

Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet

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On February 26, 1980, Ezra Taft Benson gave a talk titled “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet” at BYU.¹ Here are the points that he outlined. (Note, he goes into further depth with quotes and more sources of those quotes. You’ll have to read the original article to get the full effect of what Benson is saying.)

Here are the fourteen points:

First: The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything.

Second: The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works.

Third: The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet.

Fourth: The prophet will never lead the Church astray.

Fifth: The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.

Sixth: The prophet does not have to say “Thus saith the Lord” to give us scripture.

Seventh: The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.

Eighth: The prophet is not limited by men’s reasoning.

Ninth: The prophet can receive revelation on any matter, temporal or spiritual.

Tenth: The prophet may be involved in civic matters.

¹<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/ezra-taft-benson/fourteen-fundamentals-following-prophet/>

Eleventh: The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich.

Twelfth: The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.

Thirteenth: The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency—the highest quorum in the Church.

Fourteenth: The prophet and the presidency—the living prophet and the First Presidency—follow them and be blessed; reject them and suffer.

There is some controversy to this list though, President Spencer W. Kimball was not a fan.

Benson's ill-advised BYU speech [i.e. "Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet] forced Kimball to call Benson in once again. According to general authorities with direct knowledge of the affair, President Kimball asked Benson to apologize to the Quorum of the Twelve but they 'were dissatisfied with the response.' The enfeebled president then instructed Benson to apologize again the following week, this time to a combined meeting of all the general authorities. The apostle also prepared a written apology to the public, though it is not clear if he delivered it.²

²Matthew L. Harris, *Watchman on the Tower: Ezra Taft Benson and the Making of the Mormon Right* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2020), 103.