

# 24

## Follow the Prophet

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**OBJECTIVE** Each young man will understand the importance of following the living prophet.

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**PREPARATION**

1. Prayerfully study Ezekiel 3:17 and Doctrine and Covenants 1:14, 38; 21:4–6; 28:2; 101:54; 107:65–67, 91–92; 112:20; 124:61.
2. Materials needed:
  - a. Copies of the scriptures (each young man should bring his own).
  - b. A picture of the living prophet.
  - c. Pencils for marking scriptures.
3. Either make copies of the quotations to be read during class or be ready to pass the manual around.
4. Assign two young men to practice the dialogue for the role play. You might want to make copies of the dialogue for them.
5. If they are available, bring copies of recent conference reports or conference issues of the Church magazines.

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**NOTE** You might want to divide this lesson over two class periods or select from the lesson those items you feel would have the greatest influence on the young men.

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**SUGGESTED  
LESSON  
DEVELOPMENT**

Picture discussion

**Introduction**

Show a picture of the living prophet, and ask the young men to explain what they know about him and the position he holds.

- How do you feel about the living prophet?
  - What are the prophet's responsibilities?
  - Why is it important that we trust and honor the prophet?
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**A Prophet, Seer, and Revelator**

Chalkboard discussion

Write the name of the President of the Church on the chalkboard. Explain that we sustain him as a prophet, seer, and revelator. Write the words *prophet*, *seer*, and *revelator* on the chalkboard under the name of the President of the Church.

Discussion

- What do *prophet*, *seer*, and *revelator* mean?

Have three young men read the definitions of three words from the Bible Dictionary: *prophet*, *revelation*, *seer*.

- What does it mean to sustain a leader?

Summarize by explaining that we sustain the President of the Church as a prophet, seer, and revelator. This means that we support him as the Lord's spokesman and that we agree to accept and follow his counsel.

Quotation

Explain that President Gordon B. Hinckley said the following about sustaining the prophet:  
“I speak to the priesthood of this Church, wherever you may be gathered across the world, in gratitude for a prophet to guide us in these latter days. I plead for loyalty to him whom the Lord has called and anointed. I plead for steadfastness in upholding him and giving

attention to his teachings. I have said on another occasion at this pulpit that if we have a prophet, we have everything. If we do not have a prophet, we have nothing. We do have a prophet. We have had prophets since the founding of this Church. We shall never be without a prophet if we live worthy of a prophet.

“The Lord is watching over this work. This is His kingdom. We are not as sheep without a shepherd. We are not as an army without a leader. . . . God help us to be true and faithful, to hear with listening ears that counsel which has come from Him who is our Father and our God, and from Him who is our Savior and our Redeemer as they have spoken to us through those whom we sustain as prophets” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, pp. 77–78; or *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 53).

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### **Only the President Receives Revelation for the Entire Church**

Scripture marking

Have the young men read Doctrine and Covenants 107:65–67, 91–92. Suggest that they mark these verses and write *President of the Church* in the margin.

Explain that the President of the High Priesthood is the living prophet and has the duty of presiding over the Church. The Apostles and the Counselors in the First Presidency are also sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. But the Lord has designated the President of the Church as the only one entitled to receive revelations and directions for the Church as a whole.

Have a young man read and explain Doctrine and Covenants 28:2.

Quotation and chalkboard

Have a young man read the following statement:

“Here we must have in mind—must know—that only the President of the Church, the presiding High Priest, is sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church. He is God’s sole mouthpiece on earth for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only true Church. He alone may declare the mind and will of God to his people. No officer of any other Church in the world has this high right and lofty prerogative” (J. Reuben Clark Jr., “When Are Church Leader’s Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?” *Church News*, 31 July 1954, p. 10).

Write the following on the chalkboard. (More will be added later.)

<p>President of the Church</p> <p>1. Only person who receives revelation for the entire Church</p>
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### **God Will Never Allow the Prophet to Lead the Church Astray**

Quotations

Hand out the four statements below, or pass the manual around for the young men to read. Tell them which prophet made each statement.

1. President Wilford Woodruff said:

“I say to Israel, the Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty” (Official Declaration—1).

2. Elder Marion G. Romney recalled an experience he had with President Heber J. Grant:
 

“I remember years ago when I was a bishop I had President Grant talk to our ward. After the meeting, I drove him home. . . . When we got to his home I got out of the car and went up on the porch with him. Standing by me, he put his arm over my shoulder and said: ‘My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it.’ Then with a twinkle in his eye, he said, ‘But you don’t need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray’ ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, p. 78).
3. President Harold B. Lee, referring to President David O. McKay, said:
 

“We believe in a living prophet, seer, and revelator, and I bear you my solemn witness that we have a living prophet, seer, and revelator. We are not dependent only upon the revelations given in the past as contained in our standard works—as wonderful as they are—but . . . we have a mouthpiece to whom God does and is revealing his mind and will. God will never permit him to lead us astray. As has been said, God would remove us out of our place if we should attempt to do it. You have no concern. Let the management and government of God, then, be with the Lord. Do not try to find fault with the management and affairs that pertain to him alone and by revelation through his prophet—his living prophet, his seer, and his revelator” (*The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator* [address delivered to seminary and institute faculty, Brigham Young University, 8 July 1968], p. 13).
4. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:
 

“I think there is one thing which we should have exceedingly clear in our minds. Neither the President of the Church, nor the First Presidency, nor the united voice of the First Presidency and the Twelve will ever lead the Saints astray or send forth counsel to the world that is contrary to the mind and will of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, p. 99; or *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 88).

Chalkboard

Add the second sentence to the chalkboard:

<p>President of the Church</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only person who receives revelation for the entire Church</li> <li>2. Will never lead the Church astray</li> </ol>
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### **The Prophet Is a Watchman**

Quotation

Read the following statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Remember whose church this is. It carries the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands as its head. His is the power to remove any who is found remiss in his duty or who is teaching that which is not in harmony with His divine will.

“I say for each and all that we have no personal agenda. We have only the Lord’s agenda. There are those who criticize when we issue a statement of counsel or warning. Please know that our pleadings are not motivated by any selfish desire. Please know that our warnings are not without substance and reason. Please know that the decisions to speak out on various matters are not reached without deliberation, discussion, and prayer. Please know that our only ambition is to help each of you with your problems, your struggles, your families, your lives. . . .

“Ours is the responsibility outlined by Ezekiel: ‘Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me’ (Ezekiel 3:17).

“We have no selfish desire in any of this, other than the wish that our brethren and sisters will be happy, that peace and love will be found in their homes, that they will be blessed by the power of the Almighty in their various undertakings in righteousness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, pp. 79–80; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, pp. 59–60).

Read and discuss with the young men Ezekiel 3:17 and Doctrine and Covenants 101:54 and 124:61.

- How is our present prophet a watchman? What problems or dangers has he warned us about?
- How might the prophet’s counsel protect us from danger?

Chalkboard

Add the third sentence to the chalkboard:

<p>President of the Church</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only person who receives revelation for the entire Church</li> <li>2. Will never lead the Church astray</li> <li>3. A watchman to warn us of spiritual and temporal danger</li> </ol>
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### The Prophet Is a Teacher

Quotation

President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught:

“There are many little things that test our willingness to accept the word of the prophets. Jesus said, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37).

“So it has been through the history of mankind, and so it is today. . . .

“Now again, as always, we are faced with public moral issues, this time concerning lotteries, pari-mutuel betting, and other forms of gambling. The Presidents of the Church have spoken clearly and unequivocally on these matters.

“These are little things, but they are important things. They bring to mind the great contest between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal. Said Elijah on that occasion: ‘How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.’ (1 Kings 18:21)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, p. 77; or *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 53).

Scripture and discussion

Have a young man read aloud Exodus 18:20.

- What counsel did Moses receive about what he should teach the people?
- Why is it important for us to listen to what the prophet teaches about ordinances, laws, and what we should be doing in our daily lives?

Add the fourth sentence to the chalkboard:

<p>President of the Church</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only person who receives revelation for the entire Church</li> <li>2. Will never lead the Church astray</li> <li>3. A watchman to warn us of spiritual and temporal danger</li> <li>4. Teaches the ordinances and laws of God</li> </ol>
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Quotations and discussion

### Church Members Are to Follow the Living Prophet

Explain that one of our greatest tests is to follow the living prophets.

Read the following statement by Elder Harold B. Lee:

“During the early days of the Church we passed through a period of slander and misrepresentation, and we came through. It drove us together because of enemies from the outside. And we survived it. We passed through a period of mobbing and driving, when lives were taken and blood was shed, and somehow the place of the martyr gave us strength. We passed through poverty, and we gained strength from the test of it. Then we passed through an age of what we might call apostasy, or betrayal from the inside—one of the severest tests through which we have passed. We are now going through another test—a period of what we might call sophistication. This is a time when there are many clever people who are not willing to listen to the humble prophets of the Lord. And we have suffered from that. It is rather a severe test” (“Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity,” *Instructor*, June 1965, p. 217).

President Gordon B. Hinckley told the following story about President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“Joseph Fielding Smith next became President of the Church and the prophet of the Lord. Some thought he spoke harshly in the tone of a prophet of the Old Testament. He did speak straightforwardly and without equivocation. Such is the mission of a prophet. But it was my experience that he was a man of great kindness who grieved over the unwillingness of so many to follow the commandments of the Lord.

“He used three great words that I can never forget—‘true and faithful.’ In his public addresses, in his private conversation, in his prayers to the Lord he pleaded that we might be true and faithful. Those who followed his counsel have tasted the sweet fruit of obedience. Those who have scoffed have known something of the bitterness that comes of a denial of truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, pp. 75–76; or *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 52).

- Which of the prophet’s current teachings are hard for some people to accept and obey?
- What will happen to those who do not follow the prophets?

Have a young man read Doctrine and Covenants 1:14, 38.

- How should we receive the prophet’s words? Why?

Have young men read Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6 and 112:20.

- What blessings are promised to those who receive and follow the prophet’s words?
- How can we develop faith in the prophet’s words?

Scripture and discussion

Quotation

“The Lord will show us the way, if we will but follow his prophets and Apostles.

“Do not question their direction! It is as simple as that. No, I am not saying to have blind faith or blind obedience.

“Sometimes you may want proof of this doctrine or that saying of the prophet. Keep the commandments! Pray, walk in righteousness, and through the Holy Spirit you can know by that sweet, calm feeling that it is true” (Waldo P. Call, in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, p. 106, or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, p. 83).

### Do I Follow the Brethren?

Role play

Have the two previously assigned young men read the following dialogue:

Steve (nonmember): Do you really believe that your church has a living prophet?

Scott (Latter-day Saint): Yes, I believe that the President of our church is a prophet. He receives revelation from Heavenly Father.

Steve: How often does your prophet receive revelations from God?

Scott: Constantly, I guess. Whenever the Church needs guidance.

Steve: How do you find out what those revelations are?

Scott: Mainly from our general conferences.

Steve: Can everybody in your church go to those?

Scott: No. The Church is too big. But the conference sessions are broadcast on television and by satellite. And everybody can read the prophet's words in the Conference Report or the Church magazines.

Steve: Do you think most people in your church read those?

Scott: Well, probably not everybody.

Steve: Do you read them?

Scott: Well, not usually. I'm very busy.

Steve: What did the prophet say at your last conference?

Scott: Um, I don't know. I was studying for a big test, and I was too busy to listen to the broadcasts. I have the conference issue of the *Ensign*, but I haven't been able to read it yet.

Steve: Do you really believe in your prophet?

Scott: Of course.

Steve: Well, how can you say you follow him when you don't even know what he says?

- What counsel has the living prophet given us?

If you have brought them, distribute copies of recent conference reports or conference issues of the Church magazines. Have the young men refer to the talks given by the living prophet. Ask them to look for specific instructions and to notice the things the prophet emphasizes. On the chalkboard, make a list of commandments the prophet has given. Then invite the young men to consider the following questions and answer them silently to themselves.

- How well have you followed the prophet's counsel? What can you do to follow his counsel more completely?

Invite the young men to commit themselves to follow the counsel of the living prophet throughout their lives.

Discussion and chalkboard

### Conclusion

Quotation and discussion

Read the following promise given by President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“I add my own words of testimony as one who has known and worked closely with seven Presidents of the Church, extending over a period of more than half a century. I know that each of these men has been a man of God, raised up by Him, trained and nurtured, schooled and disciplined for the great and singular and unique callings which have come to them. Our people have been blessed as they have followed their counsel. We will con-

tinue to be blessed if we will walk in the paths which they have pointed out and will continue to point out to us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, p. 122; or *Ensign*, May 1991, p. 92).

- How have the teachings of the living prophet blessed you?

Adviser presentation  
and testimony

Tell the young men how you gained a testimony that the living prophet is called of God. You may want to tell them about blessings you or your family members have received as you have followed the counsel of the living prophet. Testify of the blessings that come to those who rely on the words of the living prophet. Explain that life is full of dangers but that if we read, study, pray, and follow the living prophet and the Church leaders who preside over us, we can travel safely to our destination, the celestial kingdom.

Challenge

Challenge the young men to read the prophet’s talks and writings and to live the principles he teaches.