

**3 Nephi 19: 1-3**

1 If you knew Jesus was coming tomorrow, what would do today?

**3 Nephi 19:4-6**

2 As the Church grows in total; membership and regional distribution, wise delegation becomes more and more important—in fact, imperative for continued success.

**3 Nephi 19:9***Prayed for Holy Ghost*

3 There is... a difference between the gift of the Holy Ghost and the enjoyment of the gift. All saints after baptism receive the gift or right to the sanctifying power of the Spirit; only those who are worthy and who keep the commandments actually enjoy the promised reward. In practice, members of the Church enjoy the companionship of the Spirit from time to time as they manage by obedience, to get in tune with the Infinite.

The actual enjoyment of the gift of the Holy Ghost is a supernal gift that a man can receive in mortality. The fact of its receipt is a witness that the saints so blessed are reconciled to God and are doing the things that will assure them of eternal life in the realms ahead.

Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 2257.

4 I have little or no fear for the boy or girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His Spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them. Supplicating the Lord for the guidance of His Spirit places around us a safeguard, and if we earnestly and honestly seek the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, I can assure you that we will receive it.

Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, [1976], 26.

5 If you want to obtain and keep the guidance of the Spirit, you can do so by following this simple four-point program. One, Pray. Pray diligently... Second, study and learn the gospel. Third, live righteously; repent of your sins... Fourth, give service in the Church.

Marion G. Romney, "Guidance of the Holy Spirit," *Ensign*, Jan. 1980, 5.

**3 Nephi 19:10-13***Re-Baptism*

6 When Christ appeared to the Nephites on this continent, he commanded them to be baptized, although they had been baptized previously for the remission of their sins... Then we read that the Savior commanded Nephi and the people to be baptized again, because he had organized anew the Church under the gospel...

..For the same reason Joseph Smith and those who had been baptized prior to April 6, 1830 [that baptism was for the remission of sins], were again baptized on the day of the organization of the Church.

... They had to be in order to come into the Church by the door.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:336.

7 After the crucifixion of the Savior there came a new order of things. The law of Moses came to an end, and with it, sacrifice of animals ceased, and the fulness of the gospel was ushered in. Therefore in this new order it became necessary for all those who had been previously baptized to be baptized again...

Therefore in the new order, Jesus commanded Nephi to be baptized and also the other brethren of the twelve. Following this all of the people were baptized. The conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost would naturally follow, except in the case of those who had been previously baptized and confirmed.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972], 4:96-97.

8 The Church among the Nephites before the coming of Christ was not in its fulness and was under the law of Moses. The Savior restored the fulness and gave to them all the ordinances and blessings of the gospel. Therefore, it actually became a new organization, and through baptism they came into it.

We have a similar condition in this dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were baptized by command of the Angel John the Baptist. Several others were baptized before the organization of the Church. However, on the day the church was organized, all who had been previously baptized were baptized again, not for the remission of sins, but for entrance into the Church. In each case the reason was the same.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960], 3:205-206.

### **3 Nephi 19:13**

9 *Holy Ghost*

The receipt of that member of the Godhead [the Holy Ghost] as a gift, and the enjoyment of the companionship of the Holy Spirit, is essential to salvation.

10 In December 1839, Joseph Smith and Elias Higbee wrote to Hyrum Smith and the High Council of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding their visit to Washington D.C. to seek redress for the suffering of the Saints in Missouri. In a postscript to that letter, obviously written by Elias Higbee, we read: "In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from other religions of the day. Brother Joseph said we differed in mode of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost (HC 4:42). On a later occasion, the Prophet stated, "You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (TPJS, 314).

Monte S Nyman, *Divine Ministry—The First Gospel*, p. 282.

Joseph stepped toward me, and looking very earnestly, yet pleasantly said, “Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife, and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God. Tell the brethren if they will follow the Spirit of the Lord, they will go right. Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord; and if they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in Heaven before they came into the world. Our Father in Heaven organized the human family, but they are all disorganized and in great confusion.”

Joseph then showed me the pattern, how they were in the beginning. This I cannot describe, but I saw it, and saw where the Priesthood had been taken from the earth and how it must be joined together, so that there would be a perfect chain from Father Adam to his latest posterity. Joseph again said, “Tell the people to be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord and follow it, and it will lead them just right.”

Watson, Elden J. (Ed), *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1846-1847*, pp. 5528-530.

Praying to receive the Holy Ghost, and praying by the power of the Holy Ghost are two different things. Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, “we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” but with divine aid “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;... the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). The Holy Ghost will actually provide whoever is praying with precise particulars of what to pray for. Such was the state of the Nephite multitude who, while praying, “did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire” (3 Nephi 19:24).

Why is it necessary to pray with the power of the Holy Ghost? President Benson explains that “with the help of the Holy Ghost, we will know about what we should pray” (112). When we utter the things that God wants us to utter, then we are asking “in the Spirit,” which is akin to asking “according to the will of God.” When this occurs, our prayers will be answered even as we ask (see D&C 46:30. Having the Holy Ghost dictate God’s will concerning us should be the goal of all Latter-day Saints, knowing that “the time will come when we shall know the will of God before we ask. Then everything for which we pray will be right. That will be when, as a result of righteous living, we shall enjoy the companionship of the Spirit that he will dictate to us what we should ask” (Romney, *Learning of the Eternities*, 117-18).

Individuals who ask for the companionship of the Holy Ghost and pray by the power of the Spirit will discover marvelous things happening in their lives. Spiritually, their lives will become transformed through Christ into a new creation. God will give them temporal and spiritual directions dealing with all aspects of their mortal lives. The time will come when the Saint will be “purified and cleansed from all sin,” and then the righteous souls will “ask

whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask” (D&C 50:29-30).

Donald W. Parry, *Pray Always: Learning to Pray as Jesus Prayed*, p. 144-145.

### **3 Nephi 19:18**

*Prayed unto Jesus*

- 13 There was a special reason why this was done in this instance and on a onetime basis. Jesus had already taught them to pray in his name to the Father, which they did... Jesus was present before them as the symbol the Father. Seeing him, it was as though they saw the Father; praying to him, it was as though they prayed to the Father. It was a special and unique situation.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The Coming of Christ* [1978], 560-561.

### **3 Nephi 19: 20**

*I Thank Thee*

- 14 Prayer is an essential part of conveying appreciation to our Heavenly Father. He awaits our expressions of gratefulness each morning and night in sincere, simple prayer from our hearts for our many blessings, gifts, and talents.

Through expressions of prayerful gratitude and thanksgiving, we show our dependence upon a higher source of wisdom and knowledge—God the Father and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Robert D. Hales, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1992 or *Ensign*, May 1992, 64.

### **3 Nephi 19: 20-23**

*Unity in Prayer*

- 15 From the Savior’s language, we see clearly it is the Holy Ghost that provides such unity, a doctrinal point not so clearly communicated in the New Testament account. Furthermore, it is significant that one of the ultimate evidences God has of our belief in Deity is that we are seen and heard praying. Christ noted this evidence on behalf of the Nephites. To the Father, he said, “Thou seest that they believe in me because thou hearest them [3 Nephi 19:22]... It is the key to the miraculous manifestations of heaven and the personal companionship of the Holy Comforter(s).”

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 280.

- 16 Jesus achieved perfect unity with the Father by submitting Himself, both flesh and spirit, to the will of the Father. The Savior’s ministry was always clearly focused because there was no debilitating or distracting double-mindedness in Him. Referring to His Father, Jesus said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29)...

Surely we will not be one with God and Christ until we make Their will and interest our greatest desire. Such submissiveness is not reached in a day, but through the Holy Spirit, the Lord will tutor us if we are willing until, in process of time, it may accurately be said that He is in us as the Father is in Him. At times I tremble to consider what may be required, but I know that it is only in this perfect union that a fulness of joy can be found.

D. Todd Christopherson,, *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 72-73.

**3 Nephi 19:23***One yet Separate*

- 17 The Father and the Son are two personages of the Deity, with the Holy Ghost as their ministering Spirit or agent... While they are two personages, they are but one—one in feeling, one in thought, one in mind, one in everything, in fact, in every direction in which their power is or can be exercised.

George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truths*, ed. by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 161

- 18 I listened to a videotape the other night prepared by the Baptists. They are coming to Salt Lake to hold a convention, and they want to convert us all. But they say, among other things... as I understand it, they [the Baptists] believe that God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are one being. The scriptures tell a different story, Jesus prayed to His Father in Heaven. His Father in Heaven spoke at the time of His baptism. There was a vision of His Father at the time of Transfiguration. And in that great, classic prayer, He said, “Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). He said, “I will be your access to the Father” (see John 14:6). They are two beings, entirely separate. And He promised the Holy Ghost as the comforter when he should leave them. They are separate beings. Joseph Smith, I would like to submit, learned more about the nature of Deity as a 14-year-old boy in the grove of his father’s farm than the acts of all the ministers and priests and the divines who have long argued that question.

*Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley*, 1995-99 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:513.

**3 Nephi 19: 24***Prayer*

- 19 Perfect prayers are those which are inspired, in which the Spirit reveals the words which should be used.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, second edition [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 586.

- 20 True prayer is a gift of the Spirit. When our attitudes and actions are in harmony with the mind and will of God, the Holy Ghost inspires us as we pray and guides our words (see commentary on 3 Nephi 17:15-20; 18:20). When the Saints pray in the Spirit, they find their prayers given to them from above (D&C 46:30; 50:30); they find their words reaching beyond their own thoughts, their hearts open to people and principles and ideas that they had not considered previously. This kind of prayer, prayer directed and motivated by the power of the Holy Ghost is a revelatory experience; because our hearts have begun to tell our minds things they did not know before, we learn something from what is uttered.

Millet and McConkie, *BOM Commentary*, p. 135.

**3 Nephi 19:24***Did not multiply words*

21 When the Nephite disciples were praying in the presence of Jesus, they set a good example for us all. The record says... “they did not multiply many words...”

This is consistent with the commandments the Lord gave to the Jews during his mortal ministry. He said “When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” (Matthew 6:7; also see 3 Nephi 13:7)

When we pray publicly, let us be careful to never be swept away in the desire for honors or men, which might cause us to pray without real intent or to unnecessarily extend the length of our prayers. The same caution applies to those who pray for a mortal audience rather than simply to be heard by the Lord. We must always be careful to avoid “flowery” prayers or prayers to impress. Surely the Lord is not pleased with such an approach, nor will he answer the prayers of one who is not focused on the Lord or who prays with real intent.

*Receiving Answers to Our Prayers* [1996], 43-44.

**3 Nephi 19:25***Countenance*

22 Transfiguration for mortals consists of a temporary physical and spiritual change, allowing them not only to behold the glory of God but to enter his presence. It is characterized by o-illumination of countenance such as Moses experienced (Moses 1:11; ex. 34:29-35) and comes about by an infusion of God’s power (MD. P.725). Because God is a being of transcendent glory, it is impossible for men and women to enter his presence without their physical bodies being spiritually “quickenened.” The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that God “dwells in eternal fire; flesh and blood cannot go there, for all corruption is devoured by the fire. “Our God is a consuming fire” (TPJS, p. 367; cf. Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24). Transfiguration bestows on individuals a temporary condition compatible to that of deity and allows them to see God face-to-face...

The earth itself will be transfigured at Christ’s second coming. While on the Mount of Transfiguration the three apostles saw not only God’s divine glory but also the earth in its transfigured state (cf. D&C 63:21; TPJS, p.13). Modern revelation says that, through obedience and enduring to the end, faithful Saints will receive an inheritance upon the transformed earth when the millennial day arrives (D&C 63:20-21).

*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol.4.

23 There are two ways in which the Lord’s countenance did “shine upon them”—one literal and the other symbolic. From the context of this verse, we can see that there was a literal transfiguration of the disciples in that they were filled with light and their countenances shone with light like that of the Savior. They were so filled with the Spirit that they shone with a literal light and glory (compare Exodus 34:29; Daniel 3:22-27; Matthew 17:2; Helaman 5:23).

In a more symbolic way, we experience the countenance of the Lord shining upon us, like the Nephites, when we feel of the Savior’s perfect love for us, his compassion, and his approbation.

Though we may not literally, in this life, *see* the smiling face of God, we can nonetheless *feel* the smile and joy of the Lord as we please him through service and obedience.

R. Miller and J.F. McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992], 135-136.

- 24 There is a God, and he has an all-seeing eye. He can see you now, and he loves you. As you get older, you'll worry more and more about this question: "When I see him, will he smile?" You can go through this life with a picture in your mind of the Savior smiling at you. Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 88.

### **3 Nephi 19:28**

#### *Purified*

- 25 First, two things are essential for spiritual progress. For Latter-day Saints these two things seem commonplace by reason of counsel we constantly receive from our leaders, yet not all Saints comply. To those seeking sanctification, however, daily scripture study and "hearts drawn out in prayer unto [God] continually" (Alma 34:27) are crucial.

If we are hoping to do good the Lord's way, we must write the word of God on our hearts; we must obtain the word by feasting on scripture every day. As President Howard W. Hunter said, "The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study" (Ensign, November 1979, p. 64). Here, especially if we have little children or some other great demand on our time, we can only do the best we can, realizing that a very small amount, focused on, can be of great value, especially if it is held in the mind. But clearly, the greater the amount, the greater the blessing. "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21; see also Alma 17:2).

Formal and informal prayer, offered in the spirit of Moroni 10:4-5, must include a sincere heart, real intent, having faith in Christ, otherwise the prayers apparently do not set anything divine into motion. Without prayer we are just participating in man's righteousness, not God's (see Romans 10:2-3).

With scripture study and prayer as foundation, we are ready to consolidate our efforts to greater effect on the third issue. This point could be made in so many ways that I've struggled to know how to say it succinctly, but it has to do with focusing our unfocused minds. Moroni gives the essential idea. You'll notice the word *all* coupled the word *them*:

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall... love God with all your might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God (Moroni 10:32).

M Catherine Thomas, *Spiritual Lightning*, p. 100-101.

**3 Nephi 19:27**

26 [pray not for the world, but for those whom thou has given me out of the world, because of their faith] The Saints are called to live *in the* world, though they are counseled to be not *of* the world. They cannot make a difference in a wicked world—cannot be the salt of the earth or the light of the world—if they seclude themselves from the world. The blessings of the gospel cannot be obtained by the wicked and the worldly. The Savior’s promises are bestowed upon those who come out from the world through faith, repentance, and obedience to all gospel laws and ordinances.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. 4, p. 136.

27 Glorified=Receive a fulness of light, truth, and knowledge (D&C 93).

**3 Nephi 19: 32-34**

28 The beautiful prayer of the Savior recorded in 3 Nephi 19 may or may not have been heard (or recorded) by those who were present. The scripture says that “Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and went a little way off from them” and there prayed to his Father (3 Nephi 19:19).

Someone might have heard that prayer and recorded it (compare 3 Nephi 19:33), or the Master may have repeated it a second time for the historical record. But another possibility for such private declarations running throughout the Book of Mormon is that the Spirit simply revealed in every necessary detail what Mormon—and we—needed to know. Obviously nothing was to be lost that would be essential to the latter-day message, no matter how privately it may have been uttered initially.

Jeffrey R. Holland; in *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 225.

29 [An experience similar to the one in 3 Nephi 19 was described by Elder Bruce R. McConkie. He, with the other Apostles, had been with President Spencer W. Kimball when the great revelation on the priesthood being made available to all worthy men was given.]

On the first day of June in this year, 1978, the First Presidency and the Twelve, after full discussion of the proposition and all the premises and principles that are involved, importuned the Lord for a revelation. President Kimball was mouth, and he prayed with great faith and great fervor; this was one of those occasions when an inspired prayer was offered... He prayed by the power of the Spirit, and there was perfect unity, and complete harmony, between the Presidency and the Twelve on the issue involved... The Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced. The revelation came to the President of the Church; it also came to each individual present... The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings and all its obligations, including the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, to those of every nation, culture, and race, including the black race. There was no question whatsoever as to the word and message that came... There is no way to describe in language what is involved. This cannot be done. You are familiar with the Book of Mormon references where the account says that no

tongue could tell and no pen would write what was involved in the experience and that it had to be felt by the power of the Spirit. This was one of those occasions... I cannot describe in words what happened; I can only say that it happened and that it can be known and understood only by the feeling that can come into the heart of man.

Bruce R. McConkie, *A Symposium on the Book of Mormon*, 1979, pp. 4-5.

### **3 Nephi 19: 35**

#### *Miracles*

- 30 Why don't our talks in general conference and local meetings say more about the miracles we have seen? Most of the miracles we experience are not to be shared. Consistent with the teachings of the scriptures, we hold them sacred and share them only when the Spirit prompts us to do so...

...Modern revelation directs that "they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation" (D&C 84:73. Another revelation declares "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64)... Latter-day Saints generally follow these directions. In bearing testimonies and in our public addresses we rarely mention our most miraculous experiences, and we rarely rely on signs that the gospel is true. We usually just affirm our testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel and give few details on how we obtained it. Why is this? Signs *follow* those that believe. Seeking a miracle to convert someone is improper sign seeking. By the same token, it is usually inappropriate to recite miraculous circumstances to a general audience that includes people with very different levels of spiritual maturity. To a general audience, miracles will be faith-reinforcing for some but an inappropriate sign for others.

Dallin H. Oaks, "Miracles" [CES fireside for young adults, May 7, 2003] 3, [www.ldsces.org](http://www.ldsces.org).

### **3 Nephi 19: Conclusion**

- 31 Brigham Young noted that to pray always is to live as we pray: "I do not know any other way for the Latter-day Saints than for every breath to be virtually a prayer for God to guide and direct his people... Every breath should virtually be a prayer that God will preserve us from sin and from the effects of sin."

Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds. *Third Nephi 9-40: This Is My Gospel*, p. 144

- 32 If we would advance in holiness—increase in favor with God—nothing can take the place of prayer... Give prayer—daily prayer, secret prayer—a foremost place in your lives. Let no day pass without it. Communion with the Almighty has been a source of strength, inspiration, and enlightenment through the world's history to men and women who have shaped the destinies of individuals and nations for good.

Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, p. 8.

D&C 76: 114-119

But great and marvelous are the words of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion:

Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;

Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him;

To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves:

That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.

And to God and the Lamb be glory, and honor, and dominion forever and ever. Amen.