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20 GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN STUDY AND USE OF THE  
SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

1. The Spirit of Prophecy messages are primarily messages to me personally. See Acts 26:19.
2. Study all counsels available on a given subject. Gain the full picture.

"The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture."--1SM 42.

3. Study specific counsels in their setting.  
Example: "Eggs should not be placed on your table."  
--2T 400.

4. Time and place of certain specific counsels should be studied. There are relatively few.

"Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered."--1SM 57.

Example a: Practical training for girls in Education published in 1903.

"If girls. . . could learn to harness and drive a horse. . . they would be better fitted to meet the emergencies of life."  
--Ed. 216-217.

Example b: Testimony referring to bicycles, 8T 51, 52. Written July 20, 1894.

"There seemed to be a bicycle craze. Money was spent to gratify an enthusiasm. . . . A bewitching influence seemed to be passing as a wave over our people there . . . to invest their time and money in gratifying supposed wants. This is a species of idolatry. . . . There were some who were striving for the mastery, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of strife and contention among them as to which should be the greatest."

Historical background: "Toward the end of the last century the American people were swept with a consuming passion which left them with little time or money for anything else. . . . What was this big new distraction? For an answer the merchants had only to look out the window and watch their erstwhile customers go whizzing by. America had discovered the bicycle, and everybody was making the most of the new freedom it brought. . . . The bicycle began as a rich man's toy. Society and celebrity went awheel. The best early bicycle cost \$150, an investment comparable to the cost of an automobile today. . . . Every member of the family wanted a 'wheel,' and entire family savings often were used up in supplying the demand."--Reader's Digest, Dec., 1951.

5. Find the underlying principles and seek to apply them today.

Examples: Harnessing and driving a horse.  
Owning and riding bicycles.  
Counsels on sports. See AH 499.  
Masonry sanitarium buildings. 7T 83-4.

6. The messages are up to date.

"Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of Prophecy. . . .

Time and trial have not made void the instruction given. . . . The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days."--RH July 18, 1907, in LSM 41.

"I have been shown that the principles that were given us in the early days of the message are as important and should be regarded just as conscientiously today as they were then."--9T 158 (Statement to Gen. Conf. in 1909 session.)

7. The messages are scientifically sound. Within the last ten years research has demonstrated the scientific accuracy of many counsels and warnings given to us 60 to 100 years ago in such fields as:

1. Tobacco. 4SG 128; MH 327, 328.
2. Cancer Germ. MH 313.
3. Pre-natal Influence. MH 371; 2SM 431.
4. Electric Currents in Nerves. 2T 347;  
Ed. 197, 209; 3T 157.
5. Salt. CDF 344; MH 305.
6. Yeast Germ. MH 301.
7. Psychosomatic Medicine 3T 184.
8. Birth Defects. 2SM 442; PP 561.
9. Hypnosis. MM 111, 115, 116; 2SM 349-50.
10. Nutrition and Fats. 2T 61; CDF 393-394.

8. The principles set forth in the messages are universal in their application.

Illustrations: (a) Experience in Europe regarding the canvassing work. (b) The Avondale School.

9. I recognize that there is opportunity for doubt.

- (a) With the Bible. GC 527.
- (b) With the Spirit of Prophecy. 5T 675-6.

The Word of God: "While God has given ample evidence for faith, He will never remove all excuse for unbelief. All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon, will find them. And those who refuse to accept and obey God's word until every objection has been removed, and there is no longer an opportunity for doubt, will never come to the light.

"Distrust of God is the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed heart, which is at enmity with Him. But faith is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it will flourish only as it is cherished. No man can become strong in faith without a determined effort. Unbelief strengthens as it is encouraged; and if men, instead of dwelling upon the evidences which God has given to sustain their faith, permit themselves to question and cavil, they will find their doubts constantly becoming more confirmed." --GC 527.

The Testimonies: "'Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence.' 'God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will, be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith.'" --5T 675-676.

Faith Rests on Evidence: If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration.--5T 69.

10. The Spirit of Prophecy not given to take the place of (a) faith; (b) hard work; (c) initiative; or (d) Bible study.

11. I should study the Spirit of Prophecy to find the counsels and not just prove my conclusions.

12. In using testimonies to institutions or individuals, I must keep in mind that conditions may change.

Illustration: MYP 384. "I saw that there is not one in twenty of the youth who knows what experimental religion is." Date 1867.

13. My conclusion based on testimony study must be in harmony with the tenor of the writings themselves taken as a whole.

14. The counsels must be applied consistently. I am not at liberty to accept part and reject part.

"There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the Testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light."--9T 154.

15. I must be absolutely honest with myself in my relationship to the counsels. I must be cognizant of the influence of my attitude on myself and on others.

16. I must help others to find its guiding principles and persuade not drive. (Experiences with reform dress.) 4T 636; See also 6T 122.

17. I must be tolerant with others. Different people have come through different experiences and from different backgrounds. There are some things each individual must settle on his own with his conscience and with God.

18. God sets before me an ideal for which I should strive. If I fall short in some respects I should not become discouraged. It may take time. God does not reject or cast off His people if they come short of His ideal.

Illustration: Battle Creek College & Sanitarium.

19. God can bless abundantly if I accept and follow the light consistently and fully. It may save me from anguish in this life and from the loss of eternal life. See 2 Chron. 20:20.

20. I should read the Spirit of Prophecy counsels in the E. G. White books and not in someone's unauthorized mimeographed sheet or privately published compilation. If I feel I must pursue such compilations, I should look up and read each E. G. White statement in its full setting.

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"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit.

"There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue."--5T 661.

"It should be the study of every Christian to serve God from principle."--1T 161.

"The young should be controlled by firm principle"--MYP 379.

"The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles."--5T 663-664.