

## “The Constant Companionship of the Holy Ghost”

*President Brian K. and Sister Melinda Ashton  
BYU-Pathway Worldwide*

**President Brian K. Ashton:** Our dear BYU-Pathway students and colleagues, we love you and are grateful to be able to serve you. The Lord loves you, as do His living prophets.

In February, President Dallin H. Oaks, God’s prophet on the earth today, spoke to “all who follow the words of a prophet.”<sup>1</sup> He noted that all of you are “greatly loved by the Lord.”<sup>2</sup> He also stated that he “pray[s] for what our Heavenly Father wants for each of us — and that is to become active members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, proceeding forward on the covenant path [to] the eternities.”<sup>3</sup>

**Sister Melinda Ashton:** President Oaks then made a startling statement:

I feel to emphasize the warning President Russell M. Nelson issued us: that “in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, ... comforting, and constant [influences] of the Holy Ghost.” One of the many reasons you will need the constant influence of the Holy Ghost is that you live in a season where the adversary has become so effective at disguising truth that if you don’t have the Holy Ghost, you will be deceived.<sup>4</sup>

That we “will be deceived” if we don’t have the Holy Ghost is a sobering statement. Here are a few definitions for the word “deceived”: “To ensnare; to take unawares by craft or guile; to beguile or betray into mischief or sin; to cause to believe what is false; to mislead as to a matter of fact; lead into error; to allow oneself to be misled; to delude oneself.”<sup>5</sup> What is interesting about these definitions is that those who are deceived believe falsehoods and are led into sin and error without knowing it.

President Ashton: In fulfillment of the prophecy that the Lord will give us “a pattern in all things, that [we] may not be deceived,”<sup>6</sup> President Oaks shared four things that will help us draw closer to the Savior and thereby invite the Holy Ghost into our lives:

- “First, strengthen our faith in [Jesus Christ].
- Second, increase our humility.
- Third, seek help from others.
- [And] fourth, be patient.”<sup>7</sup>

**Sister Ashton:** There are many ways to develop these qualities. However, you are in a unique position to develop them because your studies at BYU-Pathway Worldwide are specifically designed to help you do the things President Oaks invited us to do. In fact, your time at BYU-Pathway — including your classes from Institute, BYU-Idaho, and/or Ensign College — provides you with an exceptional opportunity to learn how to invite the constant influence of the Holy Ghost into your life.

**President Ashton:** BYU-Pathway’s spiritually based curriculum is designed to help you develop faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Your studies will also help you develop daily habits like prayer and scripture study that will help you stay close to the Savior throughout your life.

**Sister Ashton:** In the process of learning the content in courses, you will come to realize that there is nearly infinitely more that you don’t know. You will also learn to rely upon an all-knowing and loving Heavenly Father to master the skills and knowledge you will need to acquire. These experiences will help you increase your humility.

**President Ashton:** Your time at BYU-Pathway will help you to develop righteous, lifelong friendships with well-informed people who have similar beliefs and desires and who will help you through hard times. They will help when you have questions or doubts by bearing testimony of the truths of the gospel, encouraging you to take the sacrament each week, and helping you seek answers from faithful sources and from God through personal revelation.

**Sister Ashton:** The process of getting an education and a degree will also help you to learn patience. We learn “line upon line, precept upon precept.”<sup>8</sup> It is impossible to understand some truths without first understanding other foundational truths upon which the greater truths are built. For example, you cannot learn algebra unless you first learn arithmetic. This means you can only earn your degree by consistently putting in effort over time. This is the process for developing patience.

**President Ashton:** Maybe most importantly, the Holy Ghost is the teacher and witness of all truth. In fact, it is the Holy Ghost that allows you to see “things as they really are, and ... as they really will be.”<sup>9</sup> You cannot learn the truths and skills that you are striving to learn in your studies or understand why they matter without the help of the Holy Ghost.

Thus, your honest search for truth in your studies will teach you how to have the influence of the Holy Ghost in your life more often.

**Sister Ashton:** Now, strengthening your faith in Jesus Christ, increasing your humility, seeking help from others, and developing patience during your studies at BYU-Pathway will not happen automatically. For example, you may feel a need to focus on grades rather than on learning and becoming. If you do this, you can go through your entire academic program and get your degree without internalizing the truths and learning the skills that you will need to be successful in your life and career. It can also lead you to develop habits that will drive away the Holy Ghost instead of inviting it into your life.

Some of the ways students focus on grades instead of learning include only trying to understand concepts at a superficial level, cramming immediately before exams instead of studying over the term of the course, using artificial intelligence tools inappropriately, letting your classmates do most of the work on group projects, copying other people’s work, and getting others to do your homework.

When you do these things, you can make it difficult for the Holy Ghost to be your constant companion. You may also lose many of the blessings of attending a Church-sponsored institution of higher learning.

**President Ashton:** Before my mission to Peru as a young man, I focused on getting good grades while doing minimal work. As a result, my studies didn’t bring me closer to God or prepare me as well as they should have for the future.

On my mission, I focused my study time and my daily actions on becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. In that process, I learned the joy of having the Holy Ghost teach me truth. I found joy in becoming better and more capable.

When I returned from my mission and reenrolled in university, I still wanted good grades, but my focus was on learning and becoming. I put in the work required to learn. If I didn’t understand a concept, I kept working until I did understand it. I pondered what I was learning, talked with friends about it, and tried to apply it to my life. I spent my vacations reading articles and books about what I had studied in class.

Not surprisingly, I received better grades. I learned judgment, discernment, and leadership. It was a pleasure to go to school. I felt the Holy Ghost in my life more often, and I was happier. Those characteristics helped me to find good employment. They continue to bless me today.

If you will focus on learning and becoming during your time at BYU-Pathway Worldwide, you can reap the same blessings. What’s more, because you will learn to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost

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in your life, you will not be deceived, and you will become honorable, productive, and joyful disciples, spouses, parents, citizens, employees, and leaders.

**Sister Ashton:** Our dear BYU-Pathway students, having the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest gifts we can receive from our Heavenly Father. As we follow the counsel of God’s prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, increase our humility, seek help from others, and be patient, we can have the influence of the Holy Ghost with us *always*. Seeking to be a learner at BYU-Pathway can help set a foundation for the rest of your life that will make it easier to do those things.

**President Ashton:** We bear witness that your Heavenly Father loves you. Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world. He suffered and died so that we might repent and have peace and every other good thing. We are led by a living prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “[Coming Closer to Jesus Christ](#)” (BYU Devotional, Feb. 10, 2026), [speeches.byu.edu](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> OED.com entry for “Deceived”

<sup>6</sup> [Doctrine and Covenants 52:14](#)

<sup>7</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, “[Coming Closer to Jesus Christ](#)” (BYU Devotional, Feb. 10, 2026), [speeches.byu.edu](#)

<sup>8</sup> [2 Nephi 28:30](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 98:12](#); [128:21](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Jacob 4:13](#)