

# LISTENING GUIDE:

## *Ways of Discovering God's Will*

Stephen M. Veazey

### Materials

- DVD worksheet
- Glossary of Terms
- Copy of the "Ways of Discovering God's Will" model
- Script of DVD presentation
- Discussion Questions

### DVD Worksheet Questions

1. What are some "restoration principles" that help us get a clearer sense of God's will?  
**continuing revelation, open canon of scripture, Christ centeredness, agency, all called according to their gifts, and the call to be a prophetic people**
2. President Veazey says "Our journey to discover a clearer sense of divine will begins by recognizing that God is God and we are not." How do we deny this truth?  
**--No right answer, just a matter of personal response--**
3. The \_\_\_\_ **Holy Spirit** \_\_\_\_\_ is the illuminator and communicator of divine truth.
4. \_\_\_\_ **Spiritual attention** \_\_\_\_ is an attitude of being open and alert to the Spirit's presence which is often subtle and gentle.
5. \_\_\_\_ **Spiritual practices** \_\_\_\_ include spiritual centering, quietness, prayer, creative scripture study, fasting and meditation.
6. List the six lenses Community of Christ uses to gain a better sense of the Spirit's witness about the purposes of God. (You will use this information as you fill in the model.)
  - **Scripture**
  - **Reason and Knowledge**
  - **Tradition**
  - **Personal and Community Experience**
  - **Continuing Revelation**

- **Common Consent**

7. In the church's official scripture statement, "Scripture in Community of Christ," we uphold scripture as \_\_\_ **indispensable** \_\_\_\_. What does this mean?  
**--No right answer, just a matter of personal response--**
8. When Community of Christ finds scriptures that don't agree with our understanding of God's revelation through Christ, as affirmed by the faith community and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, how do we determine their validity?  
**the love, teachings and vision of Jesus Christ prevail**
9. What is Community of Christ's position on the historicity (historical accuracy) of scripture?  
**scripture is not historically, ethically, or theologically perfect**
10. Scripture should be interpreted responsibly through \_\_\_ **informed study** \_\_\_ in the faith community guided by the Spirit.
11. Which church president made the statement that Community of Christ did not consider scripture to be infallible?  
**Joseph Smith III**
12. What is the "test" for the Living Word in scripture?  
**It is presented and received as the good news in the lives of hurting people, bears the fruit of love, reconciliation, healing and hope for all.**
13. Part of Community of Christ tradition encourages us to \_\_\_ **study it out in our mind and study all good books** \_\_\_ minds when facing complex issues.
14. \_\_\_ **tradition** \_\_\_\_\_ is the body of belief, wisdom, and practices produced over the years by a faith community as it seeks to live by the gospel in various times and places.
15. Why is it important to look at the larger Christian tradition as well as our own story when seeking divine guidance?  
**It is an important source of identity and guidance**
16. What are the components of tradition in Community of Christ?  
**Scripture, Basic beliefs statement, Enduring principles, Hymns, Christian and restoration history, World conference resolutions, Official interpretations by church leaders, Official statements by World Church leadership bodies, Official administrative policies.**

17. What counsel does Roy Cheville give regarding “dueling testimonies”?  
**Be careful to distinguish between firsthand contact with God and our interpretation of contact. Examine experiences carefully and interpret soundly**
18. Summarize the foundational principles of continuing revelation.  
**Multiple answers for discussion**  
**Revelation involves God’s self-disclosure**  
**Human response involves interpretation**  
**Some revelatory experiences in religious movements are foundational and formative**  
**Continuing revelation involves ongoing encounter with God and Jesus through the Holy Spirit.**  
**Continuing revelation is not predicting the future, rather presenting inspired concepts and vision that enhances our ability to create the future for which God yearns**
19. What is the purpose of continuing revelation?  
**to keep the church moving toward God’s vision as revealed in Jesus**
20. \_\_\_ **Continuing revelation** \_\_\_ often challenges us with new ideas or new insights about long-standing beliefs.
21. \_\_\_ **Common consent** \_\_\_ is achieved when all viewpoints have been sufficiently considered in the spirit of prayerful discussion and when a sufficient level of support has been expressed by the church community that allows the body to take action.
22. The foundational question for common consent is \_\_\_**what is our best perception of God’s will for us together at this time under these circumstances**\_\_\_.

## Glossary of Terms

**Common consent:** the foundational principle of the church government in Community of Christ. Each member participates in the decision making process of the church.

**Broader Christian tradition:** the totality of Christ-based faiths who share a belief that Christ is the divine, yet human son of God, sent to redeem the world

**Diversity:** an aspect of the Enduring Principles of Community of Christ. The church is called to unity in Christ in its many and varied expressions (diversity) which is expressive of being the body of Christ.

**Enduring Principles:** core values that define the essence, heart, or soul of church identity, belief, mission, and message of Community of Christ

**Fundamentalism:** term originally coined by its supporters to describe a specific package of theological beliefs that developed into a movement within the Protestant community of the United States in the early part of the 20th century. . . Fundamentalists are scriptural literalists.

**Holy indifference:** ridding oneself of agendas or current conclusions about an issue

**Inerrant:** without error

**Open canon of scripture:** the belief that God continues to reveal God's nature and this revelation can be included in the scripture of Community of Christ by consent of the people

**Prophecy:** This is not a prediction of the future, but a challenge to God's people to understand more fully their relation to God and their purpose as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the speaking on behalf of God to communicate God's will for a situation. In the New Testament prophecy is a gift of the Spirit.

**Prophetic people/Prophetic community:** a community which is representative of Christ who willingly declares and lives God's word in the world, proclaiming peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit

**Restoration principles:** generally equate with "Enduring Principles" and primarily center in continuing revelation, open canon of scripture, Christ-centeredness, agency (responsible choices), all called according to their gifts, and the call to be a prophetic people

**Revelation:** We affirm the living God is ever self-revealing. The Triune God is revealed to the world in the testimony of Israel, and above all in Jesus Christ. By the Holy Spirit we continue to hear God speaking today. The church is called to listen together for what the Spirit is saying and then faithfully respond.

**Scriptural literalism:** the belief that God wrote the Bible (every word) and it cannot be questioned. (This is in contrast to Community of Christ's long held understanding that our scriptures came to us through human hands and bear witness to the Living Word (God in Christ) but cannot take the place of the Living Word that continues to speak in each generation through the gift of the Holy Spirit.)

**Spiritual attention:** an attitude of being open and alert to the Spirit's presence

**Spiritual practice:** spiritual centering, quietness, prayer, creative scripture study, fasting and meditation

**Theocratic democracy:** The Spirit leads through leaders who are approved and supported by the will of the people.

**Tradition:** to deliver or to handover; the transmission of received teaching or practice. In Christian churches the church's tradition centers in God's revelation in Jesus Christ. The term has come to mean the genuine preservation of the apostolic faith.

## Draft Script: Ways of Discovering God's Will

Hello, I am Steve Veazey. I will be talking about "Ways of Discovering God's Will."

Faithful discipleship includes faithfully seeking with other disciples a clearer understanding of God's will. This process is ongoing so we can be open to new insights whenever they come. It is particularly vital when the church faces situations or questions that do not have easy or clear answers.

As humans, we humbly confess that we "see through a glass darkly" or, as some translations put it, "we see in a mirror, dimly" (I Corinthians 13:12). That is, no matter how much of God's nature, including God's image reflected in human life, we think we understand, dimensions of God's truth remain hidden to us.

At the same time, scripture invites us to seek greater understanding of God's vision for life. This invitation comes to help us grow as disciples so we can make a vital contribution to Christ's mission:

***Ask and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.***

—Matthew 7:7–8

As we ask, seek, and knock in humility and faith, we are blessed with insights that enrich our relationships with God and others. Sometimes clarity comes in moments of great enlightenment. Often it comes over time as we pray, study, listen to others, and experience life.

As a church we benefit from a fruitful approach to seeking a clearer sense of God's will. This approach is rooted in the broader Christian tradition. It is greatly enriched by Restoration principles, scriptures, and experiences. It has served us well in the past and will bless us in the future if we consistently use it.

The Community of Christ way of seeking a better understanding of God's will is built on confidence in God's continuing revelation, one of our Enduring Principles. We sincerely expect that "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his word" (*Hymns of the Saints*, "We Limit Not the Truth of God," No. 309). It also seeks to integrate proven spiritual practices through which we, in community with others, can more fully experience God's guidance.

As an introduction, the primary elements of the Community of Christ way of seeking and discovering God's will are presented in a visual model. While any model has limits and is not the reality we seek to describe, using a model can help us better understand the principles. In this regard, it is best to start with a holistic view and then continue to a more in-depth exploration.

### **Exploring the Model**

The center of the model is **God**, the eternal community of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who is one God. God has created and is still creating. God has **purpose and vision for creation**.

Our journey to discover a clearer sense of divine will begins by recognizing God is God, and we are not!

It continues by shedding our agendas or current conclusions about an issue. This “holy indifference,” as some call it, is often the most-difficult step. It can be achieved only through spiritual trust that quiets our willful egos and fear of loss of control. The constant call is to let God be God!

Connecting our lives with God’s truth is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said he would send “a comforter,” which he defined as the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:16–18).

**The Holy Spirit is the illuminator and communicator of divine truth.** The Spirit opens our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to perceive the proper application of divine will to particular circumstances. It moves freely in and among people to bear witness, renew life, form community, and open future possibilities in harmony with God’s will.

How do we position our lives to better sense the Spirit’s guidance? **Spiritual attention and spiritual practices** help us better respond to the Holy Spirit. **Spiritual attention** is an attitude of being open and alert to the Spirit’s presence, which often is subtle and gentle. **Spiritual Practices** include spiritual centering, quietness, prayer, creative scripture study, fasting, and meditation.

The next layer of the model identifies “**lenses**” through which we gain a better sense of the Spirit’s witness about the purposes of God. Spiritual practices help clear and focus the lenses through which we gain helpful perspective and sense the Spirit’s guidance. In Community of Christ these include:

- **Scripture**
- **Reason and knowledge**
- **Tradition**
- **Personal and community experience**
- **Continuing revelation**
- **Common consent**

The goal of discovering a clearer sense of God’s will is to apply our understanding to the church’s mission and life together in Christ. The area outside various elements of the model is defined as **Embody Christ’s Peace**.

Just as Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is our peace (See Ephesians 2), we are called to embody our best understanding of the peace of God through Christ in our lives and in the world. Sometimes this requires us to revise previous attitudes, beliefs, and practices with ones more attuned with divine nature as we come to perceive it. This is the process of genuine spiritual growth. The Apostle Paul describes this process in Ephesians 4:13 as growing in the “full stature of Christ.”

## Exploring the Community of Christ Lenses

### Scripture

Scripture is essential to understanding the nature and will of God. In fact, in the church's official scripture statement, "Scripture in Community of Christ," we uphold scripture as **indispensable!**

We also teach that scripture must be applied through the lens of God's most-decisive revelation in Jesus Christ. God's Word—which is God's creative and reconciling activity—is not revealed fully in the words of any language, but in a person who was fully human and fully Divine. Therefore, all scripture stands under the scrutiny and authority of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

So if specific verses of scripture don't agree with our best understanding of the revelation of God in Christ, as affirmed by the faith community and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, the love, teachings, and vision of Christ prevail.

The scriptural view that stirs the most discussion is the church's official stance that scripture's authority does not come from the belief that it is historically, scientifically, ethically, and theologically perfect or without error in every detail. Why is this so?

Scriptural literalism is a fairly recent trend that has been pushed hard in Christianity by fundamentalism. A vocal minority within Christianity has insisted on a literal, inerrant reading of scripture as the only reliable source of truth in faith matters. In Community of Christ, we do not accept this approach.

While it may be surprising to some, this is not a new position as evidenced by the following quote from Joseph Smith III:

**We do not consider it [the Inspired Version] infallible, nor do we consider the Bible infallible. We do not consider anything that passes through human hands to be infallible. We do not believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible; we hold that everything which passes through human hands is fallible.**

—Joseph Smith III, evidence in the Temple Lot Suit

Our church teaches that scripture is inspired and essential to our knowledge of God. We also insist that scripture should be interpreted responsibly through informed study in the faith community guided by the Spirit.

In other words, understanding scripture is not just a matter of reading a passage and assuming what it means for all times and places. Responsible scriptural interpretation is done in dialogue with others and includes study, prayer, reason, tradition, and continuing revelation as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine and Covenants 164:6c reminds us that

***Faced with difficult questions, many properly turn to scripture to find insight and inspiration. Search the scriptures for the Living Word that brings life, healing, and hope to all. Embrace and proclaim these liberating truths.***

This counsel encourages us to search **within** scripture for the “Living Word.” How do we know we have rightly uncovered the Living Word in scripture? The Living Word is presented and received as good news in the lives of hurting people. It draws people to God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. It bears the fruit of love, reconciliation, healing, and hope for all.

### **Reason and Knowledge**

Another important lens for discovering insight into God’s will is reason and knowledge. This lens is not meant to elevate reason and knowledge higher than any other way of coming to better know God. It affirms that we have to use our minds and available knowledge to strengthen our understanding of God’s ways.

I was told a story once about the great scientist, George Washington Carver. One day Mr. Carver was in a peanut field. He stooped and pulled a peanut plant from the ground. Holding it up to the sky he said, “Creator, what is in this peanut plant?” As the story goes, the Creator responded, “George, I have given you a good mind, you figure it out!”

Our own experience as a church suggests that God wants to relate to us in ways that help us grow in understanding of divine nature through study, informed conversation, and alert observation.

Doctrine and Covenants 58: 6c-d states:

**...it is not meet that I should have to command you in all things...Men (you) should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of your own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness, for the power is in them (you)...**

From the church’s earliest days, members were urged to “study it out in your own mind” (Doctrine and Covenants 9:3b) and to “become acquainted with all good books” to learn truth (Doctrine and Covenants 87:5b). We have always been a people who sought greater understanding of truth through “study and faith.” For example, in 1968, when the church was facing complex social and theological issues, the following counsel was given:

**My servants of the leading quorums are commended for their diligence in seeking more light and truth from all available sources. For have I not told you that my glory is intelligence and he that seeketh learning by study and by faith will be rewarded...**

—Doctrine and Covenants 149:5

Consideration of available information through reason and study is not the opposite of trusting in the Spirit. Judaism regards study and thinking about God as among the highest forms of prayer. Study and thinking are how we love God with our hearts AND OUR MINDS.

Knowledge about many aspects of creation, including human life, has increased dramatically over the centuries. This includes information that was not even conceivable to those who shaped scripture in earlier centuries.

We do not know how writers who shaped scripture long ago would write today if they had access to information that is now common knowledge. The task of continued interpretation, through faith and study, is left to us and future generations.

However, it is important to note that in our efforts to better comprehend God's nature and will we do not take the insights of scholarship and science at face value. In faith matters, conclusions of the human mind must be considered carefully and their value determined through prayerful reflection and Spirit-led deliberation. When exploring important questions we use study, reason, common sense, discussion, and inspiration to determine how to apply knowledge to our beliefs and church policies.

## **Tradition**

Tradition is the body of belief, wisdom, and practices produced over the years by the faith community as it seeks to live the gospel in various times and places. It includes the larger Christian tradition and our own Community of Christ story. If we lose touch with our faith tradition we lose an important source of identity and guidance.

Margaret Farley observes:

**...a community's beliefs and moral insights through time are not only a fund of wisdom for each generation but are revelatory of God's presence and action in the life of the community.** —*Just Love*, Margaret A. Farley, page 188

Tradition is not a matter of rigidly maintaining positions or practices. Rather, tradition is the faith community's ongoing conversation with its sacred story, enduring principles, theology, and policies.

Tradition, when understood in this way, identifies the church's recognized sources of official reference and teaching. Components of tradition in Community of Christ include:

- Scripture
- Basic beliefs statement
- Enduring Principles (core values)
- Hymns
- Christian and Restoration history
- World Conference resolutions
- Official interpretations by church leaders
- Official statements by World Church leadership bodies
- Official administrative policies and procedures

While affirming tradition's value, it is equally important to recognize times when tradition appropriately is challenged by new situations and the Spirit's movement to broaden the church's vision. We have only to recall Peter's rooftop vision that set the early Christian church on the path to becoming more inclusive of Gentiles to understand this principle (Acts 10).

Another, more-recent example, is the church's acceptance of prophetic counsel that called for the ordination of women (Doctrine and Covenants 156).

Regarding tradition, the church is counseled:

**Be respectful of tradition and sensitive to one another, but do not be unduly bound by interpretations and procedures that no longer fit the needs of a worldwide church. In such matters direction will come from those called to lead.**

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:2d

### **Personal and Community Experience**

Obviously, the lenses do not function in a vacuum. We bring aspects of our personal experiences, culture, beliefs, feelings, and personalities to our quest to better understand God's will. Any experience that is thought about or communicated to others is interpreted experience.

That is why personal experiences among different individuals can be quite different. Sometimes there even can be "dueling testimonies" of the Spirit's guidance. This is especially true when considering sensitive, emotional, or complicated issues. It is not uncommon in business meetings and prayer services to hear people reach different conclusions based on personal experiences and intense feelings.

Roy Cheville provides wise guidance about the use of personal experience in forming beliefs:

Whenever people make contact with the Divine they must be careful about what they say has happened. What is said needs to be restrained by awareness of our limitations about what we know of God and about what we know of ourselves. We do well to distinguish between firsthand contact with God and our interpretation of that contact. Every experience needs to be examined and interpreted soundly. An experience unexamined can be quite dangerous and misused.

—paraphrased Roy Cheville, *Scriptures from Ancient America*, page 26

In Community of Christ, we take the wide range of personal experiences seriously as we attempt to form direction for our faith community. Struggling with diversity of experience is not just a necessity because of human nature; it is an important aspect of becoming real community.

However, as a general rule, personal experience and intensity of feelings should not be one's primary or only authority in faith matters. Because of our fallible natures shaped by our cultures, personalities, and life histories, personal experience must be tested against the broader experience and wisdom of the faith community.

The most-reliable spiritual discernment occurs in association with others. We have been counseled recently to “listen together” to the Spirit’s voice (Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c).

Obviously, “listening together” includes listening to each other and being open to the Spirit’s movement during discussions. Small groups, congregations, and national, field, and World Conferences can have shared experiences with God’s Spirit that are informative, even revelatory.

While some understand shared experiences in different ways, collective experience as “a prophetic people” is vital. As we seek to better comprehend God’s will, our faith community must take into serious account its shared experience of the Spirit’s guidance.

### **Continuing Revelation**

We believe in the importance of continuing revelation to establish direction for the church. Our basic beliefs call us to be a “prophetic people.” We hold that

**“God graciously reveals divine will today as in the past” and that “in humility, individually and in community, we prayerfully listen to understand God’s will for our lives, the church, and creation more completely.”**

—*We Share: Enduring Principles, Continuing Revelation*, page 12

When considering the “lens” of continuing revelation it is important to establish several foundational principles:

1. Revelation is encounter with God that involves God’s self-disclosure. It comes when and how God chooses.
2. Human response to revelation always involves interpretation because its meaning is communicated through the filters of the human mind and language.
3. There are revelatory experiences in religious movements that are regarded as foundational and formative. One example is God’s action to free the Hebrew slaves as described in the Book of Exodus. Another example is God’s self-disclosure and real presence (incarnation) in Jesus Christ.
4. Continuing revelation involves ongoing encounter with God and Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. It provides added insight or deepens understanding of formative experiences. It “unveils” dimensions of earlier encounters with God that have been unrecognized or perhaps even misunderstood.
5. Continuing revelation often is equated with prophecy, and prophecy often is defined as predicting the future. That is a very limited definition of prophecy. Continuing revelation is not so much forecasting the future as it is presenting inspired concepts and vision that open up or help create the future for which God yearns.

In general practice, continuing revelation involves groups in study, prayerful reflection, spiritual practices, and discernment that open up people to perceive God’s will more fully.

In the worldwide church, we express our belief in continuing revelation through the prophet-president’s calling to bring inspired counsel for the whole church. If the World Conference approves inspired counsel for

inclusion in Doctrine and Covenants, it becomes part of the church's scripture. This means scriptural interpretation must take into account the whole body of scripture, including the most-recent sections of Doctrine and Covenants.

Continuing revelation calls the church to become more fully aligned with God's present-day activity to bring about reconciliation, more Christ-centered community, justice, and the peaceable kingdom. In other words, given our natural tendency to want to settle down where we are comfortable, the purpose of continuing revelation is to keep the church moving toward fulfillment of God's vision as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The use of an "open canon" or "living body of scripture" can be extremely challenging. Continuing revelation often challenges us with new ideas or new insights about long-standing beliefs. As has been the case throughout history, this can cause some to resist what is being shared because it unsettles what was thought to be certain.

A ministry of the Holy Spirit is to help the church trust and embrace continuing revelation, especially when acceptance calls for revisions of some long-held practices. When faced with the need to evaluate its beliefs or policies in response to continuing revelation, the church has been told

***...as you gain ever more confidence in sensing the leadings of my Spirit, you will begin to see with new eyes, embrace the truths that are waiting for your understanding, and move joyfully toward the fulfillment of the tasks that are yours to accomplish.***

—Doctrine and Covenants 159:8

## **Common Consent**

**And all things shall be done by common consent in the church, by much prayer and faith; for all things you shall receive by faith.**

—Doctrine and Covenants 25:1b

The church was defined by Joseph Smith III as a ***theocratic democracy***. This means God's Spirit leads the church. The Spirit leads through leaders who are approved and supported by the will of the people. It also means members have a significant role in determining church direction in response to the Spirit's guidance.

***Common consent*** helps ensure that all of the "lenses" previously described are being used and that no one person's or group's perspective is allowed to dominate.

Common consent is open consideration of issues, in a spirit of worship, during which all opinions may be voiced. It includes thorough consideration of proposals in conferences at all levels of church life. It also involves consideration of inspired counsel at World Conference, which then becomes authoritative throughout the church.

Ideally, common consent is much more than decision-making by simple-majority vote. At the same time, common consent does not require unanimity of support.

Common consent is achieved when all viewpoints have been sufficiently considered in the spirit of prayerful discussion and when a sufficient level of support has been expressed by the church community that allows the body to take action.

Common consent at its best is a process of education, discussion, prayer, and consideration that requires patience, cooperation, and spiritual sensitivity. It encourages minority or opposing voices that may contribute vital insights or strengthen proposals.

If common consent is done well, broader understanding and support of proposed direction is the result. This ensures greater unity than otherwise would have been the case.

Common consent is not perfect because imperfect human beings are involved. It works to determine the best decision at a given time under current circumstances.

The foundational question for common consent is: "What is our best perception of God's will for us together at this time under these circumstances" (Adapted from "Common Consent and Parliamentary Procedure, *Saints' Herald*, March 1974, page 3). Decisions made by common consent are always subject to review in the future through the Spirit's guidance as we address issues we have not faced before.

Regarding common consent, the church has been told to trust the work of the Holy Spirit as it speaks in and through the voices in the faith community. Common consent has served the church well as a way of helping to determine church direction when practiced in a spirit of prayer, love, and cooperation.

### **Integrating the Various "Lenses"**

A key to effectively using the "lenses" is to see them in relationship to each other. That is, they do not function independently. The dynamic movement of the Holy Spirit connects them as it seeks to illuminate truth and to grow us as "responsible" disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore the various "lenses" are best understood as interdependent.

Another key to effectively applying the Community of Christ way is to recognize that all elements included are not only important, but essential! If we focus on just one or two, we run the high risk of going on tangents or missing some vital dimension of God's will.

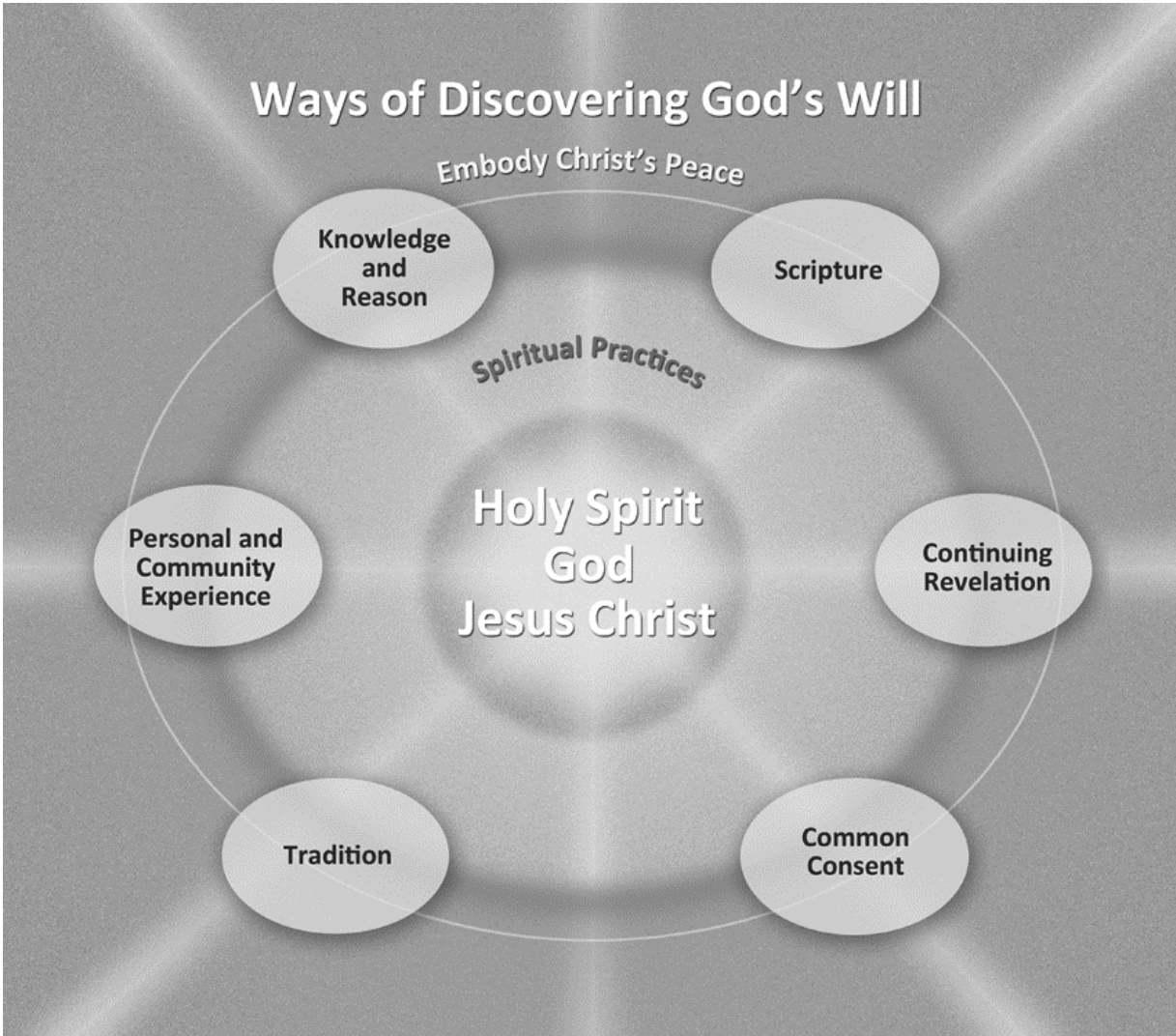
While we may prefer one or some of the lenses because of our particular personalities, backgrounds, or spiritual types, we are called to discipline our lives to engage all of them. In fact, it is important to consciously engage the lenses and spiritual practices that are more difficult for us to ensure that we do not miss part of the broad vista of God's vision for human life and the church.

### **Conclusion**

Now, as we begin to apply the Community of Christ way of discovering a clearer sense of God's will, may we do so with confidence in our capacity to work together in patience and love. Let us be encouraged and hopeful as we entrust our future to this promise:

Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God's ultimate vision for the church. --Doctrine and Covenants 164:9a

## Model: Ways of Discovering God's Will



## Discussion Questions

1. How are you feeling at this point?
2. What are your reactions to what you are hearing?
3. What methods or tools have you found most helpful in searching for God's direction?
4. President Veazey notes that we "see through a glass darkly." What is meant by this? How does this affect our efforts to discover God's direction?
5. Of the six "ways" presented in this session which one do you most rely on in your search to understand God's will? What in your life's experience has shaped this reliance? Which one of the six "ways" do you find most difficult or challenging? Why?
6. Alternative Activity to Question 3:
  - a. Point to six different places in the room, and identify each in order as scripture, knowledge, tradition, experience, discernment, and common consent. Ask people to go to one of the locations and share their thoughts on the following request: "Think of a time when you relied on one of these methods of seeking God's will. Tell how that method informed your thinking."
  - b. Follow-up: We do use a variety of ways of seeking God's will. Ask "Can you think of another method of seeking God's will that you used in the experience you shared? Go to that location now." Depending on time, ask people to share again.
  - c. Acknowledge that each individual may come to discern God's voice in a number of ways. Hearing a person speak from one method may not always be the whole picture of that person's perspective.
7. In your experience how has (or has not) scripture been an "indispensable witness"?
8. President Veazey explains that "all scripture stands under the scrutiny and authority of God's revelation in Jesus Christ." What is meant by this? How can this assist in the interpretation and application of scripture?