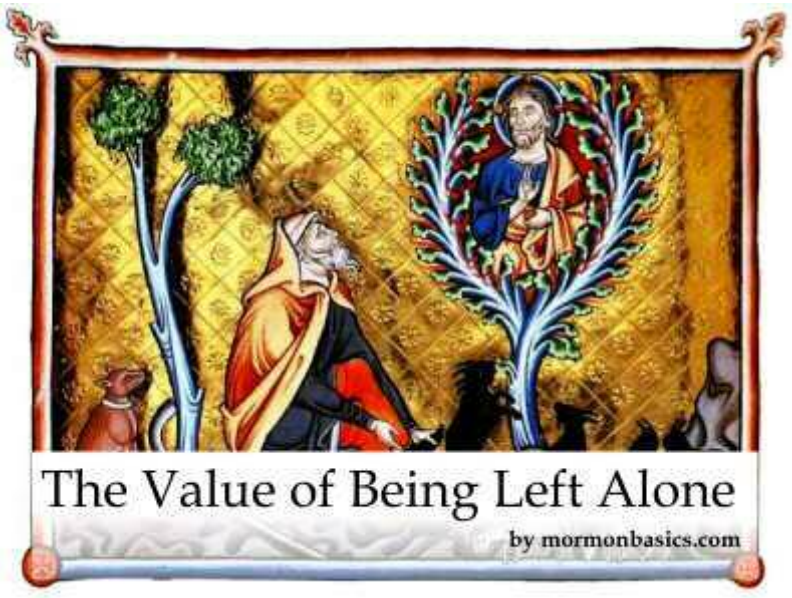

My wife and I received a phone call from one of our daughters who had recently had a baby. In the course of the conversation she said that she did not understand why the Lord had "left her alone." She felt like she had done what she was supposed to have done, so why, now was she feeling left alone, like the Lord was not talking to her any more. That statement reminded me of the phrase used in the Pearl of Great Price to describe what happened to Moses after he had just finished a wonderful experience with the Lord. Moses 1:9

> 9 And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.

Not uncommon

As an aside, this experience of having a heavenly vision exhaust you is not uncommon. Joseph Smith was that way with the first vision, and subsequently, after having had years of such visions, when he was with Sidney Rigdon during the vision that became section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants they were described this way, “Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’” (Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pp. 303–4.) Quoted from Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual

Evidently when Moses started having visions he had not yet "gotten used to it," because after his first vision it was hours before he received his natural strength again. Moses

1:10

> 10 And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man; and he said unto himself: Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.

Our daughter had just had a baby, and was going through a small bout of depression, which is normal for many women after they have given birth. She was torn with feelings of guilt that she had been given so many blessings leading up to the delivery of the baby, then when it was all over, she felt abandoned. She had thoughts that she had only conceived this child out of a sense of mere duty because she felt that there was someone missing from the family and she needed to have another child. After having the child, and sensing intensely how special he was, she felt guilty of such thoughts, and felt unworthy to be his mother. She stated emphatically that she would not give him up for any price. So why had the Lord "closed the doors" on her?

Going back to Moses, in verse 10 he realized something he had never before thought of, that mankind was as nothing compared to God. He realized that in order to even stand in the presence of his God he had to be transfigured or changed in some way or he would have "withered and died." The kind of glory he had just witnessed was something totally new to him, and this experience needed some time to sink in (Moses 1:11).

> 11 But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.

Moses thought his experience was over with, but then Satan came calling. It is often the case that when we receive something from the Lord that Satan is then given a chance to work on us. We see this all the time in missionary work. Someone says they will be baptized, and either right before they are baptized or right afterward there is a period of intense testing that takes place. They have doubts, their friends gang up on them to convince them they are throwing their life away by joining that "cult." Something almost always happens. It is so predictable that missionaries can generally feel safe warning the convert that it is coming and to be prepared for it. It happened to Joseph Smith right before his first vision, he was almost overcome with an intense dark power that threatened to destroy him, but by exercising all his faith, he was able to dispel it

and immediately his experience was replaced with a visit from the Father and the Son. With Moses, no sooner had he regained his strength from his vision, and had time to sort out what he had experienced, than Satan came tempting him (Moses 1:12).

> 12 And it came to pass that when Moses had said these words,
> behold, Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.

Moses was more prepared than he had been a few hours before. He now knew he was a son of God, not a "son of man." He knew of God's glory, and to him, Satan's "glory" was only darkness. He rehearsed to Satan what God had told him, and the more he said the angrier Satan became. Moses told him to leave multiple times, but it wasn't until the third time that he announced emphatically that his allegiance was with God, and commanded him in the name of the Only Begotten (Jesus Christ), that Satan left.

> 24 And it came to pass that when Satan had departed from the presence of Moses, that Moses lifted up his eyes unto heaven, being filled with the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and the Son;
>
> 25 And calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory again, for it was upon him; and he heard a voice, saying: Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God.
>
> 26 And lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days; for thou shalt deliver my people from bondage, even Israel my chosen.

Not only did the Lord promise Moses great things in these verses, but much more was shown to him in the following verses. It was in the vision that followed that Moses was shown the actual creation of this earth and all its inhabitants. That is the record that became the first few chapters of Genesis.

Lessons learned

Okay, so how does this apply to our daughter and her dilemma of feeling left alone? The two situations may be different, but the principle behind them is the same. Sometimes we feel like we are doing what we are supposed to do - we are doing our duty. So why do we get to a point that we feel the heavens have temporarily shut themselves against all our efforts to get help and direction? What did Moses do when he was left alone?

Sometimes when heaven leaves us alone it is an opportunity for us to sort through all that has happened to us. The Lord is sometimes giving us a chance to figure out where our priorities are, our allegiance. Our daughter felt unworthy to be the mother of this special little boy because she felt she had only decided to have him out of a sense of duty. She was afraid that the Lord had shut her out, so to speak, and was angry with her. We counseled her about the Lord's love for her, assuring her that the Lord was more willing to let go of a little thing like that than she might think He was. It was time for her to go back to the Lord and let him know that she was grateful for what she had been given, no matter the reason for how he came to be, and that she would be a good mother to him, and would seek to raise him well.

Like our daughter, like Moses, we are often left alone for a time. During this time we might feel cast adrift or abandoned, but we are not, because like Moses, even when Satan comes calling, planting doubts and falsehoods in our path, when we turn to the Lord and declare ourselves His and His alone, eventually the heavens reopen, and the Lord showers us with His blessings. These "alone" times are our proving grounds, they are the times when we are given the opportunity to find our way through our difficulties on our own. The Lord has not abandoned us, but left us to exercise our own abilities to do good. It makes us stronger and more able in the long run. It is like the parent who let's go of their toddler and let's them take those first tentative steps on their own. They have not abandoned the child, but are letting the child gain confidence in their own ability to accomplish great things. Once we have made covenants with God to be His obedient children, we are never really alone.

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The Value of Being Left Alone