



## **CHOOSE LIFE: FOLLOW THE SPIRIT**

### *A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles*

Choice. These days, we often hear comments about the right to choose, freedom of choice. Sometimes these discussions imply that belief in the word of God inhibits freedom of choice. Some of these discussions go so far as to declare that choices of men and women can supersede the word of God.

On the contrary, nothing could be further from the truth.

Throughout life everyone has freedom to make choices. ... *after He had created our first parents ... it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter. Wherefore, the Lord God gave it unto man that he should act for himself... enticed by the one or the other.* (II Nephi 2:15&16) We are constantly making choices, enticed toward one direction or the other. But having freedom to choose does not automatically make every choice acceptable to God.

In truth, we all exist within a great spiritual reality that includes our temporary physical world within it. Spiritual reality is much greater than physical reality. That is why Moses was able to part the Red Sea, Joshua caused the sun to stand still, and the dead man revived upon being put into Elisha's sepulchre and contacting his bones. Life as we know it, came about through a choice: ...*Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit ... And we see that death comes upon mankind ... nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us ...* (Alma 12:22-24) This temporary life we prize so dearly presents nothing more significant than time allotted to each of us by God for His specific purpose: It is the time to prepare to meet God and to become ready for eternity.

God supports the choice of "eternal life." He loves us so much that He ... *gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might be saved.* (John 3:16) Jesus

brought His Gospel of Salvation. He redeemed our sins with His own blood. Moroni tells us, *"...the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; ... for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; ..."* (Moroni 7:16) True believers in Christ know that the Holy Spirit is very real; God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (also called Holy Ghost). We know that the Holy Spirit is promised to all those who believe, repent, and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. *And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; ... And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.* (Moroni 8:25&26) After our baptisms, the ministry laid hands upon each of us for reception of the Holy Spirit. We know that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Times may march on, but His values are constant. The guidance of the Holy Spirit has always been and will always be consistent with the word of God who never changes and shall bring the believers to be eternally with God.

Being constantly aware of the spiritual enticements that attract you is essential. It is very real that we deal with enticements of 1) our own spirit of man (carnal) as well as with 2) evil spirits and 3) the Holy Spirit. In yielding to the Holy Spirit of God we choose righteousness and can overcome the tendency toward carnal priorities. But in turning away from that Holy Spirit, one takes on a perception of life that is a distortion of that which God has declared. *... to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually minded is life eternal.* (II Nephi 9:39; see also Rom. 8:6&7) Without the Holy Spirit, life's choices are geared to gratify the flesh as much as possible: to prioritize acquisition of material things, to indulge carnal tastes, to "eat, drink, and be merry" without sufficient regard for the plan of God. Guided by the Spirit of God, choices favor "life and peace" and "life eternal." Choosing to live in the Spirit avoids condemnation altogether. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* (Romans 8:14)

True belief in Christ - faith in Christ, hope in Christ - is a product of the power of the Holy Spirit. *And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for He worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow, and forever.* (Moroni 10:7) Faith is enhanced by interaction with God – interaction with God is enhanced by faith: a wondrous, beautiful cycle (See Alma 32:26-43). This is why Christ promised His Comforter. We know that the Spirit is more than an intangible, internal feeling or sensation, but rather, the Spirit manifests in many, many ways. *And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from*

*the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them. ... to one is given ... that he may teach the word of wisdom; ... to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge ... to another, exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing ... to another, that he may work mighty miracles; ... to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; ... to another, all kinds of tongues; ... to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues. And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; ... And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ. (Moroni 10:8-18)* The manifestations of the gifts provide evidence of God's presence and His truth.

Moroni's reference "to profit them" means to strengthen believers' enticement toward righteousness and successful spiritual lives that lead to eternal life with God. Also, it can mean profit for others by helping persuade them to join the believers. How many times have you heard testimonies of God's Spirit intervening: tumors disappeared, collisions miraculously avoided, food being multiplied beyond the original quantity. Yes, these events made life better in those moments, but, more importantly, these events help us believe, strengthen our faith, draw us closer to God. These are small "partings of the sea," "haltings of the sun," "raisings of the dead." If we can believe that the Spirit of God was manifested, we can grow in faith and look for more. Imagine the beacon of light the Church can become in a world that grows darker daily in so many ways. As we work our way toward eternal life with God, can we not help others find that path?

Let us all choose wisely: eternal life. Choose to believe and abide by every word that God has given us. Choose to earnestly pray for strength to follow the Spirit of God. Choose to pray for the power of God manifested among us. Realize that choice is a privilege God gave to mankind – not to permit sin – but to allow us to be restored to Him for eternity. Let us make the most of that opportunity by choosing to draw closer to Him each day.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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