

THE Pattern to Receiving Answers to Prayer

One of the most beautiful patterns in the Book of Mormon, and which we quote all the time, is Moroni 10:3-5. This same pattern is throughout all the scriptures teaching us revelation. We think of this particular one as a promise, and it is, but it's also a pattern. When we understand the pattern a bit better we can, and should, use it for every question we take to God. Lets take a look at it and find the pattern:

*“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall (1)**read these things**, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would (2a)**remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things**, and (2b)**ponder it in your hearts**. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would (3)**ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ**, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a (4) **sincere heart**, (5)**with real intent**, having (6)**faith in Christ**, (7)**he will manifest the truth** of it unto you **by the power of the Holy Ghost**. And by the power of the (7) **Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things**.”*

Prayer Pattern

1. Receive the Word of God or have a question
2. Gratitude (remember and ponder)
3. Ask God in Christ's name our question
4. Sincere heart
5. Real intent
6. Faith in Christ
7. Manifest the truth unto you — Know truth of all things (Repeat about anything)

That is the pattern for getting answers to ALL our questions. We understand this pattern, to a degree, on a logical basis, but we don't know how to really *DO*^l this pattern. Somehow the application of the pattern escapes us completely, so we struggle to receive answers to prayer, when God has promised us that we can know **all truth, all the time**.

1. The first step is receiving something from God. Since every opportunity to choose (due to agency) is a gift from God, this first step is given to us all the time. We don't receive anything by our own merit, it all comes because of His love. This opportunity to choose

could be about receiving His word (like the Book of Mormon), or an opportunity to do something (like marrying someone, or taking a new job, buying a t-shirt or when to go to the store), or a question about new information (an idea someone presents to us, or a thought about something we're learning through the spirit, books, etc.). We receive something and then have a choice to make, (believe or not believe, go or not go, learn or not learn). First we receive an opportunity to grow or choose, about which we are now needing direction. We need to ask God questions.

If it's about learning truth, it may look like hearing the word of God, for that's one of the ways we begin to have faith for "*Faith cometh by hearing...the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). Also, when we receive the word through scripture, we see how God answers others and hope that He'll also answer us. A seed of faith/hope is planted in our own heart, and we begin to desire to receive more from God.

All questions, doubts, choices and opportunities are blessings. When we have questions it's an occasion to have our faith renewed by asking and getting a witness from God, it's a moment to be taught by the Greatest Teacher of all. It's also an opportunity to grow in our understanding of God's ways and to get *clean*² of our own perceptions and ideas that aren't in sync with God. Questions can push us to be humble and ask for understanding beyond our own ability to see or know. To have a question is a gift indeed!

2. The second step is to have gratitude and "***remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.***" in giving us everything we have, even questions, choices, problems and obstacles. In these we receive the opportunity to choose, learn, understand and grow more like God.

Gratitude is very important when we start asking questions, and it's not because God wants us to give Him kudos. He's not that kind of a God. He asks us to be grateful because it's good for us and increases *our faith*. When we're grateful before we ask for more, we start to recognize how merciful and loving God is. When we're honest and grateful, we begin to see His hand in our lives, which creates more faith. This makes receiving blessings and answers faster and easier because we see He has blessed us before and will again. If we haven't had a lot of experiences we think we can call upon, He tells us to look all the way back to Adam and see His mercy and grace from the beginning of time. Surely we can find something to be grateful for because gratitude provides us the power to ask with confidence.

¹ ibid.

It creates an immediate shift in us that takes us from needy to blessed therefore we are able to receive more blessings. Remember, we get what we ARE.³ If we are blessed we get more blessings. If we are victims we become more victimized. It reminds us of how good God is, and helps us find the faith to turn to Him and receive from Him. Gratitude could be called the great “return” because it shifts us in a moment and lands us facing Him. We turn from a place of hurt, resentment, fear or any other negative emotion to face directly God’s love and grace. This is the place we’re always seeking to attain in our quest for at-one-ment.

3. The third step is to “***ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ***”. We’re not to wait until we’re perfect or until we’ve figured it out on our own, or understand it all, or have pondered the matter at length, or made a decision by ourselves. Moroni said to ask, second only to having a question and being grateful. There’s a beautiful paradox here. We are going to start with asking, but we may not get an answer right away, because there are other things that are required. Asking may seem like a contradiction to the admonishment of God to Oliver Cowdery who “***took no thought save it was to ask me***”⁴ but it’s not. Oliver only asked and didn’t go on to the next four steps. He stopped at asking, just as we usually do. We are to ask first, but there are four more steps before the promise is secure. There’s a lot more to asking than just demanding an answer.

The admonition to Oliver is similar, both instruct us to ask, and then we are to stop and notice the questions, doubts, fears, and concerns that come up after we’ve asked. God is telling us to start by opening the channel of communication and then pondering and studying it out in our mind — *with God in the conversation!* Remember we are to pray always, so this takes both the admonition to pray always, and to ponder and study it out, all into account. Sometimes we cannot see all of the concerns we have regarding an issue, until we have first asked the question and sometimes we don’t ask because of these things. Therefore Moroni tells us to go ahead and ask, and then takes us into the pondering about the question we asked. It can also be done the other way around, like Oliver was being told to do, but just because God tells Oliver to ponder, and not just to ask, does not preclude that we can ask before we have studied it out in our mind. Both are valid ways to be done as long as we know we are going to be doing some pondering, contemplating and praying about it all — Including God in the prayer.

² See flassary James 4:8

³ D&C 88:40

⁴ D8C 9:7

4. The next thing required to get answers is that the answer is based on the stipulation of a sincere heart. *“If ye shall ask with a **sincere heart**...he **will manifest the truth** of it unto you **by the power of the Holy Ghost**”*. Meaning, IF a sincere heart is missing the promise is void. This is part of the getting *clean* process and is a qualification and requirement to getting any answer. The heart is where the emotions and desires are stored. Sincerely asking God to teach us and instruct us may seem simple, but it is not. Our own fears and emotional anxieties must be *cleared* from our hearts. We are to ponder what we have received and be grateful, but be *clean* and sincere enough about feeling what God’s opinion is that we can receive what He is saying to us. We cannot go to Him and hope that He will conform to our desire or idea of the answer. Most of us do this when we pray. We think that the answer **should** and **will** look a certain way, or we do not really *want* to hear what the Lord has to say. We may be afraid that if we are willing to accept **anything**, it might hurt, so we do not trust God. This step, to sincerely ask and be open to His will, is paramount to getting an answer to our petition. We cannot ask just to check it off our list of things to do and then say, “Well, I asked, so I am justified in doing it my way now” We must be *sincere* and trust of God’s will.

In other words, we should not ask questions we do not want answers to. God is under no obligation to answer any questions we do not REALLY want Him to answer. He will not force us to hear Him, obey Him or believe Him. If we don’t sincerely want His will over our own He will not give it to us. He waits until we sincerely want His help. Sometimes that takes us getting so sick of our own ideas, designs, and plans that we become sincere and ask in despair, letting go of our own ideas. This is why we often fast and pray to get answers to prayer. It makes us more humble and willing to hear God’s voice over our own. Paradoxically, when we stop doubting His will is when He is able to answer our questions, but not before. We stop God from answering because we do not sincerely want the answer. Maybe we just want to say we have asked, so we can blame God when we don’t get an answer, or when things go wrong. Or we want Him to validate our choice, but we do not want to follow Him and do what He says unless He validates our choice. But He knows our hearts and lets us live with our own double nature until we are willing to be sincere and have a desire to know the truth.

At times we can still get answers to questions even if we are not sincere. God’s kind, generous nature, through grace, allows us at times to see and receive answers before we have done the work to get them. It is a benevolent God who knows that we are not ready to give up our fears all at once. At times He allows us to receive the answers first, giving us a taste of

what answers look and feel like. This prepares us to be able to do what it takes to get answers the next time we ask. But this will not last forever. This grace is offered so we can begin to have the experience of getting answers and then start to trust that God does want what is best for us and will answer our prayers. But eventually we will be expected to become *clean*⁵ and sincere before the answers will come. We do this with the Repent and Replace procedure that is in the practice section of this book and in the Understanding Grace chapter. This means we are to get rid of our fears, doubts, and our own ideas before we can expect answers. In other words we are required to have *clean* intent first. God does this for many reasons. If we have our own ideas about something, they will usually stop us from receiving His will. Our own will supersedes hearing God's instruction, answers and direction. Fear is a lack of faith, and the two cannot be in the same person at the same time, so we will be expected to rid ourselves of fear and replace it with faith, in order to get the answers we desire.

To get *clean* and have a sincere heart we must repent of our desire to control the answer, to get a certain answer, or to fear any answer. When God tells us to have a sincere *heart*, he is addressing our feelings. He is telling us to stop marinating in our own emotions and get into a *clean* emotional state first. We are not to desire our own way, be afraid of God's way, or be too excited⁶ or emotionally committed to any answer that is before us. We must sincerely want to know God's will for us. We must put His knowledge and truth before our own, by first getting rid of our own heart's desire. His desire is all we should sincerely want if we want an answer from Him. We must be at peace with any answer God sees fit to give, or we are not being sincere about asking His advice, wisdom and knowledge. A sincere heart addresses our emotional state and our desires.

To achieve a sincere heart, we must first notice what we feel. Are we afraid of what the answer might be, or are we excited to receive the answer a certain way? If any of these things exist we must get rid of them before we proceed to the next step. If we are not willing to have a sincere and *clean* heart then we do not want an answer from God and He will not answer us.

Sincere means to be free of deceit, hypocrisy, or falseness. We must be genuine and real, earnest and pure in heart in order to find what is real from God. He requires that we be willing to look at our own heart and see what is there so He can come in heal us, and make up the deficit. If we go to God with our own feelings, ideas, and beliefs and don't really want His truth or direction, we are not able to be open enough to receive His instructions. He will

⁵ See glossaary

not damn us more by telling us to do something He knows we are not willing to do or believe. He respects our agency too much to give us answers we really don't want, won't use, or can't believe.

The location of this sincerity is to be in the heart where our emotions are. The heart is for the emotional things and the mind is for the mental or thinking processes. Both are addressed in the pattern of getting answers to prayers.

We have all seen it with missionaries when someone says they read the Book of Mormon and asked if it was true and then tell us God told them to run away from it, or that it is evil. We know this instruction did not come from God, but came from the heart and fears of the person asking the question. He was not able to get *clean* enough and therefore was taking direction from his fear instead of from God. We do this same thing about any question we ask if we are not free of fear and deep enough into faith. Each of us must examine our own heart and see what is there before we will be able to receive answers from God. We can always get answers from our own desires, fears and will, and God will not stop us from doing that. We are permitted to believe we have received them from God, when, in fact, we have received them from our own heart and mind. We must learn how to have a pure or *clean* heart, and then we can hear what the Lord is saying and not what our own mind and heart are dictating to us. When we get to this point we are beginning to have pure communication with the Lord. But there are more steps to take before we can be sure that our answers are coming from the True Source.

5. Next Moroni tells us that we must have “*real intent*”. Now to some, this may look like it is the same thing as a sincere heart, but it is not. Intent as a noun refers to “the state of ones **mind** at the time one carries out an action⁷”. As an adjective it means “firmly fixed; concentrated, having the **mind and will** focused on a specific action.”⁸ Both the definitions as a noun and an adjective help us understand the meaning of the word intent. In this instance the mind and will would be focused on receiving the will of God and following what He tells us is true. We need to be *clean* of our own ideas and motives. In the previous step God addressed our heart, and asked us to be sure that it is pure and sincere, now the Lord wants us to *clean* up our mind. We know from also reading D&C 8:2-3 that these two things when combined give us the spirit of revelation. “*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***

⁶ see glossary

⁷ <https://dictionary.search.yahoo.com/intent>

⁸ *ibid.*

*heart. Now, behold, **this is the spirit of revelation**; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground.”*

The state of our mind is REALLY important when we start to seek for understanding from the Lord. Our mind, and the intent we hold there, must be firmly fixed and focused on receiving an answer from God and being grateful for it instead of just proving our own ideas. The intent must be REAL. What does it mean to be real? It must be “true and actual; not imaginary, alleged, **or ideal**. Genuine and authentic; not artificial or spurious. Being no less than what is stated; Free of pretense, falsehood, or affectation.”⁹ If we think that we can lie to God and intend to do our own thing, and believe our own ideas, above what God is about to tell us, we will. Therefore God will not give us answers, if we do not **intend** to follow Him, if we do not REALLY intend to follow Him. If we have doubts and fears, this is the time to state them and be honest with the Lord regarding them. He will not reject us if we are honest with Him. In fact He cannot come in and perform His miracles in our heart if we do not state what our heart and mind are really doing. *“For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or **prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing**. For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. For behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God. And likewise 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 7:6-9) Moroni is very clear about the intent we hold. If our intention is not *clean*, or *pure* — meaning it consists of just one thing — namely the desire to know the truth and be honest about what we want, feel and believe — then we cannot expect to get an answer, for God has not received the prayer. This may sound harsh, but it is our responsibility to have *pure, clean* intentions when we pray, or truly we are only praying to ourselves — trying to secure our own ideas and plans, which is void of faith in God.

To be *clean* of our own intentions, fears, doubts, desire to control the outcome, we must use the tool of Repent & Replace again. If we repent of those things that we can see are in the way, and choose to believe God, then He can come in and heal and shore up our desire to know Him. But if we are false with Him and ourselves, and not really willing to hear what He has to say, then we cannot expect Him to answer us. We must find the mess in our own hearts and minds and use the atonement to become *clean* first.

⁹ <https://dictionary.search.yahoo.com/real>

We must be like the man who came asking the Savior to heal his son and was totally honest saying “Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief”¹⁰. Truth is the first step to seeing what is going on, and honesty begins to mend our doubts. We must be willing to state the unbelief we have and repent of it and then choose to believe. These two steps entail Repent & Replace — R&R.¹¹

The Repent & Replace pattern takes us out of doubt and into the grace of God’s love and forgiveness. It puts faith back into us through our agency. Our intentions focus on the mind, thoughts, and beliefs more than on the heart or feelings. It is one thing to think something and quite a different thing to feel it. Thoughts lead to feelings — which are energy in motion, and become enmeshed, and convoluted to seem like the same thing. If we do not know where one starts and the other ends, that is ok, we are told to look at both because either one can stop us from getting answers to prayer. We have control over our thoughts and feelings when we dwell long enough on a thought it becomes a feeling. Feelings also start when we assign value to our experiences, associating feelings with a belief.

There are many beliefs and thoughts that get in the way of our receiving answers to prayer. Unbelief makes faith impossible. One of those beliefs is that we cannot hear God. We may judge ourselves to be unworthy or that it’s unnecessary to have a personal relationship with God, thinking only prophets and leaders need to hear Him. We may judge the answers before we get them, thinking things need to be a certain way and if they don’t then it can’t be from God. These and many other beliefs constitute the opposite of real intent — intending to believe God will answer us and intending to following Him. Anything else is false or alleged intent. If we do not truly want to know God’s answer, or we have decided the answer has to be one way to be right, our intent is not to obey or receive God’s instruction. It is to do as we desire; hear our own will, and put our trust in the arm of flesh — our own assessment of what is right. If we are asking but afraid we won’t get an answer, we are not looking at all the evidence of what God has done for us. There is plenty of evidence in our lives that shows us what God is willing to do and has done. We must see it and chose to believe it if we want to know God and hear His voice — both through the Spirit and through His language of types, symbols, metaphors, analogies etc. We also must be honest and repent of believing He will not answer and then replace the doubt and fear with belief.

Sometimes we want God to prove His love to us, and while He will prove lots of things, He does not usually try and convince us using miracles *before* we have chosen to believe

¹⁰ Mark 9:24

Him. He will not force us to believe! Proofs from God come after belief. If we choose to doubt Him, instead of focusing on the evidence that He always answers our prayers, He will not make us receive His voice. In other words, we must be *clean* of any fear of not getting an answer and for any desire to get any other answer, except God's answer.

Remember, we need to reiterate that just because we are afraid of not getting an answer or of getting an answer we don't want, does not mean we are bad, wrong or evil, it just means we are human and need to increase our faith. Where fear is, there is no love¹², for fear and faith cannot be in the same person at the same time because faith works by love.¹³ We therefore must increase our faith and get out of fear.

When we want one answer more than another we either do not get an answer, or we will think our answer is God's answer, because we'll hear what we wanted to hear, and convince ourselves that it is from God. In reality it was our own emotion, not His word. Answers are not emotion. They are something completely different. It takes us getting *clean* and out of emotion to be able to see this. When we can feel clearly we can hear God clearly and answers come more easily. If we don't trust that God is going to tell us the best answer then we cannot expect to hear His answer.

Would you answer your child if you knew he would not listen to you and wouldn't follow your advise? You may for a while, but if he continually disregards your advice and does his own thing, you stop telling him what you think, because he don't listen anyway,. Why waste your breath? If we do not trust God do we think He will bother trying to convince us? Our responsibility is to believe and trust Him and let go of our fears.

If we get *clean* regarding all of our desires about what we think or want the outcome to be, we will always get answers to our questions. The two parts of the equation of heart and mind are SO important. This cannot be stressed enough. It is everywhere in the scriptures! If I pray about marrying someone but don't want to hear the answer; (say for example I don't want to hear God tell me that it's not a good idea), do you think God is going to force me to hear that? If He tells us, and we do not follow Him, we are held accountable and He doesn't want to damn us. He would rather we learn from our own choices, acknowledging that we don't know what's best, until we start to come to Him with a sincere and pure heart and mind.

If I ask Him to tell me if I should take a certain job, but I am afraid He's going to say no, (or I'm afraid of a yes) will He tell me? Not likely. Or maybe He does tell me, but because of my fears I'm unable to hear Him; my own emotions get in the way. I will wonder why He

¹¹ We go over this in greater detail in Section Three: Practice and Understanding Grace

¹² John 4:18

didn't answer, but He doesn't yell. His voice is still and small¹⁴ and when we are full of fear, doubt, excitement or desire we can't hear that little voice; we only hear our own voice. God's voice through the Holy Ghost doesn't create the same kinds of sound waves we hear with our ears, it is felt. The Spirit is called still because our EARS can't usually hear it — but it pierces us to the center; we FEEL it. This is why God says we can become *past feeling*¹⁵ the Holy Ghost. After we become accustomed to feeling the Holy Ghost we may start to hear it also. When we raise our spiritual frequency or light quotient we become able to feel **and hear** the Spirit.

In order to do this we will need to repent of our false, *unclean*, insincere and vague intent. Repentance is really the only way to be fully *clean* of it. If we try and overlook or ignore it, or replace it by saying affirmations, but we never get rid of the untrue thoughts we keep having, we will not have the power to truly hear GOD's voice through the Holy Ghost instead of our own. It is like icing a cake made of poop. It will be pretty, but the cake is still made from mud. Without making a real cake and then icing it we only have mud and no one will want to eat it.

We must be 'one' or single minded in our intentions, being honest and real. We must fully acknowledge our weaknesses and give them to Father through the atonement and then picking up the next part of the pattern — faith.

This same pattern and promise are given back the opposite way in D&C 8:1 to Oliver Cowdery. It says "*Oliver Cowdery, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall (2)ask in faith, (3)with an honest heart, (4)believing that you shall receive*" These steps correlate with the steps of Moroni 10: 3-5. He tells Oliver to (2) ask (3) with an honest heart, which is the same as a sincere heart, then He goes on to address the mind as well when he said Oliver must (4) **believe** he would receive a knowledge of the things he asked. This is the same step as *pure intent* in Moroni 10:4. The promise is given in the beginning in this account: "*you shall receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask...*". It's the pattern, although it seems God allows us to ask first or last, as long as we put all the pieces together and have a clean heart and mind somewhere in the equation.

¹³ Galatians 5:6, Eph 3:17

¹⁴ 1 Kings 19:12, D&C 85:6, 1 Nephi 17:45

¹⁵ 1 Nephi 17:45, Alma 32:28, D&C 9:8

All of this is a further witness of D&C 8:1 in which Oliver was instructed on what revelation *looks like*¹⁶: “*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. Now, behold **this is the spirit of revelation**; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground.*”

The mind and the heart **must** be united, but usually they aren’t when we start to seek answers. Our mind goes one way and our heart goes another; being in two different places at once. We cannot be divided in our selves if we want to get answers from God; we must be *ONE*¹⁷ — whole and united in ourselves first. When we have emotion attached to all the possible outcomes, we do not have a sincere heart. If our heart is emotionally compromised we cannot feel the spirit of God. If our mind has decided it must look a certain way we cannot be taught another way. But if we will get *clean* of our own motives, ideas and fears, we are prepared to receive answers and become *ONE* with God.

6. The next step is to ask “*having faith in Christ*” - Getting answers to prayer requires us to have faith in Christ. This seems obvious, because we probably wouldn’t ask questions without some faith. But we can ask and still not understand or hear the answers we get, so there must be more to the requirement to “*having faith in Christ*”.

The promise in Moroni 10:3-5 is a sequential pattern. The pieces build upon each other. It is best applied in this order: (1) have a question, (2) ponder in gratitude, (3) ask our question, (4) sincerely desire an answer, having a *sincere* heart — meaning being *emotionally clean*, (5) do it without intellectual pretense, falsehood or intent to just have God confirm what we *think* we should do, and finally we must bring our (6) **faith back into** the equation.

All of this is about us having worked through our fears, our control issues, and having given God our will completely, so now we are to chose to state what we believe in-place-of of the old belief, thought or intention. We are to say, in faith, that we chose to believe God really does want the best for us and speaking of our trust in His divine grace and perfect plan. We speak in faith that what we want most is to be answered by God, and not by our own will or desire. In other words, say what we *choose to believe*. This is a part of having faith in Christ. This faith is a choice, we choose what we believe and then speak it. “I choose to believe...”

There is no dubious intent in this. When we choose something, we do not say that we are perfect in it or that we know it to be true. we just state that we are choosing to believe it, and

¹⁶ See glossary for understanding of “looks like”

the Spirit makes way for us to really believe it. “I choose to believe that God wants what is best for me and that it will bring me the greatest joy.”

We must also come to believe and have faith that Christ will indeed manifest the truth unto us. We best do this by stating it after we have repented of our insincere heart and impure intent? This is choosing to believe that we are important enough, loved enough and good enough to be told by God the answer to this prayer. If we do not have this belief then we must go back and repent of not believing Christ, doubting His love, His power, and His promises. We must believe Him when He said “*ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened, seek and ye shall find.*” If we do not believe that He will answer, how will He answer, and would we believe the answer if He did? Or are we double minded, believing that He promises to answer everyones prayers but doesn’t answer me? He loves everyone else and talks to them, but won’t talk to me? Each of us has had a time when we felt the heavens were sealed to us, so that gives us “proof” when we can’t get answers to prayer that God doesn’t answer us. The mind always seeks to find evidence for what we already believe, and we always want to be right, even when it hurts us. This means we are double minded and divided in what we ‘say’ we want and what we really want. Do we want to be right more than we want an answer? Have you ever said “I don’t get answers to prayer, God just doesn’t answer me.” If you have then you are not alone. But paradoxically, you are making it very hard for you to get answers and feel God’s love.

We must use God’s way to become ‘one’ and pure of heart and mind so that there is nothing conflicted inside of us to throw doubt on what we desire — an answer from God. This is why the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are: first faith, second repentance. These two must be used all the time for us to be able to then go to the third principle of the Holy Ghost, which is to teach and enlighten us. If we do not get *clean* on what *WE* think then the Holy Ghost can’t force us to feel him. They are progressive in how we use them. They build upon each other.

This is where we are to go back and do R&R (repent and replace) for disbelief and lack of faith, replacing it with the belief that God does and will answer our prayers.

Being single minded means that our whole self is on the same page, and that we do not have hopes and dreams and desires for something contrary to the will of God. We do not want to be seen of men more than we want to hear and love God. We chose to search out God

¹⁷ See glossary for meaning of word “one”

instead of the acclaim of man or the things of the world. We put all our desires, and heart on the Lord. It is the sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

God tells us to “*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*”(James 4:8) This scripture shows us again that our mind and heart must be made *clean*. They cannot be in two different places and still get the Lord to draw nigh unto us. When we are single minded the Lord will be with us, or more accurately put, we will be able to recognize, hear and feel the Lord’s voice when He speaks to us, because He never leaves us.

Often our mind or heart get in the way, (or out of the way) but instead we are here to practice being ‘one’ with God. Even Christ had to chose to submit to God’s will, and He was a God before He came to Earth, but here He was a mortal man who looked to God the Father for His direction. We must do the same and progress even as He did, line upon line, precept upon precept.

The last step is the promise *that (7) he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.*”After we have been taught some piece of information (about anything), expressed gratitude, asked our question, gotten *clean* in our heart and mind, and then stated in faith that we believe He will give us an answer to our prayer, he promises “*he will manifest the truth of it unto (us) by the power of the Holy Ghost*”.

This is an interesting way of stating a promise because it says that He will ‘manifest the truth’ unto us. Manifest means “*to make clear or evident to the eye or the understanding; show plainly*”¹⁸ The origin of the word tells us that it means *to spread, to show plainly, to discover, disclose, betray, or to display by actions, clearly revealed, palpable, plainly apprehensible, apparent, proved by direct evidence.*¹⁹ In none of these definitions are we told exactly what something being manifest looks like, just that it is plain.

It can mean anything from something being revealed to the mind, the eye, the touch, or the feelings. It can be an idea, or words spoken by another person or hearing the voice of the Lord directly. Or it can be a sudden stroke of understanding or confidence in a certain course of action. We must understand the way the Lord works in order to understand what His manifestations look or feel like. He did not say “I will tell you directly, or I will show you, or you will hear it”. But He promised that He will ‘manifest it’ to us by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is another place where we can get confused in the process of knowing God and

¹⁸ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/manifest>

understanding Him. God did not tell us how He will manifest the truth, just that He would do it. It is up to us **to come to Him**, by being *clean* enough that we can recognize His voice however it is manifest. God speaks to us in MANY different ways, and we can expect Him to change it up from time to time. This is so we can have more experiences with Him, and know Him better. He wants us to understand all the different ways He speaks so we can know Him well. When we speak to our friends and family we don't only talk to them face to face, but we call them on the phone, and text them, write them letters, leave messages on the dry-erase board, leave them notes, draw in the dust on the back of their car, give them gifts, do them favors, wink at them, hug and touch them, and many other ways of communicating. God also speaks to us in many different ways and the more of them we recognize, the better we will know Him. This is the point of knowing God's language: knowing God.

Most of us want to receive answers from God in a certain way, and if they do not come in the way we think they should, we doubt the answers come from God. Others do not know what to expect and find it hard to hear any answer. Their lack of experience and understanding of how the Spirit works creates disbelief and fear. It seems the most 'valued' answer is sight; seeing something or having someone appear to us. This is what many desire when they ask a question, but they do not expect or even hope can happen. Joseph Smith's experience teaches us that each of us can have these experiences and receive answers this way. Most do not have the faith for it, and we must grow up into that experience. We must be able to walk before we can run, for if we run first we are more likely to fall. God wants us to feel and understand Him before we see Him. Without knowing what God's Spirit feels like, we cannot recognize Him if He appears to us. He wants us to know Him, but we must first know Who He is through what we feel.

The Holy Ghost can be manifest in many different ways, and we must come to know the ways it works with us, always allowing it to move and progress into the deeper experiences. This is a learned process. Young Samuel in the Old Testament did not know who was speaking to him when the Lord called to him three times. He kept going to Eli, the priest, thinking he was calling him. Eli had to tell him it was the Lord. The answers we get from the Lord are not always obvious. We must learn to recognize these answers. This takes practice. We are to ask a lot of questions, listen to a lot of voices, heed them and learn from the ensuing experiences. Eve had walked and talked with God in the garden, but still did not know the difference between Satan and God when Satan came and spoke with her. No one

¹⁹ tymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=manifest&searchmode=none

will learn these things without making mistakes. We do not remember the intimate experiences like Adam and Eve of knowing God so closely before we are thrown into this world of sin. We will ALL make mistakes and fall in our understanding from time to time. That is not the problem. The fear of making mistakes is the problem, for it stops us from trying and learning and practicing hearing the voice of the Lord. If we want to be able to call upon God when we really need an answer, then we must call upon Him when there is time and space to do it wrong and about things that don't matter too much. It does not matter what the prayer is about; in the beginning the more basic and simple the stuff the better. What matters is that we are practicing hearing the voice of God.

Some of the ways God and the Holy Ghost work are through hearing or feeling words or ideas. Another way is through dreams and visions with our eyes closed. Some will see with their eyes open, having personages or images appear before them. Another way is to receive answers through the scriptures. One of my personal favorites is the burning of the bosom, which testifies of truth to the recipient. This can be experienced in either a literal warmth in the heart or in a feeling of warmth like sunshine or light that penetrates the heart. Another way is through the feeling of peace. Peace is the greatest witness of truth because it cannot be duplicated or falsified by Satan. I must mention here that peace is not an absence of feelings. It is a very tangible, real and distinct feeling that is beautiful, sweet and unmistakable. When we feel peace we KNOW that we have felt it. It is similar to the feeling of love, belonging, hope, faith, confidence and joy all mixed into one emotion; it feels like coming 'home'. Peace is something that people often talk about but think it means something that it doesn't. Many understand peace to be an absence of other feelings, an absence of anxiety or fear, hurt, distress or conflict, but this is not peace. Some think it is when something makes sense to the mind and therefore they are comfortable with the idea, but this isn't peace either. Peace from God feels almost euphoric in nature. It has a sensation that is not duplicatable by anything else. It runs deep inside of us and produces a feeling of love. If I had to define it with another word besides peace, I would call it love, the love of God inside of the body, creating ease and rest that runs from head to toe. It can start out small and then grow into great peace. It can also remain small but still be peace. Once we have felt peace it becomes easier to identify in small doses. The more pure the vessel, the more peace we can receive and hold onto. One of the reasons we want to be sure that we have pure intent and a sincere heart is so we can feel the purity and confidence of the answer we will receive. If we are full of doubt, fear and anxiety, we cannot receive the love and peace of God as easily. God may give it from time to

time as a gift of grace, but in order to be able to call upon God and consistently receive peace as an answer to prayer, we must be *clean* of our own desires and intentions.

Pure knowledge is another way of receiving the Holy Ghost. This is one Joseph Smith taught. *“The Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding,²⁰ and storing the intellect with present knowledge,²¹ of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham²² than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon²³ one of the literal seed of Abraham²⁴, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul²⁵ and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood,²⁶ and make him actually of the seed of Abraham.²⁷ That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence.²⁸”*

The effect of pure knowledge or intelligence happens when the Holy Ghost is present and brings the person a confidence and understanding beyond his own reasoning. Understanding a principle, situation or any needed truth happens when the Holy Ghost descends upon a person. There is an added power above what we already understand. It feels easy and comforting, and we understand as with a new light shed on the subject.

We are to appreciate all the different ways the Holy Ghost works and find that God will try and get us to see and experience as many as we are willing to believe we can have. I use to think the only way I could get answers was through the scriptures; that was my medium, but after a few years of relying heavily on that avenue, the Lord would not let me get answers that way anymore. He wanted me to have more experiences than just one. If we are struggling to get answers in the way we have always felt them, we can look and see if God is trying to get us to hear Him in another way. He will attempt to help us experience other ways to feel the spirit and learn from the Holy Ghost as we come to know Him. The two ways I put the most credence in are peace and pure knowledge. Everything except peace can be

²⁰ [Eph. 1:18; Alma 32:28,34; D&C 76:12; D&C 88:11; JS-H 1:74](#)

²¹ [John 16:13](#)

²² [D&C 107:40; Abr. 2:11](#)

²³ [Acts 10:44; 3 Ne. 19:13; Moro. 2:3; Moses 5:9](#)

²⁴ [Abr. 2:11](#)

²⁵ [Jer. 32:41; 2 Ne. 25:29](#)

²⁶ [Isa. 4:4; Heb. 9:22](#)

²⁷ [John 8:33,37; Gal. 3:29; D&C 84:34; D&C 103:17; Abr. 1:4; Abr. 2:10](#)

²⁸ STPJS 150-151

duplicated. I do not always get peace on every question I ask, but if it is nothing major, I will be still and wait or start to move forward with the lessor answers and allow my experience to help me understand the rest. If it is a big deal, I will get clean about my fears and anxieties and wait for peace to come regarding the answer. It always does when I am clean enough. There have been times when I did not get peace, and I didn't know what to do, so I moved ahead anyway. Sometimes it was good, and sometimes it was not. But when I have received peace I have never doubted the answer I received. It cannot be taken from me even when other things crowd in to try and convince me that what I have learned is not true. That does not mean there isn't more for me to learn or understand, just that I can have confidence that somewhere there is something which makes the answer I got fit into the big picture perfectly.

Learning how the Holy Ghost speaks is foremost in receiving answers to prayer. If we are *clean* of our own intentions and motives, when the Lord speaks, we hear Him easily, it only takes practice to become proficient. Without being *clean* we are easily deceived by Satan or by our own emotion, which clouds our heart and mind. Satan and incorrect thinking draw us into fear or excitement and then lead us easily into whatever deception Satan wants to plant. Anything but a fullness of truth will do for him. All he cares is that we get it from him or ourselves. This is addressed further in the workbook that accompanies this book.

(8) Finally, after we do this promise over and over again, a new promise starts to happen. It's cumulative in nature: “*And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye **may know the truth of all things.***”

The word “may” is an archaic way²⁹ of saying we will have the ability or power to do something. This is a promise of power to consistently receive answers to prayer through this repeated process. It shows us that this scripture is not just talking about knowing the Book of Mormon being true, but that it will bring **this same** fruit — answers to our prayers — when we use it with any question or inquiry.

The promise that there is nothing this process won't work with is the process by which we can come unto God and make ourselves *clean* enough to hear His words in everything. It takes time and practice, and is easier to do when the question, choice or outcome is not one we have a lot of emotion on. It is a process that can help us see where we are tripping up and where we need to be more honest, accountable and accepting of God's will. He will not force us to hear Him, or do what He knows is best for us. He lovingly waits for us to choose Him.

²⁹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/May>

When we learn to go to Him in the little things, we will have more confidence in the big things. The process will become what we automatically *do* when the stakes are high. If we are not willing to do it when the issue is a small and insignificant one, we likely will not have the ability to hear God in the big questions. It takes lots of interactions with God to know Him. You would never consider someone a good friend that you only had a conversation with once or twice a year. Why do we consider that God is any different?

This is basically the R&R (Repent and Replace) pattern pertaining to getting answers to prayer. Without doing this pattern we are not promised to know the truth of all things. We are at the whim of our own emotions, passions and logic. We are more susceptible to deception and inclined to act in our own judgment instead of seeking and doing the will of God.

The pattern Moroni has given us is sure and even comes with its own promise. It will help us be able to hear the Lord in all situations, and all circumstances, but we must do all of the steps, not just the ones that are easy. Once we learn the process, and apply it often, we will quickly go into a *clean* state of reception, and be able to receive revelation faster. We will have more confidence in what we receive. If we are not already without emotion, or our own will in the matter, all the steps are necessary to ensure the promise. The law and pattern are given and the promise is clearly stated. The pattern/law is basically: have faith, ask, get *clean* — in both heart and head (in other words, have a broken heart and contrite spirit), state our faith in Christ and then we can expect an answer from God.

Most of us ask, but then we stop, thinking that we have done what is necessary to get the answers we want, not knowing there is more required. We do this out of ignorance, and are confused and alienated when the desired answers do not come. We must follow the law and pattern if we want answers from the Lord. If we are ok with getting answers from some another source, or from our own judgment, then we don't need to worry about being *clean* of our own intentions and motives.

The paradox here is that there are times when we are clean enough that we get an answer without doing the pattern. Or because of the grace of God and His desire for us to know we **can** get answers to prayer. Sometimes God will answer us without doing all the steps. He will grant us sufficient grace at times to have the faith necessary to ask Him and then receive it almost effortlessly. This means God will give us 'freebees', but they are to help us see what is possible, and give us the confidence to ask in all things, not to think we are exempt from the law or the pattern. We must get *clean* enough that we do not need to rely on the sheer

grace of God, but can have confidence because we have done what was asked and know that the answers are promised. This is the gift of faith that comes when we have obeyed the law, and nothing can withhold it when we have lived the law. *“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.” (D&C 130:20-21)*

At other times we will receive answers because we have fasted, or plead for a long time, or wept and shown great contrition. This often works because WE are being changed in the process, not God or His will. If we get uncomfortable enough to give up our own will through the pain of not getting an answer, that is what God is waiting for — our ‘sincere heart and real intent’, or ‘a broken heart and contrite spirit’. Once we have arrived at this place, we are ready for the answer, no matter what it is. Sometimes we never get there so we never get the answers. Or sometimes our desire for what we want is so great, that we hear what we want and feel good about it, we settle for a lesser answer, even if it is not from God. We may assume that because we asked and didn’t get an answer, God said yes. This confusion causes some to blame God when things go wrong, but they have not looked at their own motives, desires and intentions and *cleaned* them up first, so that they could hear the word of the Lord in those things.

Ironically, we don’t have to wait until we are exhausted so that we finally give up our own will, and can hear the Lord’s voice. We can do it an easier way, through repentance and replacing our own will with God’s will. This puts us into humility much faster and with a greater degree of confidence. I’m not saying that we shouldn’t or don’t need to fast to get an answer to prayer. Sacrifice is an important part of contrition, and sometimes there is no other way for us to receive the power to give up our own will. Along with having pure intent and a sincere heart, fasting causes us to be in a state of readiness, which makes us open and able to hear the voice of the Lord. That is why fasting is so effective. Put repentance, obedience, and sacrifice together and we will find it magnificently easier to hear the voice of the Lord!

This does not guarantee that we will automatically know how to feel or recognize the Spirit when it speaks to us. We need to practice, and learn, this skill, but secondary to being *clean*. If we cannot tell the difference between our own fears, desires, judgment, and the Spirit’s voice, we will not be able to hear the voice of the Lord even if it is present all the time speaking to us. This pattern is the key but only the first part in knowing how to hear and receive revelation. To summarize: Be grateful, ask in Christ’s name, have a sincere heart

and clean intentions and emotions; getting *clean* of our own will and judgment, and into a place of humility and meekness and then use our faith in Christ by stating that we choose to believe Him and obey what He says. At this juncture the Spirit will manifest the truth to us and we can know the truth of all things. This is the pattern of receiving and knowing God's will. It is a microcosm of perfection. If we are *clean* enough to get answers to prayer, and then we obey the Lord, we will find ourselves hearing Him daily, hourly, and moment by moment.

The pattern in application looks something like this. What I have written below is only and example. It is to be personalized and is to be done in prayer between you and God. Each fear or doubt that you feel should be addressed and repented of and replaced. The more you get *clean* on the faster and easier the answers come.

- A. *"Father please forgive me for being afraid of getting an answer to my question, for doubting that You want what is best for me, and feeling afraid that you want something different than what I want. Please forgive me for believing it will be too hard to do what you want me to do, that it really isn't the best thing, or that You will just ask me to do what is hardest for me to do. Please forgive me for thinking and feeling that if the answer looks like (fill in the blank of how you think the answer should look) that I will not like it, or I will feel (fill in the blank about what you think you will feel if given a certain answer) about it and then I won't do as you asked. Etc. (this is just a prayer in your own words acknowledging your thoughts, ideas, beliefs, fears, doubts, hopes, and misgivings).*
- B. *"Father, please apply the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to my fears and doubts.*
- B. *"I choose to trust and have faith that whatever you tell me or whatever the spirit teaches me is true about this issue, I chose to believe it. I choose to have confidence that you know more than I do regarding this, and I choose to follow Your instructions even if they seem like they will be too hard. I choose to feel safe and confident in trusting Your direction and instruction, I choose to feel and love the answers I'm given." , I chose to understand and be taught about (whatever question you are asking) and I chose to find joy in knowing and following the will of the Lord. Etc.*

This whole thing is to be done in our own words. It's just a prayer where we give (repent of) God our doubts, fears, and lack of faith and then chose to believe, hope, trust, and love that God will answer and protect us perfectly. That His voice is more correct than our own, and that we choose to feel, and hear Him. We also must give Him our previous judgments

about the thing we are praying about. If we believe that something can't be true, because we can't see how it fits with another truth, then we have judged it, and are stopping Him from teaching us more. We must give that judgment to God, and allow Him to teach us more truth, and how the new knowledge fits, or does not fit. Unless we relinquish our judgments and ideas, His truths will not be able to come in and enlighten our mind.

Every kingdom has a law given to it, if we increase into a higher kingdom, we will be given the new laws that will look a bit different from the lower kingdom. If we judge that something is not possible because we cannot understand the higher law, then we will not be able to enter the higher kingdom either.³⁰

The words we say should be as directly pertinent to our experience as we can make them. We must be as specific about our fears, misgivings, ideas, concerns, and lack of faith as we can be. Remember we must admit that we cannot keep the law perfectly, before we will be given the grace of knowing and answers. Change, or repentance, is about acknowledging that we are not perfect, and then allowing God to make us perfect. The one must be done before we can receive the other. God cannot perfect us if we already act like we're perfect, which means we are not willing to acknowledge our flaws. If He did, we would continue to think we did it, when it is all about knowing God and His power and love, not being in our ego.

³⁰ D&C 88:31-45