

Digital Only

Unlocking the Door to Personal Revelation

By Annelise Gardiner

There have been times when I've felt like I'm knocking on a closed door that's not going to open.

During the past few years, President Russell M. Nelson and countless Church leaders have invited us to seek more personal revelation and to learn to recognize the voice of the Savior to be able to “hear Him” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

But for me, personal revelation has sometimes been a little confusing. I love that God can speak directly to me, but as a young adult faced with many big decisions, I've occasionally felt as if I'm knocking on heaven's door with no response.

In these moments, I was always doing the basics—reading the scriptures, saying my prayers, going to church, and keeping the commandments—so what was I missing?

Over the past few months, I've realized that sometimes receiving revelation takes greater effort on our part. Here are some ways that I've found to go the extra mile.

1. Be Still and Make Time to Listen

Being still is tricky for me. I always have a never-ending to-do list. While I do get a lot done, I am often stressed and overwhelmed by everything I've committed myself to. When I was looking for ways to become more receptive to personal revelation, I realized that I was living my life like Martha instead of Mary.¹ I wasn't giving myself time to just be still. After reading conference talks that counsel us to create a place and time to regularly listen to the Spirit, I knew I needed to do that.² I now do my morning scripture study at a desk (instead of in bed), and I use my paper scriptures so I won't be distracted by my phone.

2. Spend Intentional Time in the Temple

I've been blessed to live near several temples, and I've always been pretty good about

going weekly. Many General Authorities have taught that worship in the temple can help us be more in tune with the Spirit,³ so I figured I was already doing enough. But answers still weren't coming. As I looked at my habits, I realized I had a pretty obvious area for improvement: I often get drowsy in the temple. I've told my friends, "If Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf said that 'church sleep is among the healthiest of all sleeps,'⁴ then temple sleep must be even better!" and I've rationalized my sleepiness by thinking that the temple is just so peaceful that I can't help it. But the temple isn't a day spa. I go to the temple to work—to perform proxy ordinances that give my deceased family members the opportunity to have eternal life.⁵

I realized it was time for me to "awake" (Alma 32:27) and be more intentional in my temple worship. I try to prepare myself spiritually and mentally before I go to the temple instead of treating it as just another part of my routine.

3. Participate in Family History Work

Church leaders have encouraged us multiple times to be engaged in family history work and have linked many blessings to our participation in this effort.⁶ However, most of my ancestors have already had their temple ordinances completed. So what more could I do? I could learn about the life of each person whose name I brought to the temple—really visualize them as an actual person and as a member of my family. I also started recording my own life history, indexing, and sharing inspiring stories from my family's history.

4. Share the Gospel

When I'm sharing the gospel—with nonmembers and members—I often end up teaching myself something. Maybe you've experienced this on your mission or while preparing a Sunday School lesson. Many Church leaders have confirmed that declaring our faith and encouraging faithfulness in others will help us receive more personal revelation.⁷ When we're "speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost," we can "always learn something from what [we've] said."⁸ I've started to share more about the gospel on social media, and I bring it up in daily conversations with my friends and family.

5. Realize That Personal Revelation Comes Step by Step

Some people receive crystal clear answers when they ask the Lord about big decisions in their lives, but as for me, Heavenly Father seemed to stay silent about my biggest

questions. Then I realized that I might be asking the wrong questions.

Heavenly Father does want to speak to me,⁹ but He's giving me answers "line upon line," not all at once.¹⁰ I realized I had been looking ahead to the end of my journey—expecting some grand sign that would solve all my problems¹¹—when I actually needed to ask, "What's the next step?"

I still don't have all the answers to my big questions, but I can see that God is gradually guiding me toward these bigger answers, one step at a time. This understanding has strengthened my faith and trust that He will keep leading me in the right direction.

Opening the Door to Personal Revelation

When we follow Jesus Christ and have the gift of the Holy Ghost, we can receive personal revelation daily. But we often don't realize or take time to recognize His constant presence and influence around us. However, the world is becoming more confusing, and as President Nelson has said, "It will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."¹²

The more we can listen to and recognize the Spirit, the better prepared we will be to face and overcome our challenges. We can all find ways to go the extra mile to receive personal revelation in our lives, whether it be fasting, serving others, or doing any combination of things that draw us closer to Christ. The door to heaven's answers may not swing wide open after a minute—or even a month—of knocking, but if we strive to be intentional in inviting and listening to the Spirit, we will be able to hear His quiet voice telling us where to find the key.

In a video with the Church magazines, young adults share their unique ways of seeking and receiving personal revelation.

You can submit your own article, ideas, or feedback at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org. We can't wait to hear from you!