

Personal Revelation in Family History & Temple Service

Compiled by Claudia Gibb Sudweeks

(These next 2 lists I learned from the classes of Kim Sorensen. Each bullet point is followed by quotes, scriptural verses and/or suggested magazine articles and/or scripture stories – a mix of Kim’s and my ideas.)

Seeking Revelation:

***Consecrate your time and efforts – prayer**

1. “But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.” (2 Nephi 32:9)
2. “The term ‘consecrate’ is actually the translation of two Hebrew words; *male*, meaning ‘to fill’ and *yad*, meaning ‘a hand, the open one.’ Hence, the translation would more accurately read, ‘you shall fill their hand.’” (The Gate of Heaven, Matthew B. Brown, pg. 88)
3. “...after ye have done all these things [prayed without ceasing], if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need-- I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing...” (Alma 34:28)
4. “Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my **sake**.” (3 Nephi 27:7)

*** Be clean**

1. “To get [daily] revelation it is necessary that the people live so that their spirits are as pure and clean as a piece of blank paper that lies on the desk before the inditer, ready to receive any mark the writer may make upon it.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol.11, pp.240-241)
2. “And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart: and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.” (Moroni 8:26)
3. “In general, the blessings of spiritual companionship and communication are only available to those who are clean...through the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we are cleansed of our sins and promised that if we keep our covenants we will always have His

Spirit to be with us. I believe that promise not only refers to the Holy Ghost but also to the ministering of angels, for ‘angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ.’” (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament”, *Ensign*, November 1998)

*** Ask with real intent ... and for whatsoever you stand in need ... in faith**

1. “...also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.” (Moroni 7:9)

2. “The...promise is...that the Lord will guide you by revelation just as He called you. You must ask in faith for revelation to know what you are to do. With your call comes the promise that answers will come. But that guidance will come only when the Lord is sure you will obey. To know His will you must be committed to do it. **The words ‘Thy will be done,’ written in the heart, are the window to revelation.**

“The answer comes by the Holy Spirit. You will need that guidance often. To have the Holy Ghost as your companion **you must be worthy**, cleansed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. So, your **obedience to the commandments**, your **desire to do His will**, and your **asking in faith** will determine **how clearly** the Master can guide you by answers to your prayers.” (Henry B. Eyring, “Rise to Your Call”, *Ensign*, November 2002)

3. “And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; **asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need**, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.” (Alma 7:23)

4. “Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise **faith** in Christ; and thus by **faith**, they did lay hold upon every good thing; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

“And after that he came men also were saved by **faith** in his name; and by **faith**, they become the sons of God. And as surely as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: **Whatsoever thing ye shall ask** the Father in my name, which is good, in **faith** believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.” (Moroni 7:25-26)

5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “‘Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence’,” *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 7

*** Do all we can ourselves**

1. “It is contrary to the law of God for the heavens to be opened and messengers to come to do anything for man that man can do for himself.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 1:196)

2. “Go to the Endowment house and be baptized for your dead. Perhaps you will say, ‘I have only a few names, not enough to bother with.’ I say if you have but half a dozen names, **be baptized for them and you shall never want for names.**” (Daniel H. Wells (counselor to Brigham Young))

3. "...it is my testimony that if we start where we are—each of us with ourselves, with such records as we have—and begin putting those in order, things will fall into place as they should....

“But it does mean that you have to get started. Like Nephi, you will be “led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [you] should do” (Boyd K. Packer)

*** Sacrifice our best**

1. Read: Bruce R. McConkie, “Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 50

2. Study the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, and the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal. (1 Kings 17:9-16)

3. “Adam and Eve were taught the law of sacrifice and were commanded to practice it by giving offerings. These included two emblems: the firstlings of the flock and the first fruits of the field. They obeyed without questioning (see Moses 5:5–6). President David O. McKay pointed out: ‘The effect of this [law] was that the best the earth produced, the best specimen in the flock or herd should not be used for self, but for God’ (“The Atonement,” *Instructor*, Mar. 1959, 66). At a time in history when it was a struggle to make sure the family had food, those who sought to worship the Lord were asked to sacrifice the best part of their source of life. It was a real test of Adam and Eve’s faith, and they obeyed.” (M. Russell Ballard, “The Law of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Oct 1998, 7)

4. Today our sacrifices are of ourselves – maybe it is our best hour of the day. We need to prayerfully decide what we should be giving.

*** Record & obey**

1. “Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. **You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come.** Also the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life.” (Richard G. Scott, BYU Devotional, 23 Jan 2001, p. 1)

2. “...your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and **because you have treated lightly the things you have received...**” (D&C 84:54)

3. “There is no doubt, if a person lives according to the revelations given to God’s people, he may have the Spirit of the Lord to signify to him his will, and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties, in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I am satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges.” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. and arr. by John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973, p. 32)

4. “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better** than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22)

*** Trust in the Lord**

1. “For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.” (2 Nephi 32:5)

2. “...It is a great labor devolving upon us...It is your duty now to rise up, all of you, and trace your genealogies, and begin to exercise the powers which belong to saviors of men, and when you do this in earnest, you will begin to comprehend how widespread, how numerous your ancestors are, for Whom Temple work has to be performed, in order that they may be brought into the fold; and when you get stopped, the Lord will reveal further information to you; and in this way the work of salvation and redemption will be accomplished...” (George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses*, 22:130)

3. “In pondering and pursuing consecration, understandably we tremble inwardly at what may be required. Yet the Lord has said consolingly, ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ (D&C 17:8). Do we really believe Him? He has also promised to make weak things strong (see Ether 12:27). Are we really willing to submit to that process? Yet if we desire fulness, we cannot hold back part!” (Neal A. Maxwell, “Consecrate Thy Performance,” *Ensign*, Dec 2008, 26–30)

*** Keep our covenants**

1. “O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; **that they may always have his Spirit to be with them.** Amen.” (D&C 20:77)

2. “Our covenant commitment to Him permits our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, “the power of godliness” (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives. He can do that because by our participation in priesthood ordinances we exercise our agency and elect to receive it. Our participation in those ordinances also demonstrates that we are prepared to accept the additional responsibility that comes with added light and spiritual power.” (D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 19–23)

3. “...as you will try to keep your covenants, the Savior has promised His personal help. He has said that as you go forward in honoring the priesthood: ‘There I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and

mine angels round about you, to bear you up.’ (D&C 84:88)” (Henry B. Eyring, “Faith and the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 61–64)

* **Express gratitude**

1. “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things.” (D&C 59:21)
2. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
3. “Just as expressing gratitude more often in our prayers **enlarges the conduit for revelation**, so praying for others [*including those family members we are researching*] with all of the energy of our souls increases our capacity to hear and to heed the voice of the Lord.” (David A. Bednar, “Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Nov 2008, 41–44; italics added)
4. Johnson Oatman Jr. (1856–1922), “Count Your Blessings,” *Hymns*, no. 241.

Recognizing Answers:

“When answers to urgent prayer don't seem to come, it can be that we don't understand 1) some truths about prayer, or 2) because we don't recognize answers when they come.” (Richard G. Scott, “Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989)

* **Conscience (Light of Christ)**

“**Conscience affirms the reality of the Spirit of Christ in man.** It affirms, as well, the reality of good and evil, of justice, mercy, honor, courage, faith, love, and virtue, as well as the necessary opposites—hatred, greed, brutality, jealousy (see 2 Ne. 2:11, 16). Such values, though physically intangible, respond to laws with cause-and-effect relationships as certain as any resulting from physical laws (see Gal. 6:7–9). **The Spirit of Christ can be likened unto a “guardian angel” for every person.**

“The Spirit of Christ can enlighten the inventor, the scientist, the painter, the sculptor, the composer, the performer, the architect, the author to produce great, even inspired things for the blessing and good of all mankind.

“This Spirit can prompt the farmer in his field and the fisherman on his boat. It can inspire the teacher in the classroom, the missionary in presenting his discussion. It can inspire the student who listens. And of enormous importance, it can inspire husband and wife, and father and mother.

“**This inner Light can warn and guard and guide.** But it can be repulsed by anything that is ugly or unworthy or wicked or immoral or selfish.

“The Light of Christ existed in you before you were born (see D&C 93:23, 29–30), and it will be with you every moment that you live and will not perish when the mortal part of you has turned to dust. It is ever there.

“Every man, woman, and child of every nation, creed, or color—everyone, no matter where they live or what they believe or what they do—has within them the imperishable Light of Christ. In this respect, all men are created equally. The Light of Christ in everyone is a testimony that **God** is no respecter of persons (see D&C 1:35). He **treats everyone equally in that endowment with the Light of Christ.**” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Light of Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr 2005, 8–14)

* **Peace**

1. “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?” (D&C 6:22-23)

* **Mind and heart**

1. “Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.” (D&C 8:2)

* **Still small voice**

1. "In the economy of heaven, God does not send thunder if a still, small voice is enough, or a prophet if a priest can do the job." (Neal A. Maxwell)

2. “And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire **a still small voice.**” (1 Kings 19:12 – Elijah)

* **Sudden ideas or impressions** - thoughts, songs, scriptures, etc.

1. “... all of us should try to strive and give heed to the sudden ideas that come to us, and if we’ll give heed to them and cultivate an ear to hear these promptings we too – each of us – can grow in the spirit of revelation.” (Harold B. Lee, *Stand in Holy Places*)

* **Words or actions of others**

* **Burning/stupor**

1. “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; 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 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)

* **Angelic ministrations**

1. "One of the things that will become more important in our lives the longer we live is the reality of angels, their work and their ministry. I refer here not alone to the angel Moroni but also to those more personal ministering angels who are with us and around us, empowered to help us and who do exactly that"....

"I believe we need to speak of and believe in and bear testimony of the ministry of angels more than we sometimes do. They constitute one of God's great methods of witnessing through the veil, and no document in all this world teaches that principle so clearly and so powerfully as does the Book of Mormon." (Jeffrey R. Holland, "For a Wise Purpose," *Ensign*, January 1996)

2. "...the ministering of angels can also be unseen. Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind.... Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen." (Dallin H. Oaks, "The **Aaronic Priesthood** and the Sacrament", *Ensign*, November 1998)

3. "[John the Baptist] He said that this priesthood of Aaron "holds the keys of the ministering of angels." It is a tremendous thing to have the right to the ministering of angels. ... "I am convinced that the Lord would not have given it to us had He not desired that we have it so that we might enjoy the wonderful gifts, guidance, and protection which come therefrom." (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Words of the Prophet: 'Upon You My Fellow Servants'," *New Era*, May 2002, 4)

* **Dreams**

1. "Now there's one more way by which revelations may come, and that is by dreams. Oh, I'm not going to tell you every dream you have is a revelation from the Lord.... But I fear that in this age of sophistication there are those of us who are prone to rule out all dreams as of no purpose.... And yet all through the scriptures there were incidents where the Lord, by dreams, has directed His people. When we begin to understand that beyond sight, as Brigham Young said, **the spirit world is right here round about us, and if our spiritual eyes could be opened, we could see others visiting with us, directing us.** And if we will learn not be so sophisticated that we rule out that possibility of impressions from those who are beyond sight, then we too may have a dream that may direct us as revelation." (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, p.142-143)

2. (Recognizing symbols in family history dreams – things that are lacking/missing) "And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them

for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.” (Jacob 2:19)

* **No answer at all**

1. “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 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...,obedience..., 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...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.” (Richard G. Scott, "Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989)

* **Many more** (search the scriptures)

General quotes about revelation in family history:

1. “Perhaps we regard the power bestowed by Elijah as something associated only with formal ordinances performed in sacred places. But these ordinances become dynamic and productive of good only as they reveal themselves in our daily lives. Malachi said that the power of Elijah would turn the *hearts* of the fathers and the children to each other. **The heart is the seat of the emotions and a conduit for revelation.** This sealing power that reveals itself in family relationships, in attributes and virtues developed in a nurturing environment, and in loving service. These are the cords that bind families together, and the priesthood advances their development.” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1993, p.37)

2. “We shall learn **by the spirit of revelation whom to be baptized for**, and whom to officiate for in the holy ordinances of the Gospel. Herein is the necessity of revelation. Take away revelation from this great dispensation of the fullness of times, and I would not give you much for the mission of Elijah or for the dispensation itself.” (Orson Pratt (*Journal of Discourses* 7:86))

3. “There are...hundreds of thousands and millions...in the spirit world who long to receive this gospel and have been waiting hundreds of years for their deliverance. They are waiting on you. **They are praying** that the Lord will awaken your hearts in their interest. **They know where their records are....**

“I testify to you that the spirit and influence of your dead will guide those who are interested in finding those records. If there is anywhere on the earth anything concerning them, you will find it. ... If we have done our best and have searched and have discovered all that is available, then the day will come when God will open and part the veil, and **the records ... will be revealed.**”
(*Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard*, 229-231)