

# *Our Companion, the Holy Ghost*

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**T**his night I look into the faces of the greatest group of youth assembled in one place on the earth. I plead that our eternal spirits, yours and mine, may be entwined with the Holy Ghost this night in such a way that what I say this hour may be understood through the Spirit.

## **Using the Spirit**

You have a tool more helpful than any Apple Macintosh, IBM PC, or Wang computer ever designed. This tool is more exact and more explicit than any book, video, or cassette tape you could read, watch, or listen to. This great tool is the utilization of the Holy Ghost in your life. The Spirit! The Spirit! The Spirit! I would suspect that if there is a lesson that you are to learn at this magnificent institution it is the value of utilizing the Holy Ghost in your life.

Often we hear, “When I am older I will change,” or “Time will take care of everything.” Nonsense. It is not time that creates change; it is the Spirit that alters circumstances. Each of us has observed remarkable positive behavioral changes in others—and sometimes in ourselves. When these occur, each comes as a blessing from the Spirit. He is the author of positive change!

## **Zion’s Camp**

Being a student in college is a great deal like being with Joseph Smith on the historic march of 1834 known as Zion’s Camp. A band of people in the Independence, Missouri, area had joined together and demanded that the Saints, those early courageous members, leave Jackson County. There were a number of reasons why the Saints were told to leave. Most of the charges, however, were just trumped-up allegations. Edward Partridge and Charles Allen were tarred and feathered. The store of Gilbert and Whitney was partially demolished, and the printing office in the home of William Phelps was destroyed. Later on, many of our early members had their homes destroyed, and a number of them were beaten with stones and clubs. Word of these atrocities had reached Kirtland, Ohio, and the Prophet sporadically. He did not know all that was going on, but he knew that the situation was serious.

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For several more months the problems continued, with a disorganized exodus from Jackson County fully under way by November 1833. Missouri officials had refused to assist the Saints. Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight arrived in Kirtland on 22 February 1834, bringing the devastating news of the Missouri disaster. Shortly after, Joseph Smith organized Zion's Camp.

On 1 May 1834 Joseph Smith and part of the party left for Missouri. It was a thousand-mile trek. Men were tossed together during those months in trying circumstances where all that was good or evil in their characters came to the surface. They were under incredible stress.

### **Our Nature is Revealed**

As challenges come to us during periods of stress or pressure, such as times of war, natural disaster, the death of a loved one, academic pressure, athletic contests, or even missions, our nature is revealed to be either noble or not. Zion's Camp served that purpose also. Now, listen carefully; your college experience serves the same purpose. A time of testing and refining is what these months and years are for you.

Shortly after Zion's Camp, Joseph Smith acknowledged that several of the men had been angry with him when he told them that the group would not cross the river into Jackson County after the long march. After all of those plans, after all of that time, they were not permitted to do what they expected they were going to do. The Prophet said, "But let me tell you, God did not want you to fight." He could not organize his kingdom with twelve men to open the gospel door to nations of the earth, with seventy men under their direction, unless he took them from a body of men who would offer their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as had Abraham or Moses. It was a time for him to determine who could endure and lead and serve.

During the month following Zion's Camp, two new quorums were established: the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Quorum of the Seventy. Most of the men in these two quorums had sacrificed by marching west in the army of Israel that came to western Missouri in 1834. They had proven their mettle just as we must. Brigham Young stated, "I would not exchange the knowledge I have received this season for the whole of Geauga County; for the property and mines of the earth are not to be compared to the worth of knowledge" (*JD* 2:10). That is where he received his graduate degree, not knowing that it would be his responsibility under similar circumstances to lead the Saints westward to the Great Basin kingdom.

The practical training and instruction that the participants of Zion's Camp experienced were not considered by many as valuable as the spiritual benefits they received. The same is true with college—the greatest value of your college experience should be the enhancement of your spiritual growth.

Some participants defined Zion's Camp as a failure. For so many others, however, it was the most rewarding, testimony-building, and exciting experience in their lives. Men had died on that trek of malaria and other diseases. There had been bickering and fighting. There had been a great need for cooperation, and sometimes cooperation was not there. But after they had walked those thousand miles, Joseph knew those who would help establish the kingdom during an even more difficult period.

### **Make the Holy Ghost your Constant Companion**

The way you can maximize this period in your life is through the Spirit. The logical question you might ask, brothers and sisters, is "How, Elder Pinnock?" There are eight steps as you become proficient in making the Holy Ghost truly your constant companion.

### Understanding the Spirit

First, seek for an understanding of and an acquaintance with the Spirit. The primitive Church had been going for a number of years when the apostle Paul wrote the Saints at Corinth. He said, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1). He knew that if the Church was to grow, if they were going to be able to endure, if they were going to understand the heart of the Christian message, it would be through the Holy Spirit.

He went on to say,

*No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

*And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. [1 Corinthians 12:3–5]*

For the rest of your lives you will be living in wards where one bishop will be serving and then another will be called. Some of you have already had more than one stake president here at Brigham Young University. Some of you have returned from serving in the mission field with perhaps two mission presidents. You have seen already that there is a difference in administration, but the Spirit is the same. Thank goodness that we do tolerate differences in administrations.

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

*To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

*To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. [1 Corinthians 12:7–11]*

You can read Doctrine and Covenants 46:10–26 and Moroni 10:8–18. But I would pray, brothers and sisters, that each of you, as you become biologists, historians, business people, nurses, and teachers, that you will also become experts in understanding and using the Holy Ghost.

### Commitment Leads to Surrender

Second, give commitment, which leads to surrender. After you acquire this working knowledge that all of you have comes that great step of commitment.

In January of 1961 we were expecting our second child. We already had a son, so we hoped for a daughter. My wife Anne went to the doctor and he became concerned because he could not hear a regular heartbeat and sometimes not a heartbeat at all. As my wife went into labor and we went to the hospital, I waited a particularly long time before the doctor asked me to come and speak with him.

The cord had been wrapped around our daughter's neck. She had not had an ample supply of blood for a number of hours, perhaps for several days. He gave no promise that she would be normal. I left feeling lonely, frightened, and concerned, with tears streaming down my face. I drove home at three in the morning praying that if our Heavenly Father would let her be normal, all that we had and all that we ever would be would be the Father's.

I also had an unforgettable spiritual experience when I was seventeen years old the night I received my patriarchal blessing. Several marvelous experiences in the mission field also had turned me toward the Lord, but that night I knew everything was our Heavenly Father's. We named and blessed the daughter of that daughter today.

Somehow in our lives, brothers and sisters, we must commit ourselves to building the kingdom where suddenly wealth, position, and status do not matter. What matters is that we are part of this great work and have surrendered ourselves to Him.

In 3 Nephi we read,

*And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.* [3 Nephi 9:20]

I would like to think that in all of the places in all of the world, that from this geographic location, the Spirit would be felt most of the time. We have no place in all of the world where there is such a concentration of members of the kingdom. Oh, the power that you would have if you could commit yourselves in that way.

Some of you might say, “Not now. Perhaps later because I have so much to do while I am young.” I say to you now that the surrender that comes from commitment will lead to more excitement, finer friends, and will assure you of a magnificent future. “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). Now the Spirit, which is already yours, can function within you.

Incidentally, when we discover how commitment and surrender to the Spirit intensify our capability, we find it imperative to commit ourselves worthy elsewhere in our lives. Suddenly in a natural, organized way, we structure our priorities differently than we ever did before. It comes after we have given ourselves to the master.

### **Live Righteously**

Of course that leads to the third step: live righteously regardless of how difficult it has been in the past. After surrendering to the Spirit, you will find self-control and peace beyond that which you have ever known.

A number of you, incidentally, have not asked about our first grandchild. Shame on you! As I look into the face of that little spirit so soon from God, I understand more than ever before how our Heavenly Father and our earthly parents look at you, praying that you will remain pure and good and growing.

While living under the influence of the Spirit, we discover a built-in reward system that is manifest in many ways. A young woman working at Morton Thiokol, just west of Brigham City, found her eternal mate in an interesting way. A nonmember had moved there from Ohio, met her at work, and had asked her out. She accepted and they went on a date. When she would not cooperate with his sexual advances, he became upset and took her home. The following Monday at work he was joking with other men in his department about how she would not cooperate with him, and how straight she had been. A recently returned missionary who worked there listened to the ribald conversation. Later he went back to the man and asked for the name of the uncooperative date. He told him. She was exactly what he had been looking for. Apparently things went quite well. Four and a half months later they knelt across the altar and were married forever.

The Savior said of the Holy Spirit, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

### **Be Consistent**

Fourth, be consistent in your righteousness. Remember, you must consider the little things in life just as you must consider the larger issues. Little problems in our behavior can rob us of the Spirit just as serious sins can.

A coed at a university about fifty miles north of here (I am not going to mention the name of that school) decided that a drink or two would not hurt her. I wish she could have listened to a conversation to which I listened relating to her. Some outstanding young men,

fellow students of hers, mentioned they could not take her out because they had seen her bend her elbow drinking a beer or two. Those young men did not consider her as a potential eternal partner because of a little flaw that robbed her of her eternal appeal.

In another situation a young man was observed cheating on a test by a girl he was dating. This beautiful young lady began declining his dates, and then his plans were shattered when she stopped dating him entirely—all because she worried that if he would cheat there, he would cheat elsewhere.

One of my best friends in high school was a young man named Paul. Often after a basketball game he would have a beer or two, sometimes a six-pack, while I would have a shake or soft drink. “Some 3.2 beer can never hurt you,” he would rationalize. Then one night after a beer or two he hit a gas pump in his sports car in North Salt Lake going 115 miles per hour. It took the police twenty minutes to put him in a sack. That’s what we call a closed-casket funeral.

I would suspect, brothers and sisters, that when we analyze and understand the commandments we have been given, we will plead for more. Joseph Smith called commandments blessings. I think that is a marvelous definition.

One of the greatest coaches of them all, Vince Lombardi, taught that in every football game there are only five or six plays that make the difference between who wins and who loses. It is the combination of the little things that makes the difference. He demanded that his players give it all they had on each play so that when the critical play came along they would make the most of it. How valuable is each hour, day, week, and month you spend at this great institution. Please remember the little things do count!

A fellow student in college made it a goal to study just one hour longer each day than most of us were studying. His academic excellence has made him internationally known as a

linguist, and he is a professor today at a leading institution. One extra hour a day in his life made the difference.

### Restitution

Fifth, as we deal with the Spirit, let us remember restitution. Where mistakes have been made, correct them wherever and whenever possible. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

In the book *The One Hundred*, Michael Hart names Jesus the third most influential person that had ever lived. I could not believe his demeaning analysis until I came across these words justifying his position:

*Now, these ideas which were not a part of the Judaism of Jesus’ day, nor of most other religions are surely among the most remarkable and original ethical ideas ever presented. If they were widely followed, I would have had no hesitation in placing Jesus Christ first in this book. But the truth is that they are not widely followed. In fact, they are not even generally accepted. Most Christians consider the injunction to “love your enemy” as, at most, an ideal which might be realized in some perfect world. Jesus’ most distinctive teaching, therefore, remains and intriguing, but basically untried suggestion. [Michael Hart, *The One Hundred* (New York: A & W Publishing Co., 1978), p. 47]*

But we, as Latter-day Saints, must live his teachings. Our reward is the Spirit and eternal joy. We are those who must forgive. We are those who must love our enemies. We are seeing more enemies perhaps today than we have seen in decades. Movies are being made demeaning our most holy practices. People who know better are telling lies. Now is the time to love our enemies.

A number of years ago a basketball player from the Midwest played for Utah State Univ-



ersity. He was a nonmember. He was disrespectful, dishonest, and often unkind to most of the people he met. His teammates reported that, as the team traveled to Salt Lake City, Provo, and Albuquerque, he would steal items in the dressing room, stores, or restaurants. He would steal almost anything he could get his hands on. He had little, if any, respect for the young women he dated. He would take from them their self-respect, as easily as he would steal items from store owners.

After he had used his eligibility, he returned to the Midwest and went into correctional work. After being gone for several years, he returned to Logan. “What does he want now?” several that remembered him asked. He went into the stores in Cache County, paying the merchants for what he had stolen. He called the women he had dated, and when he could find them he apologized for what he had done to them and with them. He did the same in other cities where he had played basketball.

After doing what he could do to make right his wrongs, he returned to Chicago. Soon an obituary told of his untimely death. What motivated that great change? What brought him in tune with life and morality? Apparently he had been touched by the Spirit.

We must practice restitution whenever we possibly can. I know sometimes it is not possible. We all have done things we need to change, restore, and alter if we can.

### **Build Others**

Sixth, build others. Enhance the happiness level of those nearby. Some people bring happiness *wherever* they go. Others bring happiness *whenever* they go. We simply cannot have the Spirit when we are at crossed swords with those we know. The Master summarized so much of what matters by saying, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12). The Golden Rule must be the foundation of our behavior.

The Holy Ghost is with us when we are righteously at peace with our brothers and sisters. God, our Father, pleads with us to take care of each other. If you are dating someone who leaves you at the door less pure, more frustrated, and not feeling as good about yourself as you felt before you met that person, then already you know you are not to continue that relationship. The Holy Ghost cannot dwell in an unclean environment.

### **Take Charge**

Seventh, take charge of your life. Ask, expend energy, work, and become “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). Being doers of Christian service is one of the reasons that we are strong beyond our numbers. But I am disturbed with the fact that a number of our young people believe that much of life is accidental. There is nothing accidental in spirituality and righteousness. And that I can promise you.

Part of the very foundation of the restoration scripturally is that motivating verse in James which tells us, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally” (James 1:5). We must ask, then the Spirit gives!

The Spirit will teach us all things (see John 14:26) if we ask!

The Spirit will show us things to come (see John 16:13) if we ask!

The Spirit will guide us to all truth (see John 16:13) if we ask!

Each of us must work out our own destiny with the Spirit as our strength and guide.

It was William Faulkner who said, “I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal . . . not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul and spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance” (Speech upon receiving the Nobel Prize, December 10, 1950).

### **Rely on the Spirit**

Eighth, have the courage to rely upon the Spirit. Several years ago a boy was electrocuted while retrieving his brother's kite which had become impaled on a tree. The young man had climbed a 25-foot metal ladder and accidentally grabbed a power line. He fell to the ground lifeless, a hole blasted through his leg where the electricity had escaped. Two young men, defying all of the concerns and pressures of society, ran to the body. They had not yet served missions, but were soon to receive the Melchizedek priesthood. They placed their hands upon the head of the boy, called the others who were not witnesses to the event to kneel around in prayer, and they uttered a blessing. The Spirit was called upon and their faith utilized. Other blessings were given I'm sure. Within a week he was attending school again, slightly scarred with pink tissue, but alive as a reminder of two young men's courage. Those two young men are here tonight.

While speaking to a group of single adults at Christmastime a year ago, I reminded them that if they were working in an environment that was not conducive to their spiritual well-being, perhaps they should resign. Afterwards, a young man the age of many of you came up to talk to me. He expressed concern that he was called upon to do some things that he didn't feel comfortable doing. Jobs were almost impossible to get, he explained, and the work he was doing paid well. I reminded him that it was his decision whether to stay or resign. "Call upon the Spirit," I advised. The next week he called me. Reminding me who he was, he said, "I did it. I quit my job. I am frightened, but I know I did the right thing." Within two weeks he reported back that he had a job

where now he was comfortable, and he appreciated the promptings of the Spirit.

### **It Takes Courage**

There is a monument at Gettysburg to honor the memory of a color-bearer who became isolated from his regiment after a charge during the Civil War. The regiment retreated, but the color-bearer and several men held their ground. The major sent a message through to the boy, "Bring the colors back to the regiment."

The boy replied, "Bring the regiment back to the colors."

Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe that your detractors are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men to win them. Courage comes freely when we call upon the Spirit.

Several years ago the BYU Motion Picture Studio produced a movie titled *Where Jesus Walked*. It was about the Master and about Jerusalem. It concluded with these words, "Two thousand years have come and gone since Jesus, the Savior of all mankind, consecrated this land by his presence."

We love each of you. Are you consecrating the land upon which you walk by your presence? You can make a difference with the Holy Spirit as your companion wherever you go!

May each of us rely more securely upon the Spirit than we have ever done before. These things of which I have spoken are true, I testify to you in the worthy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.