

Elder Stevenson / Oct 23

Quote #1 (intro)

“Looking through a gospel lens, God endows His children with many spiritual gifts, making them spiritually gifted people...What are the fruits of exercising spiritual gifts? They include promptings from the Spirit that help us face our daily needs and show us what to do and say and blessings of peace and comfort. As we listen and act on spiritual promptings, the Holy Ghost magnifies our abilities and capacities to far exceed what we can do on our own. These precious spiritual gifts will help us in every aspect of our lives.

“The constant companionship of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest spiritual gifts Latter-day Saints enjoy.”

Possible discussion questions: Who is eligible to have the Spirit? Why is having the Spirit vital to you?

Quote #2 (four principles)

A – “Let me offer four guiding principles that may be of assistance to you in inviting and recognizing the promptings of the Spirit.

“Our temples and homes are the most sacred of these dedicated spaces. In them we more easily invite and recognize the Spirit. Other holy places include meetinghouses, seminary buildings and institutes, and Church history sites and visitors’ centers. Stand in holy places.”

Question A: What happens to us when we stand in an “unholy” place? What helps you turn your home into a holy place? Why is it important to make our home a “bastion” from the world?

bastion: someplace or something that gives protection against attack. (like a fortress)

B – “The Spirit cannot be restrained from attending a gathering of holy people. If you hope to feel the Spirit, be with people with whom the Spirit can easily dwell. The Savior said it this way: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Choose to be with people and go to places where righteousness is found. Find your strength in numbers. Find good friends. Be good friends. Support one another wherever you are. Stand with holy people.”

Question B: Why would Elder Stevenson encourage groups? Could you increase the time and effort to be with good friends and be a good friend to others?

C – “Third, testify of holy truths as often as you can. The Comforter always shares His voice when we testify with our voice. The Spirit bears witness to the speaker and listener alike. As you seek and take opportunities to share your testimony with others, you will create moments to recognize the Spirit for yourself.”

Question C – Outside of a testimony meeting, what informal ways can we bear and testify of the gospel and of Jesus Christ? What is your favorite way to share gospel truths?

D – “The final principle is to listen to the Holy Spirit. He can be our constant companion, but He speaks in subtle, quiet tones. The noise, clamor, and contention prevalent in the world may overpower still, quiet impressions of the Holy Spirit. Find a quiet place, a holy space where you can seek to receive direction from the Spirit.”

Question D – Could anyone share a time they strongly felt the Spirit? What did it feel like, and what inspiration did you receive? What kinds of things can crowd the Spirit out?

Quote #3 (cautions)

Here are several cautions that Elder Stevenson shares when interpreting the Spirit from our feelings:

Suggestion: For emphasis, have 3 different people read these three cautions (in a row) and discuss them after the third quote.

Confirm your spiritual impressions. For example, impressions from the Spirit will align with the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets.

Be certain that the feelings you receive are consistent with your assignment. Unless you are called by proper authority, impressions from the Spirit are not given for you to counsel or correct others.

Spiritual matters cannot be forced. You can cultivate an attitude and an environment that invite the Spirit, and you can prepare yourself, but you cannot dictate how or when inspiration comes. Be patient and trust that you will receive what you need when the time is right.

Possible discussion questions. Which of these cautions stood out to you and why? Why does stewardship matter? Do we decide for anyone else when they should feel the Spirit?

Quote #4 (best judgment)

“Use your own best judgment. Sometimes we want to be led by the Spirit in all things. However, often the Lord wants us to use our God-given intelligence

and act in ways that are consistent with our best understanding. President Dallin H. Oaks taught:

“A desire to be led by the Lord is a strength, but it needs to be accompanied by an understanding that our Heavenly Father leaves many decisions for our personal choices. ... Persons who try to shift all decision making to the Lord and plead for revelation in every choice will soon find circumstances in which they pray for guidance and don’t receive it. ...

“We should study things out in our minds. ... Then we should pray for guidance and act upon it. ... If we do not receive guidance, we should act upon our best judgment.”

Possible discussion questions: Is picking a tuna fish brand okay without praying about it? Where does our best judgment come from? (accept all reasonable answers – God-given intelligence and our best understanding) When is it okay to use our best judgment after praying about a matter?

Quote #5 (gradual)

“...Latter-day Saints should be gifted, covenant-keeping people. Nonetheless, it remains for each of us to seek to exercise our spiritual gifts and then to invite and learn to recognize promptings of the Spirit.

“Your ability to invite and recognize the promptings of the Spirit will develop a step at a time. “Becoming more attuned to the language of the Spirit is like learning another language. It is a gradual process that requires diligent, patient effort.”

Possible discussion questions: What would be our advice to someone hoping to feel the Spirit more? What have you learned about feeling the Spirit? Why would Elder Stevenson describe listening to the Spirit “like learning another language”?