

Elder / Sister xxxxxx

Today I would like to share an experience with you that I had many years ago. It is an example of how the Holy Ghost teaches us. I call the story my, ***"Don't be a slow sloppy in life"*** story.

Sometimes I am amazed how the Holy Ghost teaches us lessons. I suppose it is different with every person how He works. For me He normally talks to me in my own voice as a still small voice in my mind. But it is as clear as hearing my own voice that I talk to myself with all day long. Normally when He teaches me lessons He uses experiences from my past to mix with what He is trying to teach me. Here is an example of one of those experiences. When I first got out of the Army in 1972, we rented a little house in Provo while I was going to BYU to get my degree in Genealogy. I had already started a genealogy company called Ancestral Research Center Inc. My biggest challenge was finding customers. I came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea. I had never seen such thing done but I decided to try it. We had a little Toyota car so I bought a ski rack to put on top of it. I then purchased a sheet of plywood and cut it in thirds. That then made a huge triangle when put together that was 4 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet and 2 1/2 feet high. I nailed it all together and tied it down on top of my car to make a huge advertising sign on top of my car. I then painted the whole sign bright florescent green. At that time no one had that kind of sign on top of their cars. After I drove it around a few weeks I started seeing them pop up on top of other cars. Starting with Hotels then Taxi Cabs then Domino Pizza. Now they are all over the country. But mine was the very first one that I had ever seen

Well the problem came in putting the lettering on the sign. It was not hard to make, attach to the car or paint florescent green. The hard part was putting the lettering on the sign. I was not good at all at painting lettering. I finally figured out that if I took a ruler and drew a straight line then bought stencils I could trace the letters on the sign that were about 2 inches high so they could be read by someone driving along. That worked fine. The letters were easy to keep aligned and spaced and draw in with a pencil. Now came the challenge, to fill in the penciled in letters.

I purchased some black outdoor enamel paint and a very tiny oil painting brush. I found that with a very tiny brush I could paint around the pencil line and then gradually fill in the middle until I had what looked like an almost perfect letter. But it was very slow going. I painted one side in 8 hours. I painted the second side in 8 hours. On the third day which was Friday night, we decided to go to the State Fair before I was done painting just to take a break.

While we were at the fair we walked around in the carnival with the kids so they could see all the rides and booths and ball throwing games for teddy bears. As we walked around the manager of the carnival came by with a sign painter. He walked up to the ticket booth and said to the painter, "Right there, paint tickets 25 cents". The painter had a little can of black paint and a brush that the bristles were about as broad as your thumb. He dabbed the brush in the paint reached up and in one sleek motion painted a perfect lettered sign, "Tickets 25 cents". No stencil. No line to follow. It was perfect. I was stunned. I stood there and watched in amazement.

The next day as I was painting the final few letters at the bottom of the third side I heard the voice of the Holy Ghost in my mind ask me a question as He often does rather than just tell me something. He asked me if I knew there were four kinds of sign painters. I told Him I did not know that but then the impression came into my mind about the sign painter at the fair the night before and how slow I was and how fast he was then these four things came into my mind as an impression that there are 4 kinds of sign painters and examples of each:

1. Fast and Sloppy (which most people are)
2. Slow and accurate (like what I was doing)
3. Fast and Accurate (like the sign painter at the fair)
4. Slow and Sloppy (a very undesirable way to be)

I remember laughing at Him for telling me that and thinking it was funny. But I clearly got the impression that the goal would be to become a "FAST AND ACCURATE" sign painter.

The Holy Ghost doesn't tell me things like that unless there is a lesson coming. After I thought about the 4 kinds of sign painters for a few minutes then a very clear and distinct impression came into my mind that there are also 4 kinds of people in the church with examples of each. He taught me that lesson by reminding me of Bishops I had known in the past. He reminded me of 4 different Bishops and equated them to this same lesson:

1. Spiritual but undependable
2. Dependable but unspiritual
3. Spiritual and dependable
4. Unspiritual and undependable.

Then the Holy Ghost said to me that if the Lord had to choose between a man who was spiritual but undependable or dependable but unspiritual he would take #2 every time and then he showed me in my mind a couple more examples of Bishops who were that way that I had known in the army. They were not very spiritual but they worked like a clock. Always there doing what needed to be done and gradually they became more and more spiritual as they served. I also was reminded of one I knew while in the army who was very spiritual but very undependable. He was always missing meetings, never remembering to do things.... the ward did not run very well but he was the only worthy man in that branch at that time that could serve. So he did the job as best he could.

When the lesson was learned then the Holy Ghost said to me the goal in life is to become Spiritual and Dependable and never be a Slow Sloppy in the church. The lessons I learn from the Holy Ghost normally do end with a line like that which He says to me that I remember all the rest of my life. "DON'T BE A SLOW SLOPPY BUT RATHER A SPIRITUAL DEPENDABLE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO IN LIFE."

I was so amazed at the lesson I had just learned from Him that I just stood there and looked at the sign for a long time. I have since that day seen applications for this lesson in many parts of my life.

May the Lord bless you in the work.

Brother and Sister Vail

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