4:6–7; italics added.)

Nephi was willing to try time and again, using his best efforts. He expressed faith that he would be helped. He refused to be discouraged. But because he acted, had confidence in the Lord, was obedient, and properly used his agency, he received guidance. He was inspired step after step to success, and in his mother's words was "given ... *power* [to] accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded." (1 Ne. 5:8; italics added.)

Nephi knew he was required to confide in God, to exercise faith, and to act so that he could receive help, step by step. He did not murmur nor ask for a full explanation. But, observe particularly, he did not wait passively for help. He acted! By following spiritual law, he was inspired and given power to act.

Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires. We fail to see that the Lord would have us do something else. Be careful to seek His will.

I confess I don't know how to make a correct decision except where there is righteousness and trust in a Heavenly Father. The principles simply will not work when agency is intentionally used at variance with the will of God. If there is unrepented sin, we are left to our own devices to flounder and struggle on our own. We *can* be rescued through our own repentance.

When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight.

I have saved the most important part about prayer until the end. It is gratitude! Our sincere efforts to thank our beloved Father generate wondrous feelings of peace, self-worth, and love. No matter how challenging our circumstances, honest appreciation fills our mind to overflowing with gratitude.

Why is it that the most impoverished seem to know best how to thank the Lord? In the highlands of Guatemala, members barely subsist. Going to the temple requires *great* sacrifice. A visit takes a year of preparation. There is hard work, sacrifice to save money and food, the spinning, dyeing, and weaving of new clothing. There is the long, barefoot walk out of the mountains, the crossing of Lake Isabel, the bus rides with little food. Tired and worn, they arrive at the temple. They scrub until they shine, dress in their new clothing, and enter the house of the Lord.

Reclothed in white, they are taught by the Spirit, receive ordinances, and make covenants. One highland woman was greatly touched by the spirit and meaning of the endowment. Entering the celestial room, she saw others seated, with heads reverently bowed. Innocently, she knelt at the entrance to the room, oblivious to others. She bowed her head, sobbed, and for twenty minutes poured out her heart to her Father in Heaven. Finally, with her dress soaked with tears, she raised her head. The sensitive temple matron asked, "May I help?" She responded, "Oh, would you? This is my problem: I've tried to tell Father in Heaven of my gratitude for all of my blessings, but I don't feel that I've communicated. Will you help me tell Him how grateful I am?"

The counsel about prayer is true. I have tested it thoroughly in the laboratory of my own personal life. I have discovered that what sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication is a giant step to be taken in trust.

If you seek His help, be sure your life is clean, your motives are worthy, and you're willing to do what He asks—for He *will* answer your prayers. He is your loving Father; you are His beloved child. He loves you perfectly and wants to help you.
In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 129

Keys for Determining If Administrations Are from God

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, (2002), 319–321

Historical Background

In the early days of the Church, many were curious about angels, spirits, and resurrected persons. About the time Joseph Smith recorded this revelation, he wrote:

“A man came to me in Kirtland, and told me he had seen an angel, and described his dress. I told him he had seen no angel, and that there was no such dress in heaven. He grew mad, and went into the street and commanded fire to come down out of heaven to consume me. I laughed at him, and said, **You are one of Baal’s prophets; your God does not hear you; jump up and cut yourself: and he commanded fire from heaven to consume my house.”** (*History of the Church, 5:267–68.*)

Doctrine and Covenants 129 describes the difference between angels who have gone through mortality and have been resurrected and those who are still spirits. It also gives three keys “whereby you may know whether any administration is from God” (v. 9).

The Prophet Joseph Smith may have known these keys long before this revelation was recorded. Earlier, **Michael** helped the Prophet by detecting Satan, who had appeared to Joseph as an angel of light (see D&C 128:20). Nothing further is known about the incident, and whether the Prophet learned of these keys at that time is not known. However, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal that he learned of these keys from Joseph Smith as early as 1839 (see Journal of Wilford Woodruff, vol. 2, 27 June 1839, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught:

“An angel of God never has wings. Some will say that they have seen a spirit; that he offered them his hand, but they did not touch it. This is a lie. First, it is contrary to the plan of God: a spirit cannot come but in glory; an angel has flesh and bones; we see not their glory. The devil may appear as an angel of light. Ask God to reveal it; if it be of the devil, he will flee from you; if of God, He will manifest Himself, or make it manifest. We may come to Jesus and ask Him; He will know all about it.” (*History of the Church, 3:392.*)

Notes and Commentary

D&C 129:1–3. What Is the Difference between a “Spirit” and an “Angel”?

God uses several types of messengers. President George Q. Cannon explained:

“In the broadest sense, any being who acts as a messenger for our Heavenly Father, is an angel, be he a God, a resurrected man or the spirit of a just man; and the term is so used in all these senses in the ancient scriptures. In the stricter and more limited sense, an angel is, as the Prophet Joseph Smith states, a resurrected personage, having a body of flesh and bones; but it must be remembered that *none* of the angels who appeared to men before the death of the Savior could be of that class, for *none* of them was resurrected. He was the first-fruits of them that slept. He Himself appeared often to His servants before he took His mortal body; for instance, to the brother of Jared, to Abraham, to Moses, to the seventy Elders and to many others.” (“Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Jan. 1891, p. 53.)

As used in section 129, the term *angel* is limited to **resurrected personages** with bodies of flesh and bones. “**Spirits of just men made perfect**” are individuals who have not yet been born and are thus *unembodied*, or whose spirits are separated from their bodies in death



and are thus *disembodied*. Joseph Smith earlier explained that an *angel* is “a resurrected or translated body, with its spirit ministering to embodied spirits.” A *ministering spirit* is “a disembodied spirit, visiting and ministering to disembodied spirits. Jesus Christ became a ministering spirit (while His body was lying in the sepulchre) to the spirits in prison, to fulfill an important part of His mission, without which He could not have perfected His work, or enter into His rest. After His resurrection He appeared as an angel [a resurrected being] to His disciples.” (*History of the Church*, 4:425; see also 1 Peter 3:18–20.)

Joseph Smith gave three grand keys for discerning angels or spirits.

D&C 129:3. What Is Meant by the Phrase “Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect?”

No mortal person lives a perfect life. Some, however, live the gospel so well that they become, before their life is over, what the scriptures describe as “just men.” But being just is not enough. The Savior commanded, “Be ye therefore perfect” (Matthew 5:48), and we cannot do that without His help. So the scriptures speak of “just men *made* perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (D&C 76:69; italics added).

D&C 129:4. Whatever Their State and Condition, Angels Are Messengers of God

“There are angels of various appointments and stations,” wrote President Charles W. Penrose:

“**Angels are God’s messengers**, whether used in that capacity as unembodied spirits, selected according to their capacities for the work required, or as disembodied spirits, or as translated men, or as resurrected beings. They are agents of Deity of different degrees of intelligence, power and authority, under the direction of higher dignitaries, and subject to law and order in their respective spheres. Elijah, who appeared with Moses on the mount of transfiguration, was a translated man; Moses at that time was either a translated man or a spirit ministering to the Savior; both acted in the capacity of angels. (Luke 9:28–33.) Enoch’s band of translated beings doubtless appeared as angels in manifestations to the patriarchs recorded in the book of Genesis [see Genesis 21:17; 22:11; 32:1].

“**Angels** high in authority have been clothed on special occasions with the right to represent Deity personally. They have appeared and have been recognized as God himself, just as royal ambassadors of earthly potentates have acted, as recorded in history. The Angel spoken of in Exodus 23:20–22, was one of these. So also was the Angel ... who ministered to John on the isle of Patmos, and used the names and titles of the Son of God. (Rev. 1:1.)” (“Who and What Are the Angels?” *Improvement Era*, Aug. 1912, p. 950.)

D&C 129:4–7. What Is the Significance of Shaking Hands?

If the messenger is a resurrected personage whose flesh one feels when shaking hands, the messenger is an angel from God. But spirits cannot clasp hands, since they do not have flesh and bones with which to do it. For spirits to pretend to an ability they do not possess would be deceit, and one who would attempt it would not be a “just man.” Therefore, the spirits of just men made perfect will not move when a hand is extended toward them.

D&C 129:8–9. “The Devil As an Angel of Light”

Just as there are righteous spirits committed to the accomplishment of God’s work, so there are evil spirits committed to the destruction of His work. “These are fallen angels,” President Charles W. Penrose explained, “who were cast down for transgression, as mentioned by Jude (verse 6), chief among whom on this earth is Lucifer or Satan, who has sought on many occasions to appear as an ‘angel of light’ to deceive and lead astray, and who tempted the Son of God, but failed in his efforts as he did with Moses and with the Prophet Joseph Smith. (See Luke 4:1–13; ...Moses 1:12–22; Doctrine & Covenants 128:20.) That great spiritual personage was an angel of God in his ‘first estate’, and yet never had a body of flesh, but ‘was in authority in the presence of God’ as a spirit, before he rebelled and was ‘thrust down.’ (Doctrine & Covenants 76:25–28.)” (“Who and What Are the Angels?” p. 951.)

Satan attempts to deceive by counterfeiting the light that accompanies the spirit of a just man made perfect. A just man made perfect who comes as a messenger will appear in his glory, **“for that is the only way he can appear”** (D&C 129:6). The Prophet Joseph Smith once said, **“Wicked spirits have their bounds, limits and laws, by which they are governed ... and, it is very evident that they possess a power that none but those who have the priesthood can control”** (*History of the Church*, 4:576).

The Prophet taught that when the devil is offered a hand to shake, “he will offer you his hand” (D&C 129:8). The mortal will feel nothing, because the devil is an unembodied spirit. He can therefore be distinguished in this manner from a righteous spirit or angel sent from God. The just man will not attempt to deceive (see D&C 129:7); an angel of Satan will not refrain from trying to deceive.

The Blessing of a Proper Fast

Carl B. Pratt of the First Quorum of the Seventy



I fear ... that too many of us are either not fasting on fast day or we are doing so in a lackadaisical manner.

Brethren, I hope you noticed this morning, as President Hinckley prepared to announce the names of two new Apostles, he spoke of **fasting and praying** to know the Lord's will.

Fasting has always been a practice among God's people. In our day it is a commandment given by the Lord to all members of the Church. In addition to **occasional special fasts** that we might have for personal or family reasons, we are expected to fast once a month on the first Sunday. We are taught that there are three aspects to a proper fast day observance: first, abstaining from food and drink for two consecutive meals or, in other words, 24 hours; second, attending fast and testimony meeting; and third, giving a generous fast offering.

For the Pratt family our regular fasts have always been from the Saturday noon meal to the Sunday noon meal. That way we fast for two meals, Saturday evening and Sunday morning meals. Although there is no Church standard for fasting, except that it should be for 24 hours and two meals, we have found a spiritual advantage in attending fast and testimony meeting toward the end of the fast.

For those who are physically able, fasting is a commandment. Speaking of our monthly fast day, President Joseph F. Smith said: "The Lord has instituted the fast on a reasonable and intelligent basis. ... Those who can are required to comply ... ; it is a duty from which they cannot escape; ... it is left with the people as a matter of conscience, to exercise wisdom and discretion. ..."

"But those should fast who can. ... None are exempt from this; it is required of the Saints, old and young, in every part of the Church" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 244). I fear, brethren, that too many of us are either not fasting on fast day or we are doing so in a lackadaisical manner. If we are guilty of taking our fast day for granted or simply fasting Sunday morning instead of making it two complete meals—24 hours—we are depriving ourselves and our families of the choice spiritual experiences and blessings that can come from a true fast.

If all we do is abstain from food and drink for 24 hours and pay our fast offering, we have missed a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth. On the other hand, if we have a special purpose in our fasting, the fast will have much more meaning. Perhaps we can take time as a family before beginning our fast to talk about what we hope to accomplish by this fast. This could be done in a family home evening the week before fast Sunday or in a brief family meeting at the time of family prayer. When we fast with purpose, we have something to focus our attention on besides our hunger.

The purpose of our fast may be a very personal one. Fasting can help us overcome personal flaws and sins. It can help us overcome our weaknesses—help them become strengths. Fasting can help us become more humble, less prideful, less selfish, and more concerned about the needs of others. It can help us see more clearly our own mistakes and weaknesses and help us be less prone to criticize others. Or our fast may have a focus on a family challenge. A family fast might help increase love and appreciation among family members and reduce the amount of contention in the family, or we might fast as a couple to strengthen our marriage bonds. A purpose of our fast as priesthood holders might be to seek the Lord's guidance in our callings, as President Hinckley has demonstrated, or we might fast with our home teaching companion to know how to help one of our families.

Throughout the scriptures the term *fasting* is usually combined with prayer. "Ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth" is the Lord's counsel (D&C 88:76). Fasting without prayer is just going hungry for 24 hours. But fasting combined with prayer brings increased spiritual power.

When the disciples were unable to cure a boy who was possessed of an evil spirit, they asked the Savior, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus responded, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:19, 21).

Let us begin our fasts with prayer. This could be kneeling at the table as we finish the meal with which we begin the fast. That prayer should be a natural thing as we speak to our Heavenly Father concerning the purpose of our fast and plead with Him for His help in accomplishing our goals. Likewise, let us end our fasts with prayer. We could very appropriately kneel at the table before we sit down to consume the meal with which we break our fast. We would thank the Lord for His help during the fast and for what we have felt and learned from the fast.

In addition to a beginning and ending prayer, we should seek the Lord often in personal prayer throughout the fast.

We should not expect our young children to fast for the recommended two meals. But let us teach them the principles of fasting. If fasting is discussed and planned in a family

setting, the small children will be aware that their parents and older siblings are fasting, and they will understand the purpose of the fast. They should participate in the family prayers to begin and end the fast. This way, when they reach the proper age, they will be eager to fast with the rest of the family. In our family, we have done this by encouraging our children between 8 and 12 years of age to fast for one meal; then as they have turned 12 and received the Aaronic Priesthood or entered Young Women, we have encouraged them to fast for two complete meals.

After chastising ancient Israel for fasting improperly, the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, speaks in beautiful poetic language of a proper fast:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6).

If we fast and pray with the purpose of repenting of sins and overcoming personal weaknesses, surely we are seeking to “loose the bands of wickedness” in our lives. If the purpose of our fast is to be more effective in teaching the gospel and serving others in our Church callings, we are surely striving to “undo the heavy burdens” of others. If we are fasting and praying for the Lord’s help in our missionary efforts, aren’t we desiring to “let the oppressed go free”? If the purpose of our fast is to increase our love for our fellow man and overcome our selfishness, our pride, and having our hearts set upon the things of this world, surely we are seeking to “break every yoke.”

The Lord continues describing the proper fast:

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isaiah 58:7).

It is truly a wonderful thing that through our fast offerings today we can feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and clothe the naked.

If we fast properly the Lord promises:

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; ...

“Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. ...

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, ... and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isaiah 58:8-11).

It is my prayer that we can improve our fasts so that we can enjoy these beautiful promised blessings. It is my testimony that as we “draw near” to the Lord through our fasting and prayer, He will “draw near” to us (see D&C 88:63). I testify that He lives, that He loves us, and that He wants to draw near to us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Word of Caution

In the Book of Mormon, many things could not be written down nor shared because they were too sacred. Sometimes someone else had the responsibility to record it and share it with others. **Nephi** was going to write more about the last days but was told that **John**, the apostle of Jesus, was given that responsibility. When the Savior appeared to the Nephites after His resurrection, the Nephites were commanded to **not write down the prayers** he uttered as they were too sacred.



I have struggled within me while writing this book as to what the Lord would have me share with you, and what should be kept private. I also struggle to understand how the Lord feels about certain other individuals who are sharing their sacred experiences so broadly.

Are all sacred experiences to be held private, or can some be shared for the edification of others? For example, **Paul** in the Old Testament and **Alma** from the Book of Mormon shared their conversion experiences and their visits from the Lord in order to touch the hearts of many and to help with their conversions. Yet the Savior told some of those that He healed to not tell anyone.

As we seek inspiration to know which experiences are from the Lord, and which are not, and which experiences we can share, and which ones we should not; we need to **'cry'** unto the Lord and **'plead'** with Him for additional light, knowledge, and guidance. The Lord, however, has not left us entirely to our own thought processes in making these tough decisions. He has provided some council through His apostles and prophets. In the **"Preach My Gospel"** manual, there is a section which specifically cautions the readers about the sacredness and privacy of inspiration that one receives. It states:

"President Howard W. Hunter offered this counsel:

***'Revelation and spiritual experiences are sacred. They should be kept private and discussed only in appropriate situations.** As a missionary, you may be more aware of spiritual experiences than you have been earlier in your life. Resist the temptation to talk freely about these experiences.'*





President Boyd K. Packer counseled:

*"I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently. And when they do, they are generally for our own edification, instruction, or correction. **Unless we are called by proper authority to do so, they do not position us to counsel or to correct others.**"*

*"I have come to believe also that it is **not wise to continually talk of unusual spiritual experiences.** They are to be guarded with care and shared only when the Spirit itself prompts you to use them to the blessing of others" (Ensign, Jan. 1983, 53).*

*"If worthy, we **are entitled** to receive revelations for ourselves, parents for their children, and members of the Church in their callings. **But the right of revelation for others does not extend beyond our own stewardship.**" –President James E. Faust "Communion with the Holy Spirit," Ensign, Mar. 2002, 4*

In 1913, the **First Presidency** taught:

*"From the days of **Hiram Page** at different periods there have been manifestations from delusive spirits to members of the Church. When **visions, dreams, tongues, prophecy, impressions, or an extraordinary gift of inspiration** conveys something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God, **no matter how plausible it may appear....** [emphasis added]*



*In secular as well as spiritual affairs, Saints may receive Divine guidance and revelation affecting themselves, **but this does not convey authority to direct others,** and is not to be accepted when contrary to Church covenants, doctrine or discipline, or to known facts, demonstrated truths, or good common sense....*

*The history of the Church records **many pretended revelations claimed by imposters or zealots** who believed in the manifestations they sought to lead other persons to accept, and in every instance, disappointment, sorrow and disaster have resulted therefrom."*

Harold B. Lee, "Admonitions for the Priesthood of God," *Ensign* (January 1973): 104, quoting First Presidency [Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Charles W. Penrose], "Editors' Table: A Warning Voice," *Improvement Era* (September 1913), 1148.

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:



*“It seems that periodically it becomes necessary to call attention to **the true order the Lord has given us in regard to revelation.** During the past three or four months I have received a number of communications, coming from various parts of the Church, **asking if certain purported revelations or dreams or purported visions are reliable** and have the endorsement of the Authorities of the Church....”*

*“Now, the Lord will give revelations to this Church, and he will give commandments to this Church from time to time...but always in accordance with his own law; and **we do not have to run around and invite individuals who are without authority to relate to us purported visions, or revelations or commandments, for the guidance of this people....**”*

***“If a man comes among the Latter-day Saints, professing to have received a vision or a revelation or a remarkable dream, and the Lord has given him such, he should keep it to himself.*”**

It is all out of order, in this Church, for somebody to invite him into a sacrament service to relate that to the Church, because the Lord will give his revelations in the proper way, to the one who is appointed to receive and dispense the word of God to the members of the Church....”

“Now, these stories of revelation, that are being circulated around, are of no consequence, except for rumor and silly talk by persons who have no authority....When you know God’s truth, when you enter into God’s rest, you will not be hunting after revelations from Tom, Dick and Harry all over the world. You will not be following the will-o’-the-wisp of the vagaries of men and women who advance nonsense and their own ideas.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report* (April 1938), 65–67.

Brigham Young taught:

*“If the Lord Almighty should reveal to a High Priest, or to any other than the head, **things that are, or that have been and will be, and show to him the destiny of this people twenty-five years from now, or a new doctrine that will in five, ten, or twenty years hence become the doctrine of this Church and kingdom, but which has not yet been revealed to this people, and reveal it to him by the same Spirit, the same messenger, the same voice, and the same power that gave revelations to Joseph when he was living, it would be a blessing to that High Priest, or individual; BUT he must rarely divulge it to a second**”*



person on the face of the earth, until God reveals it through the proper source to become the property of the people at large.

“Therefore when you hear Elders, High Priests, Seventies, or the Twelve, (though you cannot catch any of the Twelve there, but you may the High Priests, Seventies, and Elders) say that God does not reveal through the President of the Church that which they know, and tell wonderful things, you may generally set it down as a God’s truth that the revelation they have had, is from the devil, and not from God.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 3:318 (20 April 1856).

Note: Brigham Young did not say that people couldn’t receive information about the future, but they **“must rarely divulge it to a second person”**. He also did not say he must **“NEVER”** divulge ... but **“rarely”**.

President Brigham Young also taught:

*“The adversary presents his principles and arguments in the **most approved style**, and in the **most winning tone**, attended with the most graceful attitudes; and he is very careful to ingratiate himself into the favor of the powerful and influential of mankind, uniting himself with popular parties, floating into offices of trust and emolument by pandering to popular feeling, though it should seriously wrong and oppress the innocent. **Such characters put on the manners of an angel, appearing as nigh like angels of light as they possibly can, to deceive the innocent and the unwary.**”*

“The good which they do, they do it to bring to pass an evil purpose upon the good and honest followers of Jesus Christ.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 11:238-239 (June 1866).

Apostle Orson Pratt warned that Satan would be happy to confirm members of the Church in some true beliefs if he could thereby deceive them into accepting some dangerous falsehoods:

*“The devil can adapt himself to the belief of any person.... If he could get you to swallow down one or two great lies that would affect your destruction, and which you would preach and destroy many others, **he would not mind how many truths you might believe.**”*

Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 13:73 (19 December 1869).



In **D&C 124:45-46**, the **Lord** states:



**“If my people will hearken unto my voice,
and unto the voice of my servants
whom I have appointed to lead my people,
behold, verily I say unto you,
they shall not be moved out of their place.**

**“But if they will not hearken to my voice,
nor unto the voice of these men whom I have
appointed,
they shall not be blest.”**

Brigham Young gives us another word of caution that we would do well to heed:

*“Should you receive a vision of revelation from the Almighty, one that the Lord gave you concerning yourselves, or this people, **but which you are not to reveal on account of your not being the proper person, or because it ought not to be known by the people at present, you should shut it up and seal it as close, and lock it as tight as heaven is to you, and make it as secret as the grave. The Lord has no confidence in those who reveal secrets, for He cannot safely reveal Himself to such persons....***



*“This is the case with a great many of the Elders of Israel, with regard to keeping secrets. They burn with the idea, ‘**O, I know things that brother Brigham does not understand.**’ Bless your souls, I guess you do. Don’t you think that there are some things that you do not understand? ‘There may be some things which I do not understand.’ That is as much as to say, ‘I know more than you.’ I am glad of it, if you do. I wish that you knew a dozen times more.*

“When you see a person of that character, he has no soundness within him.”

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 4:288 (15 March 1857).

I encourage each of us to mightily ponder and pray about this. Seek the Lord’s guidance in this area. Use your promptings to guide and direct you as you hear others speak of their experiences. Perhaps you may feel prompted to ask them how they feel about the counsel and teachings from the various apostles, prophets, and the Lord that I have listed above.

