

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## *The Promised Land*

Arranged by:

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LDS Eternal Marriage  
Student Manual &

Brigham Young University - Idaho **FDREL234**  
Topics and Reading Assignments



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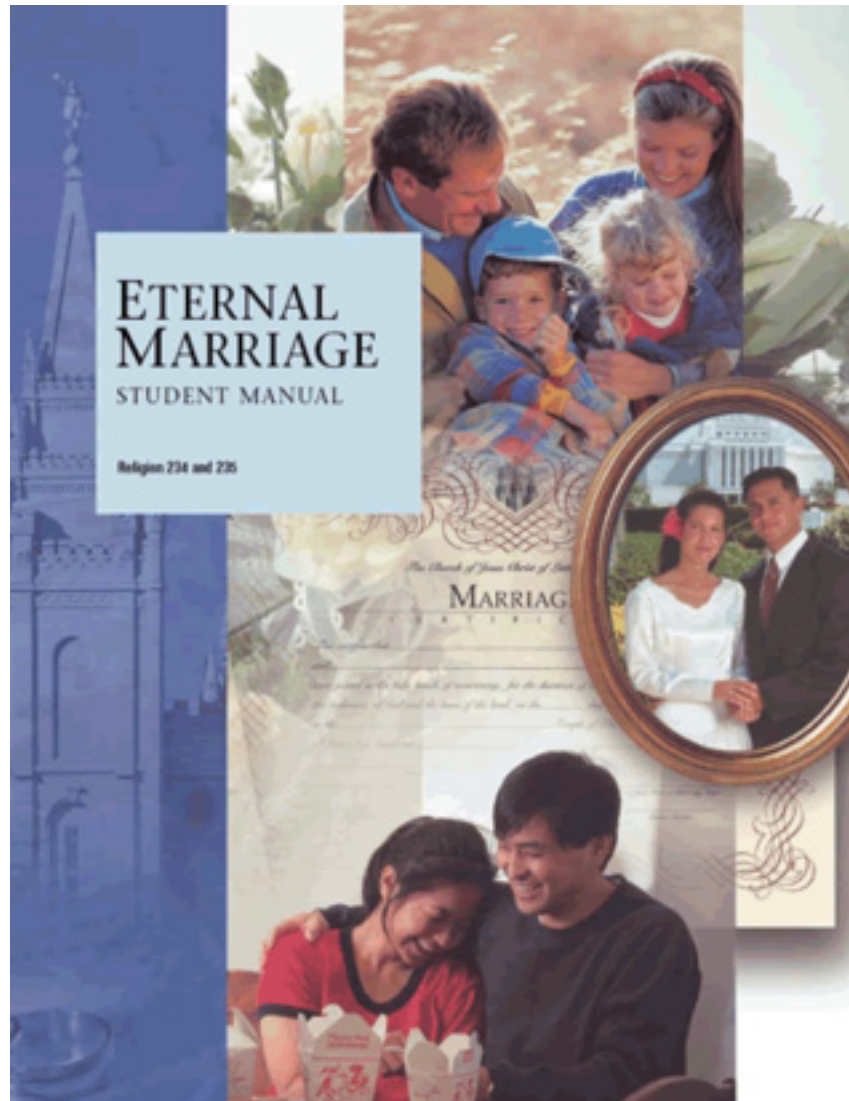
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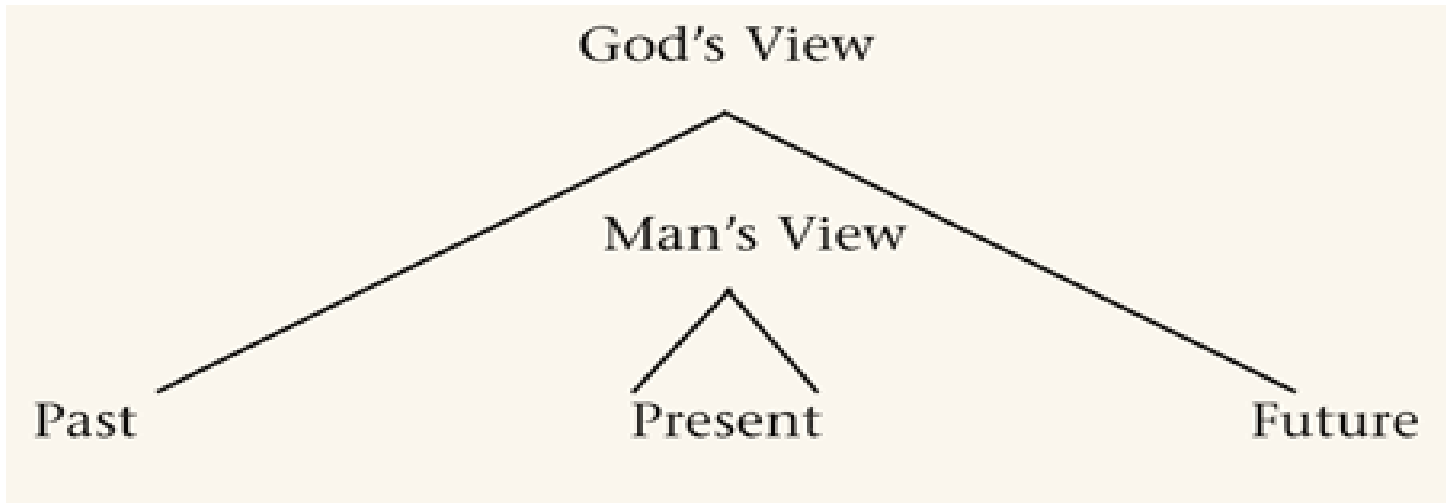


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## **Eternal Perspective Selected Teachings**

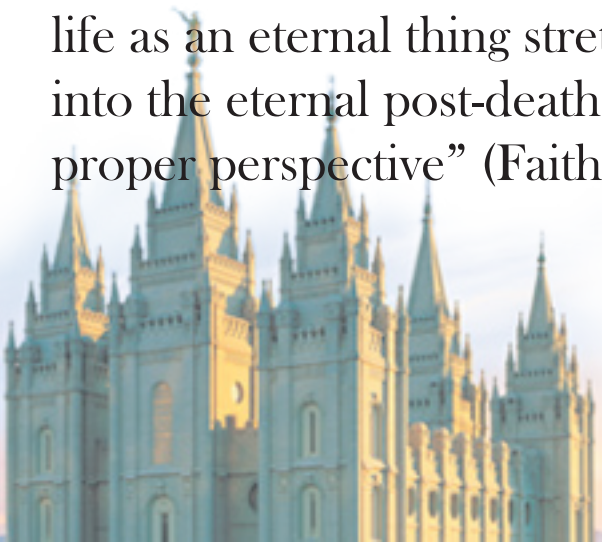


President Spencer W. Kimball

“If we live in such a way that the considerations of eternity press upon us, we will make better decisions. ...

“The more clearly we see eternity, the more obvious it becomes that the Lord’s work in which we are engaged is one vast and grand work with striking similarities on each side of the veil” (“The Things of Eternity—Stand We in Jeopardy?” *Ensign*, Jan. 1977, 3).

“If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 97).



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## **Living by Gospel Principles**

### Governing Our Lives with Principles

President Ezra Taft Benson counseled: “One of the most important things you can do ... is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81).

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated: “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle” (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1993, 117; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86).

Knowing and living by correct principles is essential to a happy life and a happy marriage. Gospel principles include doctrine, commandments, covenants, ordinances, and precepts. In this manual, however, the term principle refers to a gospel truth that gives us counsel and guidance for conduct.

### We Must Do Our Part

Principles can often be divided into two main parts: if and then. The



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if part is a statement of general counsel from the Lord. The then part is the promised results of obeying or disobeying that counsel.

God called the Word of Wisdom “a principle with promise” (D&C 89:3). The if part is the counsel to keep our bodies physically and spiritually pure. The then part promises health, wisdom, strength, and other blessings.

The Lord keeps His promises: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). We must do our part to qualify for the blessings (see D&C 130:20–22). We should also remember that God determines the then part according to His wisdom and not according to our expectations.

Principles are not always taught or written in the if-then format. For example, General Authorities do not always say “if you have faith, then you will have the Lord’s power in your life.” Instead, they may relate examples that illustrate faith or motivate us to be faithful.

## Gospel Principles Are Universal

Gospel principles are universal—they are true in all situations in all cultures at all times. The principles revealed to Adam in the beginning of the world are just as true in these latter days. We have prophets, scriptures, and the influence of the Holy Ghost to help us see and apply correct principles.

## Summary

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A principle is an enduring truth, law, or rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Principles help us apply the doctrines of the gospel to everyday living. They give us a light to illuminate the path before us in an increasingly confused and wicked world.



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## **Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge**

As spiritual knowledge unfolds, it must be understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded.

—Elder Richard G. Scott

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 117–20; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 86–88

You wonderful, righteous members of this church constantly inspire and motivate me. Thank you for your zest for life, your generous giving of self, your devotion, and your determination to live worthily. I also express gratitude to our many friends who have joined us through these conference sessions. May the messages given bless your lives.

### **Importance of Spiritual Knowledge**

Recently in South America a youth inquired, “Can you give us suggestions that will help us know the Savior better and be able to constantly follow His example?” That meaningful question and others like it have prompted this message on acquiring spiritual knowledge.

President Ezra Taft Benson emphasized the importance of spiritual knowledge, saying:

“We should make daily study of the scriptures a lifetime pursuit. ...

“... The most important [thing] you can do ... is to immerse your-

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selves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. ... Learn the doctrine. Master the principles. ...

“You must ... see that ... searching the scriptures is not a burden laid upon [us] by the Lord, but a marvelous blessing and opportunity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, p. 61; or Ensign, Nov. 1986, 47).

President Spencer W. Kimball commented:

“Spiritual learning takes precedence. The secular without the foundation of the spiritual is ... like the foam upon the milk, the fleeting shadow. ... One need not choose between the two ... for there is opportunity to get both simultaneously” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ... p. 390).

## How to Acquire Spiritual Knowledge

As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle. I have tried to do that with gaining spiritual knowledge. The result is now shared in hope that it will be a beginning place for your study. That statement of principle is:

To acquire spiritual knowledge and to obey it with wisdom, one



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must—

In humility, seek divine light.

Exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

Hearken to His counsel.

Keep His commandments.

As spiritual knowledge unfolds, it must be understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded.

I will explain that statement using examples from the scriptures, the prophets, and the precious, though difficult, laboratory of personal experience. My desire is that the suggestions given will help you in your quest for spiritual truth throughout your life. Then, in time, you may accomplish this objective given by President Joseph F. Smith:

“The greatest achievement mankind can make in this world is to familiarize themselves with divine truth, so thoroughly, so perfectly, that the example or conduct of no creature living in the world can ever turn them away from the knowledge that they have obtained. ...

“From my boyhood I have desired to learn the principles of the gospel in such a way ... that it would matter not to me who might fall from the truth, ... my foundation would be ... certain in the truths that I have learned” (Gospel Doctrine [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 3-4).

Like President Smith, you and I need that kind of secure anchor to keep our life centered in righteousness and to avoid being swept

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away by the ruthless waves of worldliness.

## Humbly Seek Divine Light

The following scriptures teach why we should seek divine light:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105; italics added).

“I, the Lord, ... will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words” (2 Nephi 10:14; italics added).

“It is I that speak; ... I am the light which shineth in darkness, and by my power I give these words unto thee.

“... Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

“... I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

“And ... by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive” (D&C 11:11-14; italics added).

Analogies with physical light help us understand the power of spiritual light. A bulb ignited in a dark room overpowers darkness. Yet if the darkness is too intense, it can overpower light, as with a bulb plunged into a bucket of black ink. Spiritual light overcomes the

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darkness of ignorance and disbelief. When transgression severely clouds a life, the focused spiritual truths of repentance cut the blackness as a laser penetrates the darkest ink.

Humility is essential to the acquiring of spiritual knowledge. To be humble is to be teachable. Humility permits you to be tutored by the Spirit and to be taught from sources inspired by the Lord, such as the scriptures. The seeds of personal growth and understanding germinate and flourish in the fertile soil of humility. Their fruit is spiritual knowledge to guide you here and hereafter.

A proud individual cannot know the things of the Spirit. Paul taught this truth, saying:

“The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ...

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:11, 14).

Since it requires much personal effort to gain and use worthwhile knowledge, you cannot endlessly sample from every fascinating arena of life. Therefore, you should select carefully a few vital areas where you can focus energy to learn and share vital truths. I know that to gain knowledge of great worth requires extraordinary personal effort. This is particularly true when our desire is to obtain spiritual knowledge. President Kimball said it this way:

“The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden

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ones—but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them. ... Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedication of one's life. ... Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pp. 389–90).

Brigham Young learned truth by carefully listening to Joseph Smith and striving to understand everything that was taught by word, example, or the Spirit. The resulting tutoring has blessed generations. It conditioned Brigham Young to learn additional truths and to share far more than he had received personally from Joseph Smith. Follow his example.

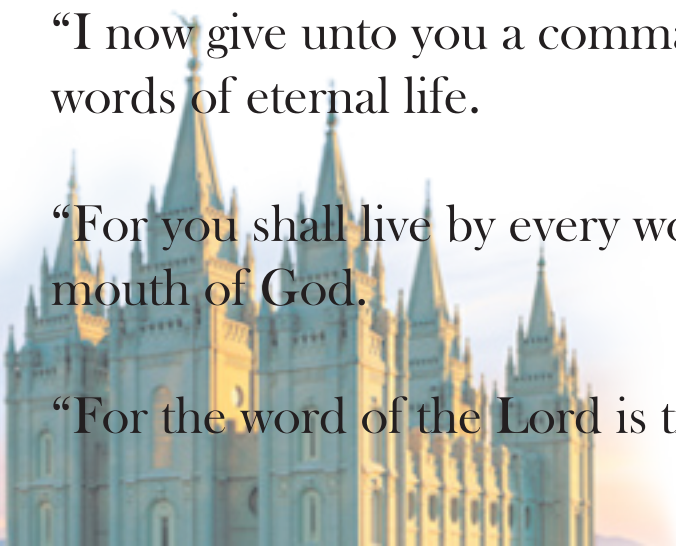
## Exercise Faith and Hearken to Jesus' Counsel

The need to exercise faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely essential. It is the foundation of the plan of salvation. When that exercise of faith is coupled with sincere effort based upon a willingness to hearken to His counsel, great personal growth and blessings follow. The Savior declared:

“I now give unto you a commandment ... to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

“For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

“For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light,





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and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

“And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

“And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto ... the Father” (D&C 84:43–47; italics added).

## Obey the Commandments

The role of obedience in gaining spiritual knowledge is crucial, as this comment of President Joseph Fielding Smith confirms:

“Now the Lord would give us gifts. He will quicken our minds. He will give us ... a knowledge that will be so deeply rooted in our souls that [it] can never be rooted out, if we will just seek for the light ... and the understanding which is promised to us, and which we can receive if we will only be true and faithful to every covenant and obligation pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1958, p. 22).

To keep the commandments, you must know them. The best single source for learning them is the scriptures. President Joseph Fielding Smith gave this admonition:

“Today we are troubled by evil-designing persons who [endeavor] to destroy the testimonies of members of the Church, and many ... are in danger because of lack of understanding and because they

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have not sought the guidance of the Spirit. ... It is a commandment from the Lord that members ... be diligent ... and study ... the fundamental truths of the gospel. ... Every baptized person [can] have an abiding testimony ... , but [it] will grow dim and eventually disappear [without] study, obedience, and diligent seeking to know and understand the truth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, p. 22; or Improvement Era, Dec. 1963, p. 1062).

Profound spiritual truth cannot simply be poured from one mind and heart to another. It takes faith and diligent effort. Precious truth comes a small piece at a time through faith, with great exertion, and at times wrenching struggles. The Lord intends it be that way so that we can mature and progress. Moroni said, “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6). To explain that truth, President Harold B. Lee gave this wise instruction:

“The Savior’s blood, His atonement, will save us, but only after we have done all we can to save ourselves by keeping His commandments. All of the principles of the gospel are principles of promise by which the plans of the Almighty are unfolded to us” (Stand Ye in Holy Places [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 246).

## Apply Spiritual Knowledge

As packets of knowledge unfold, they must be understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded. I’ll explain:

Understood. As each element of truth is encountered, you must

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carefully examine it in the light of prior knowledge to determine where it fits. Ponder it; inspect it inside out. Study it from every vantage point to discover hidden meaning. View it in perspective to confirm you have not jumped to false conclusions. Prayerful reflection yields further understanding. Such evaluation is particularly important when the truth comes as an impression of the Spirit.

Valued. You show knowledge is valued by expressing appreciation for it, especially in heartfelt prayers of gratitude. The Lord said, “He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more” (D&C 78:19).

Obedied. Obedient application of truth is the surest way of making it eternally yours. The wise use of knowledge will permeate your life with its precious fruit.

Remembered. Powerful spiritual direction in your life can be overcome or forced into the background unless you provide a way to retain it. Brigham Young declared, “If you love the truth you can remember it” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 10). Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in time of need. Spiritually sensitive information should be kept in a sacred place that communicates to the Lord how you treasure it. That practice enhances the likelihood of your receiving further light.

Expanded. This thought refers to rich benefits that come from your efforts to enlarge, extend, and increase your understanding of truth.

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Use the scriptures and the declarations of the prophets to expand your knowledge. You will find that efforts to share knowledge are often rewarded with more understanding as additional light flows into your mind and heart (see D&C 8:2–3).

## Study and Apply Conference Messages

We have come to the end of a great conference. Through its messages, you have been given inspired truth without much effort on your part. Make these truths yours through study and thoughtful application and by emulating a prophet of God, Spencer W. Kimball, who at the conclusion of a conference, taught:

“While sitting here, I have made up my mind that when I go home from this conference this night there are many, many areas in my life that I can perfect. I have made a mental list of them, and I expect to go to work as soon as we get through with conference” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, p. 164; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, p. 111).

The privilege of learning absolute truth is sacred to me. I stand in awe that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are willing, even anxious for us to learn from them. Please use what I have shared with sensitivity for the wondrous privilege given each of us, willing to obey, to be taught eternal truth. Gaining spiritual knowledge is not a mechanical process. It is a sacred privilege based upon spiritual law. I testify that you can receive inspired help. Humbly ask your Eternal Father. Seek divine light. Exercise faith in the Savior. Strive to hearken to His counsel and obey His commandments. He will bless and



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lead you as you move through this sometimes treacherous world.

I solemnly testify that Jesus Christ guides this, His church. He knows and loves you personally. As you walk in faithful obedience, He will bless you, inspire you, and lead you to greater knowledge and capacity. I certify that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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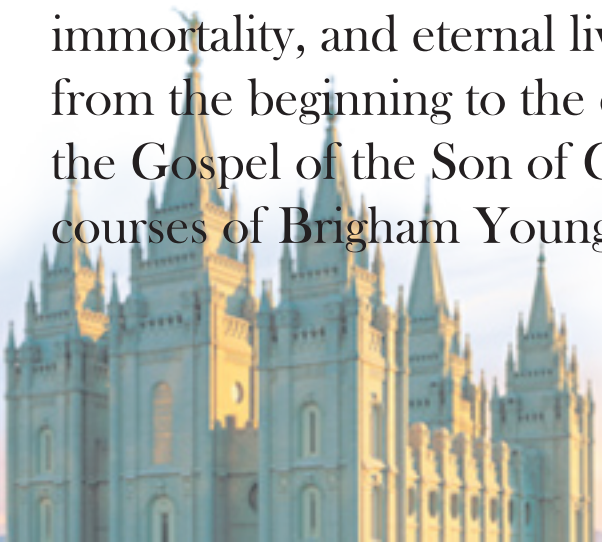
## **The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage**

President Brigham Young

“We understand that we are to be made kings and priests unto God; now if I be made the king and lawgiver to my family, and if I have many sons, I shall become the father of many fathers, for they will have sons, and their sons will have sons, and so on, from generation to generation, and, in this way, I may become the father of many fathers, or the king of many kings. This will constitute every man a prince, king, lord, or whatever the Father sees fit to confer upon us.

“In this way we can become king of kings, and lord of lords, or father of fathers, or prince of princes, and this is the only course, for another man is not going to raise up a kingdom for you” (in Discourses of Brigham Young, 195).

“The whole subject of the marriage relation is not in my reach, nor in any other man’s reach on this earth. It is without beginning of days or end of years; it is a hard matter to reach. We can tell some things with regard to it; it lays the foundation for worlds, for angels, and for the Gods; for intelligent beings to be crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal lives. In fact, it is the thread which runs from the beginning to the end of the holy Gospel of Salvation—of the Gospel of the Son of God; it is from eternity to eternity” (in Discourses of Brigham Young, 195).



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## **Marriage for Eternity Selected Teachings**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

“Mortal persons who overcome all things and gain an ultimate exaltation will live eternally in the family unit and have spirit children, thus becoming Eternal Fathers and Eternal Mothers. (D&C 132:19–32.) Indeed, the formal pronouncement of the Church, issued by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, states: ‘So far as the stages of eternal progression and attainment have been made known through divine revelation, we are to understand that only resurrected and glorified beings can become parents of spirit offspring.’ (Man: His Origin and Destiny, p. 129.)” (Mormon Doctrine, 517).



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## **The Eternal Family**

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 86–90; or Ensign, Nov. 1996,  
64–68

### **The Doctrine of Eternal Families**

I wish to speak to all those who would like to know about eternal families and about families being forever. One year ago the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a proclamation to the world concerning the family. It summarizes eternal gospel principles that have been taught since the beginning of recorded history and even before the earth was created.

The doctrine of the family begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them. The Apostle Paul taught that God is the father of our spirits (see Hebrews 12:9). From the proclamation we read, “In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life.” The proclamation also reiterates to the world that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).



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From the earliest beginnings, God established the family and made it eternal. Adam and Eve were sealed in marriage for time and all eternity:

“And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; and thus it was” (Moses 5:59).

“And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth” (Moses 5:2).

The Savior Himself spoke of this sacred marriage covenant and promise when He gave the authority to His disciples to bind in heaven sacred covenants made on earth:

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

In this latter day the promise of eternal families was restored in 1829 when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood were restored to the earth. Seven years later, in the Kirtland Temple, the keys to perform the sealing ordinances were restored, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death,

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stood before us, and said:

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi. ...

“... The keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands” (D&C 110:13–14, 16).

With the restoration of these keys and priesthood authority comes the opportunity for all who are worthy to receive the blessings of eternal families. “Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house” (D&C 110:9).

## Promises and Requirements of Sealings

What is the promise of these sealings which are performed in the temples? The Lord outlines the promise and requirements in this sacred verse:

“And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be

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written in the Lamb's Book of Life ... and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever" (D&C 132:19).

As taught in this scripture, an eternal bond doesn't just happen as a result of sealing covenants we make in the temple. How we conduct ourselves in this life will determine what we will be in all the eternities to come. To receive the blessings of the sealing that our Heavenly Father has given to us, we have to keep the commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities. The family relationships we have here on this earth are important, but they are much more important for their effect on our families for generations in mortality and throughout all eternity.

## Love Spouse above All Others

By divine commandment, spouses are required to love each other above all others. The Lord clearly declares, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else" (D&C 42:22). The proclamation states:

"By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families [see D&C 83:2-4; 1 Timothy 5:8]. [By divine design,] mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children." By divine design, husband and wife are

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equal partners in their marriage and parental responsibilities. By direct commandment of God, “parents have a sacred duty ... to teach [their children] to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens [in the countries where they reside]” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102; italics added; see Mosiah 4:14–15; D&C 68:25–28).

## Satan’s Efforts to Destroy the Family

Because of the importance of the family to the eternal plan of happiness, Satan makes a major effort to destroy the sanctity of the family, demean the importance of the roles of men and women, encourage moral uncleanness and violations of the sacred law of chastity, and discourage parents from placing the bearing and rearing of children as one of their highest priorities.

So fundamental is the family unit to the plan of salvation that God has declared a warning that those “individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God [their maker]. The disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

## Save Families, Not Just Ourselves

While our individual salvation is based on our individual obedience, it is equally important that we understand that we are each an important and integral part of a family and that the highest blessings



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can be received only within an eternal family. When families are functioning as designed by God, the relationships found therein are the most valued of mortality. The plan of the Father is that family love and companionship will continue into the eternities. Being one in a family carries a great responsibility of caring, loving, lifting, and strengthening each member of the family so that all can righteously endure to the end in mortality and dwell together throughout eternity. It is not enough just to save ourselves. It is equally important that parents, brothers, and sisters are saved in our families. If we return home alone to our Heavenly Father, we will be asked, “Where is the rest of the family?” This is why we teach that families are forever. The eternal nature of an individual becomes the eternal nature of the family.

We are each an important and integral part of a family.

## Families Prepare Us for Eternal Life

The eternal nature of our body and our spirit is a question often pondered by those who live in mortality. All people who will ever live on earth are members of a human family and are eternal children of God, our loving Heavenly Father. After birth and tasting of death in mortality, all will be resurrected because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God the Father. Depending on our individual obedience to the laws, ordinances, and commandments of God, each mortal can have the blessing of attaining eternal life; that is, returning to live in the presence of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, having eternal increase for all the eternities to come. Through making and keeping the sacred cove-

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nants found in the temple ordinances, individuals can return to the presence of God and will be reunited with their families eternally.

The home is where we are nurtured and where we prepare ourselves for living in mortality. It is also where we prepare ourselves for death and for immortality because of our belief and understanding that there is life after death, not only for the individual but also for the family.

## *Faith of a Friend with a Terminal Illness*

Some of the greatest lessons of gospel principles about the eternal nature of the family are learned as we observe how members of the Church, when faced with adversity, apply gospel principles in their lives and in their homes. In the past year I have witnessed the blessings of joy which come to those who honor and revere the gospel teaching of the eternal family during times of adversity in their lives.

A few months ago I had the opportunity of visiting a man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. As a devoted priesthood holder, he was confronted with the realities of mortality. He found strength, however, in the example of the Savior, who said, in the Lord's Prayer, "After this manner therefore pray ye: ... Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9-10). My friend took courage in knowing that as Jesus was required to endure great pain and agony in the Garden of Gethsemane while completing the atoning sacrifice, He uttered the words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42).

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My friend came to accept the phrase “Thy will be done” as he faced his own poignant trials and tribulations. As a faithful member of the Church, he was now confronted with some sobering concerns. Particularly touching were his questions, “Have I done all that I need to do to faithfully endure to the end?” “What will death be like?” “Will my family be prepared to stand in faith and be self-reliant when I am gone?”

We had the opportunity to discuss all three questions. They are clearly answered in the doctrine taught to us by our Savior. We discussed how he had spent his life striving to be faithful, to do what God asked of him, to be honest in his dealings with his fellowmen and all others, to care for and love his family. Isn’t that what is meant by enduring to the end? We talked about what happens immediately after death, about what God has taught us about the world of spirits. It is a place of paradise and happiness for those who have lived righteous lives. It is not something to fear.

After our conversation, he called together his wife and the extended family—children and grandchildren—to teach them again the doctrine of the Atonement that all will be resurrected. Everyone came to understand that just as the Lord has said, while there will be mourning at the temporary separation, there is no sorrow for those who die in the Lord (see Revelation 14:13; D&C 42:46). His blessing promised him comfort and reassurance that all would be well, that he would not have pain, that he would have additional time to prepare his family for his departure, and even that he would know the time of his departure. The family related to me that on the night

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before he passed away, he said he would go on the morrow. He passed away the next afternoon at peace, with all his family at his side. This is the solace and comfort that comes to us when we understand the gospel plan and know that families are forever.

## **Gospel Doctrines Comfort a Young Widow**

Contrast these events with an incident which happened to me when I was a young man in my early twenties. While serving in the Air Force, one of the pilots in my squadron crashed on a training mission and was killed. I was assigned to accompany my fallen comrade on his final journey home to be buried in Brooklyn. I had the honor of standing by his family during the viewing and funeral services and of representing our government in presenting the flag to his grieving widow at the graveside. The funeral service was dark and dismal. No mention was made of his goodness or his accomplishments. His name was never mentioned. At the conclusion of the services, his widow turned to me and asked, “Bob, what is really going to happen to Don?” I was then able to give her the sweet doctrine of the Resurrection and the reality that, if baptized and sealed in the temple for time and all eternity, they could be together eternally. The clergyman standing next to her said, “That is the most beautiful doctrine I have ever heard.”

The fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ brings great comfort in stressful times of mortality. It brings light where there is darkness and a calming influence where there is turmoil. It gives eternal hope where there is mortal despair. It is more than just beautiful doctrine. It is a reality in our lives that if we can be obedient and obtain the



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eternal rewards that God grants us, if we will draw nigh unto Him and embrace the eternal doctrine, we will be blessed.

## **A Dying Man Has Faith in Eternal Families**

Another incident that has touched my life recently happened when a young man with a terminal illness passed away. He knew that his illness would first take away his manual dexterity and his ability to walk, then its progression would take his ability to speak, and finally his respiratory system would cease to function. But he also had faith that families are forever. With this knowledge, he spoke to each of his children through video recordings for use when he was gone. He produced recordings to be given to his sons and daughters at important, sacred occasions in their lives, such as baptisms, priesthood ordinations, and weddings. He spoke to them with the tender love of a father who knew that while his family was forever, for a time he would not physically be able to be with them, but spiritually he would never leave their side.

The examples of faith shown by steadfast widows and widowers, along with that of their children, after the passing of a spouse or parent are an inspiration to all of us. Great lessons can be learned as we observe their faith and obedience as they strive to remain faithful so that they can once again be together as families through eternity.

## **The Gospel Brings Light and Hope**

The knowledge and understanding of the doctrine that God lives and Jesus is the Christ and that we have an opportunity to be res-

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urrected and live in the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, make it possible to endure otherwise tragic events. This doctrine brings a brightness of hope into an otherwise dark and dreary world. It answers the simple questions of where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. These are truths that must be taught and practiced in our homes.

God lives. Jesus is the Christ. Through His Atonement we will all have the opportunity of being resurrected. This is not just an individual blessing; it is much more than that. It is a blessing to each one of us and to our families. That we may be eternally grateful, that we can live in the presence of God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ, that we may be together in the eternities to come, that we might understand the joy, and that we not only teach this doctrine but live true to it in our lives and in our families, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Divorce Selected Teachings**

### Related Scriptures

#### Genesis 2:24

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

#### Matthew 19:4-6

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

“And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

#### Doctrine and Covenants 42:22, 75

“Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. ...

“But if ye shall find that any persons have left their companions for the sake of adultery, and they themselves are the offenders, and their companions are living, they shall be cast out from among you.”

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Concern for Family Life

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Nurture and cultivate your marriage. Guard it and work to keep it solid and beautiful. Divorce is becoming so common, even rampant, that studies show in a few years half of those now married will be divorced. It is happening, I regret to say, even among some who are sealed in the house of the Lord. Marriage is a contract, it is a compact, it is a union between a man and a woman under the plan of the Almighty. It can be fragile. It requires nurture and very much effort. I regret to acknowledge that some husbands are abusive, some are unkind, some are thoughtless, some are evil. They indulge in pornography and bring about situations which destroy them, destroy their families, and destroy the most sacred of all relationships.

“I pity the man who at one time looked into the eyes of a beautiful young woman and held her hand across the altar in the house of the Lord as they made sacred and everlasting promises one to another, but who, lacking in self-discipline, fails to cultivate his better nature, sinks to coarseness and evil, and destroys the relationship which the Lord has provided for him” (“Walking in the Light of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 99).

“I am concerned about family life in the Church. We have wonderful people, but we have too many whose families are falling apart. It is a matter of serious concern. I think it is my most serious concern” (“Pres. Hinckley Notes His 85th Birthday, Reminisces about Life,” *Church News*, 24 June 1995, 6).



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Growing Plague of Divorce Is Not of God  
President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Too many who come to marriage have been coddled and spoiled and somehow led to feel that everything must be precisely right at all times, that life is a series of entertainments, that appetites are to be satisfied without regard to principle. How tragic the consequences of such hollow and unreasonable thinking! ...

“There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace and truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 96–98; or Ensign, May 1991, 73–74).

President James E. Faust

“What, then, might be ‘just cause’ for breaking the covenants of marriage? Over a lifetime of dealing with human problems, I have struggled to understand what might be considered ‘just cause’ for breaking of covenants. I confess I do not claim the wisdom or authority to definitively state what is ‘just cause.’ Only the parties to the marriage can determine this. They must bear the responsibility for the train of consequences which inevitably follows if these covenants are not honored. In my opinion, ‘just cause’ should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship which is destructive of a person’s dignity as a human being.

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“At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simply ‘mental distress’ or ‘personality differences’ or having ‘grown apart’ or having ‘fallen out of love.’ This is especially so where there are children” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 46; or Ensign, May 1993, 36–37).



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## **Holy Spirit of Promise Selected Teachings**

To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve.

—Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

“The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Spirit promised the saints, or in other words the Holy Ghost. This name-title is used in connection with the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power given him to ratify and approve the righteous acts of men so that those acts will be binding on earth and in heaven. ‘All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations,’ must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have ‘efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.’ (D. & C. 132:7.)

“To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done.

“The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation. They ‘are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just

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and true.’ (D. & C. 76:53.) If they are not just and true and worthy the ratifying seal is withheld.

“When any ordinance or contract is sealed by the Spirit, it is approved with a promise of reward, provided unrighteousness does not thereafter break the seal, remove the ratifying approval, and cause loss of the promised blessing. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, p. 55; vol. 2, pp. 94–99.) Seals are placed on contracts through righteousness.

“The operation and power of the Holy Spirit of Promise is best illustrated by the ordinance and contract of baptism. An unworthy candidate for baptism might deceive the elders and get the ordinance performed, but no one can lie to the Holy Ghost and get by undetected. Accordingly, the baptism of an unworthy and unrepentant person would not be sealed by the Spirit; it would not be ratified by the Holy Ghost; the unworthy person would not be justified by the Spirit in his actions. If thereafter he became worthy through repentance and obedience, the seal would then be put in force. Similarly, if a worthy person is baptized, with the ratifying approval of the Holy Ghost attending the performance, yet the seal may be broken by subsequent sin.

“These principles also apply to every other ordinance and performance in the Church. Thus if both parties are ‘just and true,’ if they are worthy, a ratifying seal is placed on their temple marriage; if they are unworthy, they are not justified by the Spirit and the ratification of the Holy Ghost is withheld. Subsequent worthiness will put the seal in force, and unrighteousness will break any seal.



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“Even if a person progresses to that state of near-perfection in which his calling and election is made sure, in which he is ‘sealed up unto eternal life’ (D. & C. 131:5; 132:18–26), in which he receives ‘the promise ... of eternal life’ (D. & C. 88:3–4), in which he is ‘sealed up unto the day of redemption’ (D. & C. 124:124; Eph. 1:13)—yet with it all, these great promises are secured only if the ‘performances’ are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise” (Mormon Doctrine, 361–62).

An act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise ... is one which is approved by the Lord.



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## **Keeping Our Covenants**

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost who places the stamp of approval upon every ordinance: baptism, confirmation, ordination, marriage. The promise is that the blessings will be received through faithfulness.

“If a person violates a covenant, whether it be of baptism, ordination, marriage or anything else, the Spirit withdraws the stamp of approval, and the blessings will not be received.

“Every ordinance is sealed with a promise of a reward based upon faithfulness. The Holy Spirit withdraws the stamp of approval where covenants are broken” (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:45).

“Divorce Not Part of Gospel Plan. If all mankind would live in strict obedience to the gospel, and in that love which is begotten by the Spirit of the Lord, all marriages would be eternal, divorce would be unknown. ...

“Lord’s Penalty for Divorce. ...

“Marriage according to the law of the Church is the most holy and sacred ordinance. It will bring to the husband and the wife, if they abide in their covenants, the fulness of exaltation in the kingdom of God. When that covenant is broken, it will bring eternal misery to the guilty party, for we will all have to answer for our deeds done

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while in the flesh. It is an ordinance that cannot be trifled with, and the covenants made in the temple cannot be broken without dire punishment to the one who is guilty. ...

“Man Commanded to Be Fruitful and Multiply. The obligations which married couples take upon themselves should conform in every particular to the commandments given by the Lord.

“In the beginning, the Lord said when he gave Eve to Adam, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.’ [Genesis 1:28; Moses 2:28.] This earth was created for the very purpose that the spirit children of our Father might have the privilege of the temporal existence, receiving bodies of flesh and bones as tabernacles for the spirits which occupy them, and then, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, receive the resurrection in which the spirit and the body become inseparably connected so that man may live again. ...

“The covenant given to Adam to multiply was renewed after the flood with Noah and his children after him. The Lord said to Noah: ‘And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you.’ [Genesis 9:7-9.]

“This covenant is still binding, although mankind has departed from the way of eternal life and has rejected the covenant of marriage which the Lord revealed. ...

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“Enormity of Sex Sin. ...

“Is there any wonder, then, that the Lord places the violation of this covenant of marriage and the loss of virtue as second only to the shedding of innocent blood? [see Alma 39:5-9.] Is there not, then, sufficient reason for the severity of the punishment which has been promised to those who violate this eternal law? Moreover, have we not forgotten in large measure the enormity of the crime of unchastity and breaking of marriage vows? Do those who are guilty think the enormity of the offense of maliciously or wickedly tampering with the laws of life will be overlooked by a just God? Do they think that only a few stripes, if any punishment at all, will amend this broken law?” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:80, 83-84, 86-87, 92).





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## **Why Marry in the Temple?**

Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
Evidences and Reconciliations, 297-301

Marriage, the most important event between birth and death, is a determining condition of life's happiness. Therefore, it should be entered into with the greatest of care. A companion for life should be one who lives righteously, to whom abundant love may be given, and who can be respected in his or her daily walk and talk. Likewise, the marriage covenant should be of such a nature as to help create, build, and maintain daily happiness. As the successive days are, so all of life will be. Wealth, power, and fame are beggared in comparison with the joy that comes from a happy family life.

The Church offers the privilege of marriage in the temple as the foremost means of establishing and maintaining happiness in the households of its members. It is a privilege beyond compare, which every prospective bride and groom should seek and use. The conditions are such that every person may fit himself to receive this privilege, so earnestly coveted by true Latter-day Saints.

Here are nine brief answers to the question, "Why Marry in the Temple?"

1. It is the Lord's desire and will. The temple is by divine decree the place where marriages should if possible be performed. Marriage is of such crucial importance in life that it should begin with full obedience to God's law. Love is the foundation of marriage, but love itself

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is a product of law and lives by law. True love is law-abiding, for the highest satisfactions come to a law-abiding life.

Moreover, true love of man for woman always includes love of God from whom all good things issue. The proof of our love of God is obedience to His law. Besides, life is so full of problems that the married couple should from the first seek the constant favor of the Lord. A sense of security and comfort comes to all who are wedded within the temple. They have obeyed the law. They have pleased the Lord. As law-abiding citizens in the kingdom of God, they have a special claim upon divine aid, blessings, and protection. Conformity to the practices of the Church always builds happiness in life. Marriage should begin right—by obedience to law.

2. It is in harmony with the sacred nature of the marriage covenant. Temple marriages are also more in harmony with the nature and importance of the occasion. They are performed in an attractive sealing room, especially dedicated for the purpose. The ceremony itself is simple, beautiful, and profound. Relatively few witnesses are present. Quiet and order prevail. There are no external trappings to confuse the mind. Full attention may be given to the sacred covenants to be made, and the blessings to follow, covering the vast period of eternal existence. The attention is focused upon the meaning of the marriage ceremony, and not upon distracting outside features which characterize a wedding in an elaborate social setting. Such concentration of the soul upon the covenants entered into and the blessings promised, becomes a joyful, happy memory incomparably sweeter than that of the usual rush and show of a wedding outside temple walls. Lovely in its simple beauty and deep import is a tem-

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ple wedding.

There is ample opportunity after the ceremony in the temple for a reception, simple or elaborate, at which friends may gather to congratulate the couple and to wish them happiness.

3. It tends to insure marital happiness. Experience has shown that temple marriages are generally the happiest. There are relatively fewer divorces among couples who have been sealed over the altars of the temple. This is shown by dependable statistics. Today's views of marriage are notably loose; yet no person with a decent outlook on life will enter the marriage state as an experiment. Life's happiness is made or marred by marriage. Divorce does not return the individuals to their former condition. Scars remain. Hasty weddings and the easy divorces that follow menace individual and public welfare. When the integrity of the family, the unit of society, vanishes, and family relationships are held in disrespect, society is headed for disaster. The deliberation that precedes a temple marriage, the solemnity that accompanies it, and the power that seals and blesses it, form a bulwark against many evils of the day. The temple marriage hedges about, and keeps inviolate, the happiness that of right belongs to the married state.

4. It permits the association of husband and wife for time and for all eternity. The essential difference between temple and all other marriages is of the greatest consequence. In the temple, and only there, the bridal couple are wedded for time and eternity. The contract is endless. Here and hereafter, on earth and beyond, they may travel together in loving companionship. This precious gift conforms to

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the Latter-day Saint belief that existence in the life after this may be active, useful, progressive. Love, content to end with death, is perishable, poor, and helpless. Marriage that lasts only during earth life is a sad one, for the love established between man and woman, as they live together and rear their family, should not die, but live and grow richer with the eternal years. True love hopes and prays for an endless continuation of association with the loved one. To those who are sealed to each other for all existence, love is ever warm, more hopeful, believing, courageous, and fearless. Such people live the richer, more joyful life. To them happiness and the making of it have no end. Dismal, dreary, full of fear, is the outlook upon love that ends with death. The youth of the Church dare not forego the gift of everlasting marriage.

5. It provides the eternal possession of children and family relationship. There is yet an added blessing. Children born under the temple covenant belong to their parents for all time and eternity. That is, the family relationships on earth are continued, forever, here and hereafter. The family, continued from earth into the next world, becomes a unit in everlasting life. In the long eternities we shall not be lonely wanderers, but side by side, with our loved ones who have gone before and those who shall follow, we shall travel the endless journey. What mother does not value this promise! What father does not feel his heart warm towards the eternal possession of his family! What heartbreakings might have been avoided if humanity had been true to the truth, and had surrendered to the sealing power of the Priesthood of God. Temple marriage becomes a promise of unending joy.



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6. It acts as a restraint against evil. The powers of darkness are ever active to push mankind into evil paths. Often, we are tempted to do foolish things. In the family little things may lead to discord. To create unhappiness is the aim of the adversary of righteousness. Here appears one of the foremost blessings of the temple marriage. Those who have been sealed in the temple have their eyes fixed upon eternity. They dare not forfeit the promised blessings. The family is to them an everlasting possession. They remember the covenants which make possible this eternal association. The temple marriage, with all that it means, becomes a restraining force in the presence of temptation. All family acts are more likely to be shaped in anticipation of an undying relationship. Under the influence of the memory of the temple ceremony, family differences are swallowed up in peace; hate is transmuted into love; fear, into courage; and evil is rebuked and cast out. Peace is the world's great need. From the temples of the Lord, and from everything done within them, issues the spirit of truth which is the foundation of peace.

7. It furnishes the opportunity for endless progression. Modern revelation sets forth the high destiny of those who are sealed for everlasting companionship. They will be given opportunity for a greater use of their powers. That means progress. They will attain more readily to their place in the presence of the Lord; they will increase more rapidly in every divine power; they will approach more nearly to the likeness of God; they will more completely realize their divine destiny. And this progress is not delayed until life after death. It begins here, today, for those who yield obedience to the law. Life is tasteless without progress. Eternal marriage, with all that it means, provides for unending advancement. "Eternal increase" is the gift

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to all who enter into the eternal marriage covenant, as made in the temples of the Lord.

8. It places the family under the protection of the power of the Priesthood. They who have won a temple marriage have been sealed for time and eternity by the power of the Holy Priesthood. This is the supreme power committed to man's keeping. That power issues from the unseen world. It gives life and light to the world. Human life with its cares and worries is transfigured into a radiant experience and adventure when it clings to this divine power and is blessed by it. To walk under divine authority, to possess it, to be a part of it, is to walk with heads erect, with grateful hearts, before our fellow men and our Father in heaven. The men and women who have come with this power out of the Lord's holy house will be hedged about by divine protection and walk more safely among the perplexities of earth. They will be indeed the ultimate conquerors of earth, for they come with the infinite power of God to solve the problems of earth. Spiritual power accompanies all who marry in the temple, if they thenceforth keep their sacred covenants.

9. It provides a God-like destiny for human beings. "If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths.

...

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“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore they shall be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them.

Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.” (D. & C. 132:19, 20; see also The Improvement Era, 17:1064; 30:1098; 34:704; 39:214; 41:136, 220, 268, 330; 43:586).

True love hopes and prays for an endless continuation. the guilty party, for we will all have to answer for our deeds done



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## **Those Who Do Not Marry**

President Lorenzo Snow

“There is no Latter-day Saint who dies after having lived a faithful life who will lose anything because of having failed to do certain things when opportunities were not furnished him or her. In other words, if a young man or a young woman has no opportunity of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation, and glory that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it. That is sure and positive” (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, 138).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“If you are single and haven’t identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil. The Lord knows the intent of your heart. His prophets have stated that you will have that blessing as you consistently live to qualify for it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 33; or Ensign, May 1999, 27).





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## **Remember the Importance of Marriage**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Remember the central importance of your marriage. Listen to these words from Elder Bruce R. McConkie on the importance of marriage in our Father in Heaven's "great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8):

"From the moment of birth into mortality to the time we are married in the temple, everything we have in the whole gospel system is to prepare and qualify us to enter that holy order of matrimony which makes us husband and wife in this life and in the world to come. ...

"There is nothing in this world as important as the creation and perfection of family units" ("Salvation Is a Family Affair," Improvement Era, June 1970, pp. 43-44).



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## **The Family: A Proclamation to the World**

Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.

—First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102

We, The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All Human Beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In The Premortal Realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make

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it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The First Commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We Declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband And Wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The Family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family

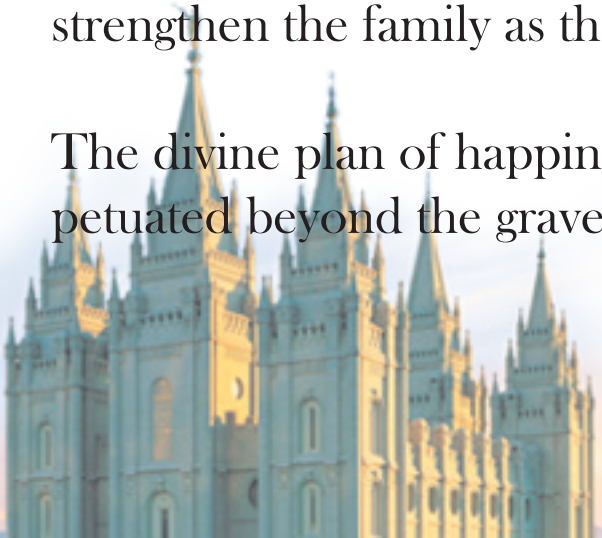
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life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We Warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We Call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.





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## **The Family**

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

CES fireside for college-age young adults, 5 Nov. 1995; or To Draw Closer to God, 157–73

Since the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith until 23 September 1995, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has issued a proclamation only four times. It has been more than fifteen years since the last one, which described the progress the Church had made in 150 years of its history. Thus, you can imagine the importance our Heavenly Father places upon the subject of this most recent proclamation.

Because our Father loves his children, he will not leave us to guess about what matters most in this life concerning where our attention could bring happiness or our indifference bring sadness. Sometimes he will tell a person directly, by inspiration. But he will, in addition, tell us through his servants. In the words of the prophet Amos, recorded long ago, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). He does that so that even those who cannot feel inspiration can know, if they will only listen, that they have been told the truth and been warned.

The title of the proclamation reads: “The Family: A Proclamation to the World—The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (see Ensign,

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Nov. 1995, p. 102).

Three things about the title are worth our careful reflection. First, the subject: the family. Second, the audience, which is the whole world. And third, those who proclaimed are those we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. That means that the family must be as important to us as anything we can consider, that what the proclamation says could help anyone in the world, and that the proclamation fits the Lord's promise when he said, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

Before we start to listen to the words of the proclamation together, the title tells us something about how to prepare. We can expect that God won't just tell us a few interesting things about the family; he will tell us what a family ought to be and why. And we know at the outset that we could be easily overwhelmed with such thoughts as: "This is so high a standard and I am so weak that I can never hope for such a family." That feeling can come because what our Heavenly Father and his son Jesus Christ want for us is to become like them so that we can dwell with them forever, in families. We know that from this simple statement of their intent:

"This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Eternal life means to become like the Father and to live in families in happiness and joy forever, so of course what he wants for us will require help beyond our powers. That feeling of our inadequacy can make it easier to repent and to be ready to rely on the Lord's help.

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The fact that the proclamation goes to all the world—to every person and government in it—gives us assurance that we need not be overwhelmed. Whoever we are, however difficult our circumstances, we can know that what our Father commands we do to qualify for the blessings of eternal life will not be beyond us. What a young boy said long ago when he faced a seemingly impossible assignment is true:

“I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

We may have to pray with faith to know what we are to do and we must pray with a determination to obey, but we can know what to do and be sure that the way has been prepared for us by the Lord. As we read of what the proclamation tells us about the family, we can expect, in fact we must expect, impressions to come to our minds as to what we are to do, and we can be confident it is possible.

The proclamation begins this way:

“We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”

Try to imagine yourself as a little child, hearing those words for the

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first time, and believing that they are true. This can be a useful attitude whenever we read or hear the word of God because he has told us, “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein” (Luke 18:17).

A little child would feel safe hearing the words that marriage between a man and woman is ordained of God. The child would know that the longing to have the love of both a father and a mother, distinct but somehow perfectly complementary, exists because that is the eternal pattern, the pattern of happiness. The child would also feel safer knowing that God would help mother and father resolve differences and love each other, if only they will ask for his help and try. Prayers of children across the earth would go up to God, pleading for his help for parents and for families.

Read in that same way, as if you were a little child, the next words of the proclamation:

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

“In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness



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enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”

Understanding these truths ought to make it easier for us to feel like a little child, not just as we read the proclamation, but throughout our lives, because we are children—but in what a family and of what parents! We can picture ourselves as we were, for longer than we can imagine, sons and daughters associating in our heavenly home with parents who knew and loved us. But now we can see ourselves home again with our heavenly parents, in that wonderful place, not only as sons and daughters but husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, grandsons and granddaughters, bound together forever in loving families. And we know that in the premortal world we were men or women, with unique gifts because of our gender, and that the opportunity to be married and to become one was necessary for us to have eternal happiness.

With that picture before us we can never be tempted even to think, “Maybe I wouldn’t like eternal life. Maybe I would be just as happy in some other place in the life after death. I’ve heard that even the lowest kingdoms are more beautiful than anything we have ever seen.”

We must have the goal not just in our minds but in our hearts.

What we want is eternal life in families. We don’t just want it if that is what works out, nor do we want something approaching eternal life. We want eternal life, whatever its cost in effort, pain, and sac-

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rifice. Whenever we are tempted to make eternal life our hope instead of our determination, we might think of a building I took a look at a few weeks ago.

I was in Boston. For a little nostalgia, I walked up to the front of the boarding house I was living in when I met Kathleen, who is now my wife. That was a long time ago, so I expected to find the house a little more dilapidated than it was, since I seem to be a little more dilapidated. But to our surprise, it was freshly painted and much renovated. A university has purchased it from the Sopers, the people who owned it and ran it as a boarding house.

The building was locked, so we couldn't get in to see the back room on the top floor, which once was mine. Costs have changed, so this will be hard for you to believe, but this was the deal the Sopers gave me: My own large room and bath, furniture and sheets provided, maid service, six big breakfasts and five wonderful dinners a week, at the price of \$21 a week. More than that, the meals were ample and prepared with such skill that we called our landlady with some affection, "Ma Soper." Just talking about it with you makes me realize that I didn't thank Mrs. Soper often enough, nor Mr. Soper and their daughter, since it must have been some burden to have twelve single men to dinner every week night.

Now, you aren't tempted by that description of a boarding house, and neither am I. It could have the most spacious rooms, the best service, and the finest eleven men you could ever know as fellow boarders and we wouldn't want to live there for more than a short while. If it were beautiful beyond our power to imagine, we wouldn't

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want to live there forever, single, if we have even the dimmest memory or the faintest vision of a family with beloved parents and children, like the one from which we came to this earth and the one which is our destiny to form and to live in forever. There is only one place where there will be families—the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. That is where we will want to be.

A child hearing and believing those words would begin a lifetime of looking for a holy temple where ordinances and covenants perpetuate family relationships beyond the grave and would begin a striving to become worthy, and to find a potential mate who has become worthy, of such ordinances. The words of the proclamation make it clear that to receive those blessings requires some sort of perfecting experiences. A child might not sense at first, but soon would learn, that all the making of resolutions and trying harder can produce only faltering progress toward perfection. With age will come temptations to acts that create feelings of guilt. Every child will someday feel those pangs of conscience, as we all have. And those who feel that priceless sense of guilt and cannot shake it may despair, sensing that eternal life requires a progress toward perfection that seems increasingly to be beyond them. So you and I will resolve to speak to someone who doesn't yet know what we know about how that perfection is produced. We will do that because we know that someday they will want what we want, and will then realize that we were their brother or sister, and that we knew the way to eternal life. Tonight and tomorrow it won't be hard to be a member missionary if you think of that future moment when they and we will see things as they really are.

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Some other words in the proclamation will have special meaning for us, knowing what we know about eternal life. They are in the next two paragraphs:

“The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

“We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance to God’s eternal plan.”

Believing those words, a child could spot easily the mistakes in reasoning made by adults. For instance, apparently wise and powerful people blame poverty and famine on there being too many people in some parts of the earth or in all the earth. With great passion they argue for limiting births, as if that will produce human happiness. A child believing the proclamation will know that cannot be so, even before hearing these words from the Lord through his prophet, Joseph Smith:

“For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves” (D&C 104:17).



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A child could see that Heavenly Father would not command men and women to marry and to multiply and replenish the earth if the children they invited into mortality would deplete the earth. Since there is enough and to spare, the enemy of human happiness as well as the cause of poverty and starvation is not the birth of children. It is the failure of people to do with the earth what God could teach them to do, if only they would ask and then obey, for they are agents unto themselves.

We would also see that the commandment to be chaste, to employ the powers of procreation only as husband and wife, is not limiting but rather expanding and exalting. Children are the inheritance of the Lord to us in this life, but also in eternity. Eternal life is not only to have forever our descendants from this life. It is also to have eternal increase. This is the description of what awaits those of us married as husband and wife by a servant of God with authority to offer us the sacred sealing ordinances. Here are the words of the Lord:

“It shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting” (D&C 132:19-20).

Now you can see why our Father in Heaven puts such a high stan-

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dard before us in using procreative powers whose continuation is at the heart of eternal life. He told us what that was worth this way:

“And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

We can understand why our Heavenly Father commands us to reverence life and to cherish the powers that produce it as sacred. If we do not have those feelings in this life, how could our Father give them to us in the eternities? Family life here is the schoolroom in which we prepare for family life there. And to give us the opportunity for family life there was and is the purpose of creation. That is why the coming of Elijah was described this way:

“And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39).

For some of us, the test in that schoolroom of mortality will be to want marriage and children in this life, with all our hearts, but to have it delayed or denied. Even such a sorrow can be turned to blessing by a just and loving Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. No one who strives with full faith and heart for the blessings of eternal life will be denied. And how great will be the joy and how much deeper the appreciation then after enduring in patience and faith now.

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The proclamation describes our schooling here for family life in the presence of our Eternal Father:

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

“The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.”

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Those two paragraphs are filled with practical implications. There are things we can start to do now. They have to do with providing for the spiritual and the physical needs of a family. There are things we can do now to prepare, long before the need, so that we can be at peace knowing we have done all we can.

To begin with, we can decide to plan for success, not failure. Statistics are thrown at us every day to persuade us that a family composed of a loving father and mother with children loved, taught, and cared for in the way the proclamation enjoins is going the way of the dinosaurs, toward extinction. You have enough evidence in your own families that righteous people sometimes have their families ripped apart by circumstances beyond their control. It takes courage and faith to plan for what God holds before you as the ideal rather than what might be forced upon you by circumstances.

There are important ways in which planning for failure can make failure more likely and the ideal less so. Consider these twin commandments as an example: “Fathers are to ... provide the necessities of life ... for their families” and “mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.” Knowing how hard that might be, a young man might choose a career on the basis of how much money he could make, even if it meant he couldn’t be home enough to be an equal partner. By doing that, he has already decided he cannot hope to do what would be best. A young woman might prepare for a career incompatible with being primarily responsible for the nurture of her children because of the possibilities of not marrying, of not having children, or of being left alone to provide for them



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herself. Or, she might fail to focus her education on the gospel and the knowledge of the world that nurturing a family would require, not realizing that the highest and best use she could make of her talents and her education would be in her home. Because a young man and woman had planned to take care of the worst, they might make the best less likely.

They are both wise to worry about the physical needs of that future family. The costs of buying a home, compared to average salaries, seem to be rising and jobs harder to hold. But there are other ways the young man and the young woman could think tonight about preparing to provide for that future family. Income is only one part of it. Have you noticed husbands and wives who feel pinched for lack of money, then choose ways to make their family income keep rising, and then find that the pinch is there whatever the income? There is an old formula you've heard, which goes something like this: Income five dollars and expenses six dollars: misery. Income four dollars and expenses three dollars: happiness.

Whether the young man can provide and still be in the home and whether the young woman can be there to nurture children can depend as much on how they learn to spend as how they learn to earn. Brigham Young said it this way, speaking to us as much as he did to the people in his day:

“If you wish to get rich, save what you get. A fool can earn money; but it takes a wise man to save and dispose of it to his own advantage. Then go to work, and save everything, and make your own bonnets and clothing.” (Journal of Discourses, 11:201.)

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In today's world, instead of telling you to make bonnets, he might suggest you think carefully about what you really need in cars, and clothes, and recreation, and houses, and vacations, and whatever else you will someday try to provide for your children. And he might point out that the difference in cost between what the world tells you is necessary and what your children really need could allow you the margin in time that a father and a mother might need with their children to bring them home to their Heavenly Father.

Even the most frugal spending habits and the most careful planning for employment may not be enough to ensure success, but it could be enough to allow you the peace that comes from knowing you did the best you could to provide and to nurture.

There is another way we could plan to succeed tonight, despite the difficulties that might lie before us. The proclamation sets a high hurdle for us to clear when it describes our obligation to teach our children. We are somehow to teach them so that they love one another and serve one another and keep the commandments and are law-abiding citizens. If we think of good families who have not met that test, and few meet it without some degree of failure over a generation or two, we could lose heart.

We cannot control what others choose to do, and so we cannot force our children to heaven, but we can determine what we will do. And we can decide tonight that we will do all we can to bring down the powers of heaven into that family we want so much to have forever.

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A key for us is in the proclamation in this sentence: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

What could make it more likely that people in a family would love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and obey the law? It is not simply teaching them the gospel. It is in their hearing the word of God and then trying it in faith. If they do, their natures will be changed in a way that produces the happiness we seek. From Moroni these words describe exactly how that change is the natural fruit of living the gospel of Jesus Christ:

“And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins;

“And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God” (Moroni 8:25-26).

When we prepare children for baptism, if we do it well, we prepare them for the process that will bring the effects of the Atonement into their lives and the powers of heaven into our home. Think of the change we need. We need the Holy Ghost to fill us with hope and perfect love, so that we can endure by diligence unto prayer. And

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then we can dwell forever with God in families. How can it come? By the simple promise Mormon described to his son Moroni. Faith in Jesus Christ unto repentance and then baptism by those with authority leads to remission of sins. And that produces meekness and lowliness of heart. And that in turn allows us to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, which fills us with hope and perfect love.

You know that is true; I know that is true from our own experience and from the experience of those in our families. We know that someday we could find on our bedspread, after a twenty-hour flight across the world, a sign written in colors in a childish hand: “You must be so tired! Lie down and relax! You’re back home where we’ll take care of everything!” And you could know that is more than talk if her older sister had said in a phone call made at a stopping place on that flight home, “Oh, I’m just vacuuming the house.”

How does an eleven-year-old who has never flown across the sea know the effects of jet lag on her mother and father? How does a fifteen-year-old decide to run a vacuum without being asked? Or how does a husband know the feelings of his wife, or a wife the feelings of her husband, and so understand without being told, and then help without being asked? Why does a niece give up her bed to an aunt and a nephew share his house and dinner table? How does a son and a daughter-in-law find it possible to take children into their already busy home and act as if it were a blessing? It takes the powers of heaven brought down by believing these words, and acting upon them:

“And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of



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heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God” (v. 26). And may I add the words “in families.”

The proclamation is careful in what it promises: “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.” My heart aches a little to know that many who read those words will be surrounded by those who do not know or who deny the teachings of Jesus Christ. They can only do their best. But, they can know this: their placement in a family, however challenging, is known by a loving Heavenly Father. They can know that a way is prepared for them to do all that will be required for them to qualify for eternal life. They may not see how God could give them that gift, nor with whom they will share it. Yet the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ is sure:

“But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.

“I, the Lord, have spoken it, and the Spirit beareth record. Amen” (D&C 59:23-24).

That peace will come from the assurance that the Atonement has worked in our lives and the hope of eternal life that springs from it.

The proclamation warns that for those who fail to respond the re-

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sult will be more disastrous than simply lack of peace in this life or absence of happiness. Here is the prophetic warning and the call to action, with which the proclamation ends:

“We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

“We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.”

The family unit is not only fundamental to society and to the Church but to our hope for eternal life. We begin to practice in the family, the smaller unit, what will spread to the Church and to the society in which we live in this world, and then will be what we practice in families bound together forever by covenants and by faithfulness. We can start now to “promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family.” I pray that we will. I pray that you will ask, “Father, how can I prepare?” Tell him how much you want what it is that he wants so much to give you. You will receive impressions, and if you act on them, I promise you the help of the powers of heaven.

I testify that our Heavenly Father lives, that we lived with him as spirits, and that we would be lonely living anywhere but with him in

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the world to come.

I testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior, that he made possible the changes in you and me that can give us eternal life by suffering for the sins of all of us, his spirit brothers and sisters, the children of his Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Father.

I testify that the Holy Ghost can fill us with hope and with perfect love.

And I testify that the sealing power restored to Joseph Smith and now held by President Gordon B. Hinckley can bind us in families and give us eternal life, if we do all that we can do in faith. And I so testify and express my love to you. In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

Think carefully about what you really need.



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## **The Family: A Proclamation to the World Selected Teachings**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I salute fathers and mothers who are loyal to one another and who nurture their children in faith and love. There has been a wonderful response to the proclamation on the family, which we issued last October. ... We hope you will read it and reread it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 90; or Ensign, May 1996, 66).

Elder M. Russell Ballard

“The recent proclamation to the world on the family, issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, makes very clear that the family is ordained of God. The proclamation warns that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 112; or Ensign, May 1996, 81).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Learn the doctrinal foundation of the great plan of happiness by studying the scriptures, pondering their content, and praying to understand them. Carefully study and use the proclamation of the First Presidency and the Twelve on the family. ... It was inspired of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 103; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 75).



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Elder Merrill J. Bateman

“The proclamation teaches that ‘successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.’ In other words, the Lord measures the success of a family by the quality of its relationships. In a home where faith, love, and forgiveness are dominant, members find joy and satisfaction in being together. Ideally the father presides in love and righteousness, provides the necessities of life, and protects the family while the mother is primarily responsible for the nurturing of the children. In contrast, the world often measures family success by the accumulation of worldly things and the size of the estate that is passed on to the children” (“The Eternal Family,” 115).

## Principle of Faith

Matthew 9:29

“Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.”

2 Corinthians 5:7

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Philippians 4:13



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“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

1 Nephi 3:7

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”

Doctrine and Covenants 76:53

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“When a man and a woman, in all sincerity, enter into a covenant of marriage for time and all eternity (and after they have ‘overcome by faith,’ and are ‘just and true’ [D&C 76:53]), the Holy Ghost—who is the Spirit of promise—bears record of or ratifies that sealing. In other words, he seals the promises appertaining to the marriage covenant upon them” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:98).

President Harold B. Lee

“Faith, not doubt, is the beginning of all learning, whether in science or religion. ... It is faith that seeks for spiritual knowledge and power by studying out in your own mind the matter in question, by apply-

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ing all possible human wisdom to the solution of your problem and then asking God if your conclusion is right. If it is right, your bosom shall burn within you and you shall ‘feel’ that it is right, but if your conclusion is not right, you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing that is wrong. (Doc. and Cov. 9:8–9.)” (Decisions for Successful Living, 194).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but also faith, confidence, understanding, and partnership. It is devotion and companionship, parenthood, common ideals and standards. It is cleanliness of life and sacrifice and unselfishness” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 248).

“Mary and John, I congratulate you for your vision and faith and your willingness to forgo the fanfare and glamour of a worldly wedding for a simple, quiet, but beautiful marriage in the temple, a sweet eternal ceremony that will be unostentatious and sacred like your birth, blessing, baptism, or ordination” (Faith Precedes the Miracle, 127).

Elder LeGrand Richards

“Anderson M. Baten dedicated a poem to his beloved wife, Beulah, entitled, *The Philosophy of Life*, which expresses his faith that his marriage tie would extend beyond the grave:

“I wed thee forever, not for now;

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Nor for the sham of earth's brief years.  
I wed thee for the life beyond the tears,  
Beyond the heart pain and the clouded brow.  
Love knows no grave, and it will guide us, dear,  
When life's spent candles flutter and burn low."  
(Marvelous Work and a Wonder, 203).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Commenting on 2 Corinthians 1:24. "After the grace of God as manifest through the sacrifice of his Son, after baptism, after temple marriage, after the Lord offers any blessing to men—still the promised rewards come by individual faith, by personal righteousness, by one man standing alone before his Maker and doing those things which enable him to work out his salvation" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 2:410).

Elder David B. Haight

"Marriage is sustained by faith and knowledge of its divine establishment, and is sustained daily by the energy of love. ...

"A strong, shared conviction that there is something eternally precious about a marriage relationship builds faith to resist evil. Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our fondest dreams, for 'neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord' (1 Corinthians 11:11)" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 16–17; or Ensign, May 1984, 14).



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Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our fondest dreams.

## Principle of Prayer

### President Spencer W. Kimball

“When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, ... then happiness is at its pinnacle” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 309).

### President Ezra Taft Benson

“Prayer in the home and prayer with each other will strengthen your union. Gradually thoughts, aspirations, and ideas will merge into a oneness until you are seeking the same purposes and goals.

“Rely on the Lord, the teachings of the prophets, and the scriptures for guidance and help, particularly when there may be disagreements and problems” (“Salvation—A Family Affair,” Ensign, July 1992, 2, 4; or Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 85–86; Ensign, Nov. 1982, 60).

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I know of no other practice that will have so salutary an effect upon your lives as will the practice of kneeling together in prayer. The very words, Our Father in Heaven, have a tremendous effect.

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You cannot speak them with sincerity and with recognition without having some feeling of accountability to God. The little storms that seem to afflict every marriage become of small consequence while kneeling before the Lord and addressing him as a suppliant son and daughter.

“Your daily conversations with him will bring peace into your hearts and a joy into your lives that can come from no other source. Your companionship will sweeten through the years. Your love will strengthen. Your appreciation one for another will grow.

“Your children will be blessed with a sense of security that comes of living in a home where dwells the Spirit of God. They will know and love parents who respect one another, and a spirit of respect will grow in their own hearts. They will experience the security of kind words quietly spoken. They will be sheltered by a father and mother who, living honestly with God, live honestly with one another and with their fellowmen. They will mature with a sense of appreciation, having heard their parents in prayer express gratitude for blessings great and small. They will grow with faith in the living God” (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 216).

“Your companionship will be one that will sweeten and strengthen through the years and that will endure through eternity. Your love and appreciation for one another will increase” (Cornerstones of a Happy Home, 11).

Elder Joe J. Christensen

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“Many Church leaders as well as professional counselors have indicated that they have never seen a marriage in serious difficulty in which the couple was still praying together daily. When you invite the Lord to be a partner in your union, there is a softening of feelings, a moderation of tension that occurs through the power of the Spirit. See what happens when, as you kneel together, you hear your companion express gratitude and love for you. Pray that you, working together, may overcome whatever difficulties you may have so that your love can increase. ...

“Sometimes, when Barbara has not been feeling well or has been discouraged for whatever reason, it has seemed to me to be helpful and meaningful during our joint companion prayer to shift into the first person and genuinely express my feelings, ‘Father, I am so grateful to have a companion such as Barbara. Help her to know how much I love and appreciate her as one of Thy chosen daughters. Assist her to be healed completely and given the health and strength she needs to continue on with her life’s important mission as wife and mother.’ ...

“I would invite you to candidly analyze your situation. Are you and your companion praying together daily that your marriage may be strengthened? If not, now is an excellent time to start!” (One Step at a Time, 15–16).

Principle of Repentance

President Spencer W. Kimball

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

“One day in the temple in Salt Lake City, as I walked down the long hall preparing to go into one of the rooms to perform a marriage for a young couple, a woman followed me ... and with great agitation she said, ‘Elder Kimball, do you remember me?’ Her eyes were searching and her ears were seeking to hear if I remembered her. I was abashed. For the life of me I could not make the connection. I was much embarrassed. I finally said, ‘I am sorry, but I cannot remember you.’ Instead of disappointment, there was great joy that came to her face. She was relieved. She said, ‘Oh, I am so grateful you can’t remember me. With my husband I spent all night with you one time, while you were trying to change our lives. We had committed sin, and we were struggling to get rid of it. You labored all night to help me to clear it. We have repented, and we have changed our lives totally. I am glad you don’t remember me, because if you, one of the apostles, cannot remember me, maybe the Savior cannot remember my sins’” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 108).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“There is a remedy for all of this. It is not found in divorce. It is found in the gospel of the Son of God. He it was who said, ‘What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder’ (Matthew 19:6). The remedy for most marriage stress is not in divorce. It is in repentance. It is not in separation. It is in simple integrity that leads a man to square up his shoulders and meet his obligations. It is found in the Golden Rule” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97; or Ensign, May 1991, 73-74).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball



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“It is well to remember that, awful, horrible and serious as adultery and other sexual sins are, the Lord has kindly provided forgiveness on condition of repentance commensurate with the sin. But where these sins are concerned, even more than with less grievous ones, prevention is so much better than cure” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 74).

“Another young couple showed a similar unawareness of the gravity of sin, and especially of sexual sin. They came to me in June, having become formally engaged with a ring the previous December, and in the six months’ interval their sexual sin had been repeated frequently. In June they went to their respective bishops seeking recommends to the temple. The girl’s bishop, knowing that she had always been active, did not searchingly question her as to cleanliness, and a recommend was soon tucked away in her purse for use in the planned June marriage. The bishop of the other ward questioned the young man carefully and learned of the six months of transgression.

“In my office the couple frankly admitted their sin and shocked me when they said: ‘That isn’t so very wrong, is it, when we were formally engaged and expected to marry soon?’ They had no comprehension of the magnitude of the sin. They were ready to go into the holy temple for their marriage without a thought that they were defiling the Lord’s house. How lacking was their training! How insincere was their approach! They were very disturbed when their marriage had to be postponed to allow time for repentance. They had rationalized the sin nearly out of existence. They pressed for a date, the first pos-

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sible one they could set up and on which they could plan their temple marriage. They did not understand that forgiveness is not a thing of days or months or even years but is a matter of intensity of feeling and transformation of self. Again, this showed a distortion of attitude, a lack of conviction of the seriousness of their deep transgression. They had not confessed their serious sin. They had but admitted it when it had been dug out. There is a wide difference between the two situations.

“This couple seemed to have no conception of satisfying the Lord, of paying the total penalties and obtaining a release and adjustment which could be considered final and which might be accepted of the Lord. I asked them the question: ‘As you weigh this transgression, do you feel that you should be excommunicated from the Church?’ They were surprised at such a question. They had thought of their heinous sin as nothing more than an indiscretion. They had been born and reared in the Church and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost at eight years of age. But in the successive nights of their perfidy they had driven the Holy Spirit away. They had made him unwelcome. They were not listening to his promptings. It is inconceivable that they did not know how wrong their sin was but they had convinced themselves against the truth. They had seared their consciences as with a hot iron” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 155–56).

“In my office one day sat a sober couple who had a large family of little children. Early in their married life they had both committed adultery, and for many years had been suffering untold agonies of remorse. They had forgiven each other but were still suffering tortures.

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“The couple came to get some questions answered. They could stand it no longer. The husband broke the silence. ‘I told my wife that because of our adultery years ago we could never hope for salvation in the celestial kingdom, much less exaltation and eternal life, but that we could receive great satisfactions as we bore children and reared them to be so righteous that we could be sure they would all receive all the blessings of the gospel and the Church and eventually reach their exaltation.’

“When I quoted a long list of scriptures showing that forgiveness was possible eventually, when the heavy price had been paid, I could see hope stir within them and a peace settle over them. They left my office radiant with a new-found ecstasy” (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 343).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The single purpose of Lucifer is to oppose the great plan of happiness, to corrupt the purest, most beautiful and appealing experiences of life: romance, love, marriage, and parenthood [see 2 Nephi 2:18; 28:20]. The specters of heartbreak and guilt [see Alma 39:5; Moroni 9:9] follow him about. Only repentance can heal what he hurts” (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1993, 27–28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 21).

“In the battle of life, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners, and many who know of no way to escape and are pressed into his service. Every soul confined to a concentration camp of sin

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and guilt has a key to the gate. The adversary cannot hold them if they know how to use it. The key is labeled Repentance. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

“I know of no sins connected with the moral standard for which we cannot be forgiven. I do not exempt abortion. The formula is stated in forty words:

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them’ (D&C 58:42–43).

“However long and painful the process of repentance, the Lord has said:

“This is the covenant ... I will make with them. ... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more’ (Hebrews 10:16–17; italics added)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 95; or Ensign, May 1992, 68).

The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

Principle of Forgiveness in Marriage



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President Spencer W. Kimball

“If the faults of two people are more nearly equal, if both of them have a beam-impaired vision, that still gives no justification for a selfish, unforgiving attitude. With this in mind, I once wrote to a woman with whom I had had previous occasion to discuss at length her family problems. I had given counsel in my desire to prevent further misunderstandings and avoid a separation or divorce. After some weeks, she wrote that she would accept my decision. I responded in part as follows:

“It is not my decision—it is up to you to make the decisions. You have your free agency. If you are determined to get a divorce it is your responsibility and your suffering if you are not willing to make adjustments. When I talked with you, I understood that you had forgiven each other and would start from there to build a beautiful life. Apparently, I was mistaken. All my warnings and pleadings seem to have fallen on deaf ears. I want you to know that I do not justify in your husband anything that was wrong, but I recognized all the way through that his was not the whole fault. I have never been able to feel that you had wholly purged the selfishness from your own soul. I do know that two people as seemingly intelligent and apparently mature as you two, could have a gloriously happy life, if both of you would begin to let your concerns run in favor of the other, instead of in favor of your selfish selves.

“The escapist never escapes. If two people, selfish and self-centered, and without the spirit of forgiveness, escape from each other,

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they cannot escape from themselves. The disease is not cured by the separation or the divorce, and it will most assuredly follow along in the wake of future marriages” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 270–71).

President Howard W. Hunter

“First, I invite all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the love and hope and compassion he displayed. I pray that we will treat each other with more kindness, more patience, more courtesy and forgiveness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 7; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“There must be recognition on the part of both husband and wife of the solemnity and sanctity of marriage and of the God-given design behind it.

“There must be a willingness to overlook small faults, to forgive, and then to forget” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97; or Ensign, May 1991, 74).

“Eternal vigilance is the price of eternal development. Occasionally we may stumble. I thank the Lord for the great principle of repentance and forgiveness. When we drop the ball, when we make a mistake, there is held out to us the word of the Lord that he will forgive our sins and remember them no more against us. But somehow we are prone to remember them against ourselves” (in Conference Re-

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port, Oct. 1994, 64–65; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 48).

President Thomas S. Monson

“Recently I read where an elderly man disclosed at the funeral of his brother, with whom he had shared, from early manhood, a small one-room cabin near Canisteo, New York, that following a quarrel they had divided the room in half with a chalk line and neither had crossed the line nor spoken a word to the other since that day—sixty-two years before! What a human tragedy—all for the want of mercy and forgiveness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 77; or Ensign, May 1995, 59).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“If we will sue for peace, taking the initiative in settling differences—if we can forgive and forget with all our hearts—if we can cleanse our own souls of sin, accusations, bitterness, and guilt before we cast a stone at others—if we forgive all real or fancied offenses before we ask forgiveness for our own sins—if we pay our own debts, large or small, before we press our debtors—if we manage to clear our own eyes of the blinding beams before we magnify the motes in the eyes of others—what a glorious world this would be! Divorce would be reduced to a minimum; courts would be freed from disgusting routines; family life would be heavenly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 133).

Elder James E. Faust

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“What is the central characteristic of those having only five loaves and two fishes? What makes it possible, under the Master’s touch, for them to serve, lift, and bless so that they touch for good the lives of hundreds, even thousands? After a lifetime of dealing in the affairs of men and women, I believe it is the ability to overcome personal ego and pride—both are enemies to the full enjoyment of the Spirit of God and to walking humbly before him. The ego interferes with husbands and wives asking each other for forgiveness. It prevents the enjoyment of the full sweetness of a higher love. The ego often prevents parents and children from fully understanding each other. The ego enlarges our feelings of self-importance and worth. It blinds us to reality. Pride keeps us from confessing our sins and shortcomings to the Lord and working out our repentance” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 4–5; or Ensign, May 1994, 6).

Elder Robert D. Hales

“I must ask for forgiveness from Heavenly Father for those things which I have done which are less than perfect and ask forgiveness of anyone I might have offended knowingly or unknowingly because of my personality or style” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 105; or Ensign, May 1994, 78).

Elder Robert L. Simpson

“Every couple, whether in the first or the twenty-first year of marriage, should discover the value of pillow-talk time at the end of the day—the perfect time to take inventory, to talk about tomorrow. And best of all, it’s a time when love and appreciation for one another



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er can be reconfirmed. The end of another day is also the perfect setting to say, ‘Sweetheart, I am sorry about what happened today. Please forgive me’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 30; or Ensign, May 1982, 21).



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## **Satan Tries to Destroy Happiness**

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

“We live in a day when Lucifer’s influence is greater than we ever have known in our lifetimes. In terms of the sin, evil, and wickedness upon the earth, we could liken our time to the days of Noah before the flood. No one is immune to affliction and difficulty, whether it be economical, emotional, or spiritual. Immorality, violence, and divorce, with their accompanying sorrows, plague society worldwide” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 4; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 5).1996, 75).



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## **Satan Tries to Destroy Happiness**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Perhaps our greatest concern is with families. The family is falling apart all over the world. The old ties that bound together father and mother and children are breaking everywhere. We must face this in our own midst. There are too many broken homes among our own. The love that led to marriage somehow evaporates, and hatred fills its place. Hearts are broken; children weep. Can we not do better? Of course we can. It is selfishness that brings about most of these tragedies. If there is forbearance, if there is forgiveness, if there is an anxious looking after the happiness of one’s companion, then love will flourish and blossom.

“As I look to the future, I see little to feel enthusiastic about concerning the family in America and across the world. Drugs and alcohol are taking a terrible toll, which is not likely to decrease. Harsh language one to another, indifference to the needs of one another—all seem to be increasing. There is so much of child abuse. There is so much of spouse abuse. There is growing abuse of the elderly. All of this will happen and get worse unless there is an underlying acknowledgment, yes, a strong and fervent conviction, concerning the fact that the family is an instrument of the Almighty. It is His creation. It is also the basic unit of society.

“I lift a warning voice to our people. We have moved too far toward the mainstream of society in this matter. Now of course there are good families. There are good families everywhere. But there are

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too many who are in trouble. This is a malady with a cure. The prescription is simple and wonderfully effective. It is love. It is plain, simple, everyday love and respect. It is a tender plant that needs nurturing. But it is worth all of the effort we can put into it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 94; or Ensign, Nov. 1997, 69).

“There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace and truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97–98; or Ensign, May 1991, 74).





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## **For the Strength of Youth: Agency and Accountability**

[Booklet]

### Agency and Accountability

“Wherefore, men ... are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Your Heavenly Father has given you agency, the ability to choose right from wrong and to act for yourself. You have been given the Holy Ghost to help you know good from evil. While you are here on earth, you are being proven to see if you will use your agency to show your love for God by keeping His commandments.

While you are free to choose for yourself, you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. When you make a choice, you will receive the consequences of that choice. The consequences may not be immediate, but they will always follow, for good or bad. Wrong choices delay your progression and lead to heartache and misery. Right choices lead to happiness and eternal life. That is why it is so important for you to choose what is right throughout your life.

You are responsible for the choices you make. You should not blame your circumstances, your family, or your friends if you choose to disobey God’s commandments. You are a child of God with great strength. You have the ability to choose righteousness and

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happiness, no matter what your circumstances.

You are also responsible for developing the abilities and talents Heavenly Father has given you. You are accountable to Him for what you do with your abilities and how you spend your time. Do not idle away your time. Be willing to work hard. Choose to do many good things of your own free will.

Matthew 25:14-29



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## **Dating Standards Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“‘Soul mates’ are fiction and an illusion; and while every young man and young woman will seek with all diligence and prayerfulness to find a mate with whom life can be most compatible and beautiful, yet it is certain that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 4).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“Not only should a mission be regarded as a priesthood duty, but every young man should look forward to this experience with great joy and anticipation. ...

“You can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord. And I would admonish you to date only faithful young women who also believe this and give you that encouragement” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1986, 57; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 44).

“Now, brethren, do not expect perfection in your choice of a mate. Do not be so particular that you overlook her most important qualities of having a strong testimony, living the principles of the gospel, loving home, wanting to be a mother in Zion, and supporting you in

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your priesthood responsibilities.

“Of course, she should be attractive to you, but do not just date one girl after another for the sole pleasure of dating without seeking the Lord’s confirmation in your choice of your eternal companion.

“And one good yardstick as to whether a person might be the right one for you is this: in her presence, do you think your noblest thoughts, do you aspire to your finest deeds, do you wish you were better than you are?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 59; or Ensign, May 1988, 53).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“How truly beautiful is a well-groomed young woman who is clean in body and mind. She is a daughter of God in whom her Eternal Father can take pride. How handsome is a young man who is well groomed. He is a son of God, deemed worthy of holding the holy priesthood of God. He does not need tattoos or earrings on or in his body. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve are all united in counseling against these things. ...

“And now just a word on the most common and most difficult of all problems for you young men and young women to handle. It is the relationship that you have one with another. You are dealing with the most powerful of human instincts. Only the will to live possibly exceeds it.

“The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great pur-



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pose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. It is beautiful when handled in the right way. It is deadly if it gets out of hand.

“It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it.

“Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble.

“It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible. ...

“... You mean so much to this Church. It could not be the same without you. Stand tall, proud of your inheritance as sons and daughters of God. Look to Him for understanding and guidance. Walk according to His precepts and commandments.

“You can have a good time. Of course you can! We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy life. We do not want you to be prudes. We want you to be robust and cheerful, to sing and dance, to laugh and be happy.

“But in so doing, be humble and be prayerful, and the smiles of heaven will fall upon you” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for

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Youth,” Ensign, Jan. 2001, 8, 11).

“I do not worry about you young men who have recently returned from the mission field. You know as well as I what you ought to do. It is your responsibility and opportunity, under the natural process of dating and courting, to find a wonderful companion and marry in the house of the Lord. Don’t rush it unduly and don’t delay it unduly. ‘Marry in haste and repent at leisure’ is an old proverb that still has meaning in our time. But do not dally along in a fruitless, frustrating, and frivolous dating game that only raises hopes and brings disappointment and in some cases heartache” (“To Single Adults,” Ensign, June 1989, 72; see also 73–75).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“Boys seldom criticize a girl for using too little makeup. Sometimes they say, ‘She’s a nice girl, but I wish she’d dress up, and she uses too much makeup.’ To be overdressed, to be gaudily dressed, to be dressed to look sexy, to be overdecorated is bad taste, to say the least. The young woman is smart who can don just enough powder and lipstick to convince the fellows it isn’t makeup at all, but the ‘real you.’ ...

“Young men should keep their faces shaved, their hair combed, their haircuts reasonably conservative, their nails cleaned. Overtight, suggestive pants brand young men as vulgar. Young people can be smart and personable, dignified and attractive by finding an area somewhere less than the extremes and still in good style” (“Save the Youth of Zion,” Improvement Era, Sept. 1965, 761).

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“Clearly, right marriage begins with right dating. A person generally marries someone from among those with whom he associates. ... Therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating nonmembers, or members who are untrained and faithless. A girl may say, ‘Oh I do not intend to marry this person. It is just a “fun” date.’ But one cannot afford to take a chance on falling in love with someone who may never accept the gospel” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 241–42).

Elder M. Russell Ballard

“You young men must cultivate a considerate attitude toward women of all ages. The young women asked me to tell you that they want you to respect them and show them common, sincere courtesy. Do not hesitate to show your good manners by opening a door for them, taking the initiative in inviting them on a date, and standing as they enter a room. Believe it or not, in this age of equal rights, the young women want you to extend these simple courtesies” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 48; or Ensign, Nov. 1990, 37).



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## **Personal Purity**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 98-102; or Ensign, Nov. 1998,  
75-78

### Personal Purity

As modern winds of immorality swirl luridly around them, I am concerned for any of our youth or young adults who may be confused about principles of personal purity, about obligations of total chastity before marriage and complete fidelity after it. Against what is happening in the world they see and hear, and hoping to fortify parents as they teach their children a higher standard, I wish to speak today about moral cleanliness. Because this subject is as sacred as any I know, I earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit to guide me in remarks that are more candid than I would wish to make. Today I know how Jacob in the Book of Mormon felt when he said on the same topic, “It grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech.”<sup>1</sup>

In approaching this subject, I do not document a host of social ills for which the statistics are as grim as the examples are offensive. Nor will I present here a checklist of do’s and don’ts about dating and boy-girl relationships. What I wish to do is more personal—I wish to try to answer questions some of you may have been asking: Why should we be morally clean? Why is it such an important issue to God? Does the Church have to be so strict about it? How could anything society exploits and glamorizes so openly be very sacred or



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serious?

## A River of Fire

May I begin with a lesson from civilization's long, instructive story. Will and Ariel Durant have written: "No man [or woman], however brilliant or well-informed, can ... safely ... dismiss ... the wisdom of [lessons learned] in the laboratory of history. A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires; [but] if he is unchecked by custom, morals, or laws, he may ruin his life before he ... understand[s] that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume in chaos both the individual and the group."<sup>2</sup>

A more important scriptural observation is offered by the writer of Proverbs: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? ... Whoso committeth adultery ... destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."<sup>3</sup>

## Why Is Sexual Purity So Important?

Why is this matter of sexual relationships so severe that fire is almost always the metaphor, with passion pictured vividly in flames? What is there in the potentially hurtful heat of this that leaves one's soul—or the whole world, for that matter—destroyed if that flame is left unchecked and those passions unrestrained? What is there in all of this that prompts Alma to warn his son Corianton that sexual

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transgression is “an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?”<sup>4</sup>

By assigning such seriousness to a physical appetite so universally bestowed, what is God trying to tell us about its place in His plan for all men and women? I submit to you He is doing precisely that—commenting about the very plan of life itself. Clearly among His greatest concerns regarding mortality are how one gets into this world and how one gets out of it. He has set very strict limits in these matters.

Fortunately, in the case of how life is terminated, most seem to be quite responsible. But in the significance of giving life, we sometimes find near-criminal irresponsibility. May I offer three reasons why this is an issue of such magnitude and consequence in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## The Doctrine of the Human Soul

First is the revealed, restored doctrine of the human soul.

One of the “plain and precious” truths restored in this dispensation is that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man”<sup>5</sup> and that when the spirit and body are separated, men and women “cannot receive a fulness of joy.”<sup>6</sup> That is the reason why obtaining a body is so fundamentally important in the first place, why sin of any kind is such a serious matter (namely because it is sin that ultimately brings both physical and spiritual death), and why the resurrection of the body is

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so central to the great triumph of Christ's Atonement.

The body is an essential part of the soul. This distinctive and very important Latter-day Saint doctrine underscores why sexual sin is so serious. We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life—"the very key"<sup>7</sup> to life, as President Boyd K. Packer once called it. In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life. And when one mocks the Son of Righteousness, one steps into a realm of heat hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.

Please, never say: "Who does it hurt? Why not a little freedom? I can transgress now and repent later." Please don't be so foolish and so cruel. You cannot with impunity "crucify Christ afresh."<sup>8</sup> "Flee fornication," Paul cries,<sup>9</sup> and flee "anything like unto it,"<sup>10</sup> the Doctrine and Covenants adds. Why? Well, for one reason because of the incalculable suffering in both body and spirit endured by the Savior of the world so that we could flee.<sup>11</sup> We owe Him something for that. Indeed, we owe Him everything for that. "Ye are not your own," Paul says. "Ye [have been] bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."<sup>12</sup> In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit.

## **The Ultimate Symbol of Total Union**

Secondly, may I stress that human intimacy is reserved for a married

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couple because it is the ultimate symbol of total union, a totality and a union ordained and defined by God. From the Garden of Eden onward, marriage was intended to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything. Adam said of Eve that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and that they were to be “one flesh” in their life together.<sup>13</sup> This is a union of such completeness that we use the word seal to convey its eternal promise. The Prophet Joseph Smith once said we perhaps could render such a sacred bond as being “welded”<sup>14</sup> one to another.

But such a total union, such an unyielding commitment between a man and a woman, can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with solemn promises and the pledge of all they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams.

Can you see the moral schizophrenia that comes from pretending you are one, pretending you have made solemn promises before God, sharing the physical symbols and the physical intimacy of your counterfeit union but then fleeing, retreating, severing all such other aspects of what was meant to be a total obligation?

In matters of human intimacy, you must wait! You must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are legally and lawfully married. To give illicitly that which is not yours to give (remember, “you are not your own”) and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole self is emotional Russian roulette. If you persist in pursuing physical satisfac-



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tion without the sanction of heaven, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, psychic damage that you may undermine both your longing for physical intimacy and your ability to give wholehearted devotion to a later, truer love. You may come to that truer moment of ordained love, of real union, only to discover to your horror that what you should have saved you have spent, and that only God's grace can recover the piecemeal dissipation of the virtue you so casually gave away. On your wedding day the very best gift you can give your eternal companion is your very best self—clean and pure and worthy of such purity in return.

## A Symbol of the Relationship with God

Thirdly, may I say that physical intimacy is not only a symbolic union between a husband and a wife—the very uniting of their souls—but it is also symbolic of a shared relationship between them and their Father in Heaven. He is immortal and perfect. We are mortal and imperfect. Nevertheless we seek ways even in mortality whereby we can unite with Him spiritually. In so doing we gain some access to both the grace and the majesty of His power. Those special moments include kneeling at a marriage altar in the house of the Lord, blessing a newborn baby, baptizing and confirming a new member of the Church, partaking of the emblems of the Lord's Supper, and so forth.

These are moments when we quite literally unite our will with God's will, our spirit with His spirit, where communion through the veil becomes very real. At such moments we not only acknowledge His divinity but we quite literally take something of that divinity to

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ourselves. One aspect of that divinity given to virtually all men and women is the use of His power to create a human body, that wonder of all wonders, a genetically and spiritually unique being never before seen in the history of the world and never to be duplicated again in all the ages of eternity. A child, your child—with eyes and ears and fingers and toes and a future of unspeakable grandeur.

Probably only a parent who has held that newborn infant in his or her arms understands the wonder of which I speak. Suffice it to say that of all the titles God has chosen for Himself, Father is the one He favors most, and creation is His watchword—especially human creation, creation in His image. You and I have been given something of that godliness, but under the most serious and sacred of restrictions. The only control placed on us is self-control—self-control born of respect for the divine sacramental power this gift represents.

## Control Sacred Procreative Powers

My beloved friends, especially my young friends, can you see why personal purity is such a serious matter? Can you understand why the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles would issue a proclamation declaring that “the means by which mortal life is created [is] divinely appointed” and that “the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife”?<sup>15</sup> Don’t be deceived and don’t be destroyed. Unless such powers are controlled and commandments kept, your future may be burned; your world could go up in flames. Penalty may not come on the precise day of transgression, but it comes surely and certainly enough. And unless there is true repen-

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tance and obedience to a merciful God, then someday, somewhere, the morally cavalier and unclean will pray like the rich man who wished Lazarus to “dip ... his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”<sup>16</sup>

## **The Peace and Renewal of Repentance**

I have declared here the solemn word of revelation that the spirit and the body constitute the soul of man, and that through the Atonement of Christ the body shall rise from the grave to unite with the spirit in an eternal existence. That body is therefore something to be kept pure and holy. Do not be afraid of soiling its hands in honest labor. Do not be afraid of scars that may come in defending the truth or fighting for the right, but beware scars that spiritually disfigure, that come to you in activities you should not have undertaken, that befall you in places where you should not have gone. Beware the wounds of any battle in which you have been fighting on the wrong side.<sup>17</sup>

If some of you are carrying such wounds—and I know that you are—to you is extended the peace and renewal of repentance available through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. In such serious matters the path of repentance is not easily begun nor painlessly traveled. But the Savior of the world will walk that essential journey with you. He will strengthen you when you waver. He will be your light when it seems most dark. He will take your hand and be your hope when hope seems all you have left. His compassion and mercy, with all their cleansing and healing power, are freely given to all who truly wish complete forgiveness and will take the steps that lead

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to it.

## Glorify God in Body and Spirit

I bear witness of the great plan of life, of the powers of godliness, of mercy and forgiveness and the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ—all of which have profound meaning in matters of moral cleanliness. I testify that we are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit. I thank heaven for legions of the young who are doing just that and helping others do the same. I thank heaven for homes where this is taught. That lives of personal purity may be revered by all, I pray in the name of purity Himself, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.





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## **Our Moral Environment**

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 91-95; or Ensign, May 1992,  
66-68

I have been a General Authority for over thirty years and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for twenty-two. During those years I have interviewed I don't know how many, surely thousands, of members of the Church and have talked with them in intimate terms of their worthiness, their sorrow, and their happiness. I mention that only in the hope that the credential of experience may persuade you to consider matters which have us deeply worried.

### **Moral Environment**

Today I speak to members of the Church as an environmentalist. My message is not on the physical but on the moral and spiritual environment in which we must raise our families. As we test the moral environment, we find the pollution index is spiraling upward.

The Book of Mormon depicts humanity struggling through a "mist of darkness" and defines the darkness as the "temptations of the devil" (1 Nephi 8:23; 12:17). So dense was that moral pollution that many followed "strange roads" and "fell away into forbidden paths and were lost" (see 1 Nephi 8:23-32).

The deliberate pollution of the fountain of life now clouds our moral environment. The gift of mortal life and the capacity to kindle

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other lives is a supernal blessing. Its worth is incalculable!

## The Spiritual Environment

The rapid, sweeping deterioration of values is characterized by a preoccupation—even an obsession—with the procreative act. Abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it are openly scoffed at, marriage and parenthood ridiculed as burdensome, unnecessary. Modesty, a virtue of a refined individual or society, is all but gone.

## The Tempter

The adversary is jealous toward all who have the power to beget life. He cannot beget life; he is impotent. He and those who followed him were cast out and forfeited the right to a mortal body. His angels even begged to inhabit the bodies of swine (see Matthew 8:31). And the revelations tell us that “he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27).

With ever fewer exceptions, what we see and read and hear have the mating act as a central theme. Censorship is forced offstage as a violation of individual freedom.

That which should be absolutely private is disrobed and acted out center stage. In the shadows backstage are addiction, pornography, perversion, infidelity, abortion, incest, and molestation. In company with them now is a plague of biblical proportion. And all of them are on the increase.

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Society excuses itself from responsibility except for teaching the physical process of reproduction to children in school to prevent pregnancy and disease and providing teenagers with devices which are supposed to protect them from both.

When any effort is made to include values in these courses—basic universal values, not just values of the Church, but of civilization, of society itself—the protest arises, “You are imposing religion upon us, infringing upon our freedom.”

## Freedom to Choose

While we pass laws to reduce pollution of the earth, any proposal to protect the moral and spiritual environment is shouted down and marched against as infringing upon liberty, agency, freedom, the right to choose.

Interesting how one virtue, when given exaggerated or fanatical emphasis, can be used to batter down another, with freedom, a virtue, invoked to protect vice. Those determined to transgress see any regulation of their life-style as interfering with their agency and seek to have their actions condoned by making them legal.

People who are otherwise sensible say, “I do not intend to indulge, but I vote for freedom of choice for those who do.”

## Flawed Argument

Regardless of how lofty and moral the “pro-choice” argument



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sounds, it is badly flawed. With that same logic one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers which keep the careless from danger should be pulled down on the theory that each individual must be free to choose how close to the edge he will go.

## No Free Agency

The phrase “free agency” does not appear in scripture. The only agency spoken of there is moral agency, “which,” the Lord said, “I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.” (D&C 101:78; *italics added.*)

## Heeding the Warning

And the Lord warned members of his Church, “Let not that which I have appointed be polluted by mine enemies, by the consent of those who call themselves after my name: For this is a very sore and grievous sin against me, and against my people” (D&C 101:97–98; *italics added.*)

Because the laws of man, by and large, do not raise moral issues, we are taught to honor, sustain, and obey the law (see Articles of Faith 1:12) and that “he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land” (D&C 58:21).

## The Right to Speak Out

When a moral issue does arise, it is the responsibility of the leaders of the Church to speak out. Gambling, for instance, certainly



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is a moral issue. Life is a moral issue. When morality is involved, we have both the right and the obligation to raise a warning voice. We do not as a church speak on political issues unless morality is involved. In thirty years and thousands of interviews, I have never once asked members of the Church what political party they belonged to.

## Physical and Moral Laws

There are both moral and physical laws “irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world” (D&C 130:20) which man cannot overrule.

For instance, do you think a vote to repeal the law of gravity would do any good?

## Unenforceable

Suppose a law decreed that all children would be taken from their parents and raised by the state. Such a law would be wicked but probably could be enforced. Such things have been done before.

But suppose an article of that law stated, “Within fifteen days the mother will cease all emotional ties to her child.”

That provision is absolutely unenforceable. No matter how severe the penalty or the number of enforcers, it is absolutely unenforceable because it contravenes both natural and moral law.

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No matter if fifteen weeks or months or fifteen years were allowed, it cannot be enforced! It may work with animals, but “all flesh,” the scriptures teach, “is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts” (1 Corinthians 15:39). It cannot be made to work with human mothers. Never!

A man-made law against nature would be as impossible to defend as a law annulling love between mother and child would be impossible to enforce!

## Children of God

No greater ideal has been revealed than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and we differ, by virtue of our creation, from all other living things (see Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59).

## The Evil Idea

No idea has been more destructive of happiness; no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak and mischief; no idea has done more to destroy the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, only advanced animals, compelled to yield to every carnal urge.

Animals are not subject to moral law. Nevertheless, while by and large they are promiscuous in responding to their mating instincts, their mating rituals have set patterns and have rigid limitations. For instance, animals do not pair up with their own gender to satisfy their mating instincts. Nor are these instincts expressed in the moles-

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tation of their offspring.

The source of life is now relegated to the level of unwed pleasure, bought and sold and even defiled in satanic rituals. Children of God can willfully surrender to their carnal nature and, without remorse, defy the laws of morality and degrade themselves even below the beasts.

## Most Abominable

If we pollute our fountains of life, there will be penalties “exquisite” and “hard to bear” (see D&C 19:15), more than all of the physical pleasure ever could be worth. Alma told his son Corianton, “Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5).

The code for moral law is found in the scriptures, stated as simply as, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). The scriptures speak in general terms, leaving us free to apply the principles of the gospel to meet the infinite variety of life. But when they say “thou shalt not,” we had better pay attention.

The only legitimate employment of the power of procreation is between husband and wife, man and woman, who have been legally and lawfully married. Anything else violates the commandments of God. From Alma, “If ye speak against it, it matters not, for the word of God must be fulfilled” (Alma 5:58). ...

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## Repentance

In the battle of life, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners, and many who know of no way to escape and are pressed into his service. Every soul confined to a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The adversary cannot hold them if they know how to use it. The key is labeled Repentance. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

I know of no sins connected with the moral standard for which we cannot be forgiven. I do not exempt abortion. The formula is stated in forty words:

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42-43).

## I Will Remember Your Sins No More

However long and painful the process of repentance, the Lord has said:

“This is the covenant ... I will make with them. ... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews



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10:16–17; italics added).

Civilizations, like Sodom and Gomorrah, destroyed themselves by disobedience to the laws of morality. “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction” (2 Nephi 26:11; see also Genesis 6:3; Ether 2:15; D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17).

God grant that we will come to our senses and protect our moral environment from this mist of darkness which deepens day by day. The fate of all humanity hangs precariously in the balance.

And may we have the protection of Him who is our Father and our God, and may we merit the love and blessings of His Son, our Redeemer, in whose name, even the name of Jesus Christ, I bear witness, amen.



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## **For the Strength of Youth: Sexual Purity**

[Booklet]

### **Sexual Purity**

“The sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children and for the expression of love between husband and wife. God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage.

When you obey God’s commandment to be sexually pure, you prepare yourself to make and keep sacred covenants in the temple. You prepare yourself to build a strong marriage and to bring children into the world as part of a loving family. You protect yourself from the emotional damage that always comes from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage.

Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage. Satan may tempt you to rationalize that sexual intimacy before marriage is acceptable when two people are in love. That is not true. In God’s sight, sexual sins are extremely serious because they defile the power God has given us to create life. The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder or denying the Holy Ghost

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(see Alma 39:5).

Before marriage, do not do anything to arouse the powerful emotions that must be expressed only in marriage. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person's body, with or without clothing. Do not allow anyone to do that with you. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body.

In cultures where dating or courting is acceptable, always treat your date with respect, never as an object to be used for your lustful desires. Stay in areas of safety where you can easily control your physical feelings. Do not participate in talk or activities that arouse sexual feelings.

Homosexual activity is a serious sin. If you find yourself struggling with same-gender attraction, seek counsel from your parents and bishop. They will help you.

Victims of rape, incest, or other sexual abuse are not guilty of sin. If you have been a victim of any of these crimes, know that you are innocent and that God loves you. Seek your bishop's counsel immediately so he can help guide you through the process of emotional healing.

If you are tempted to commit sexual transgressions, seek help from your parents, your bishop, and friends you can trust. Pray to the Lord, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings.

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If you have committed sexual transgressions, begin the process of repentance now so you can find inner peace and have the full companionship of the Spirit. Seek the Lord's forgiveness. Talk with your bishop. He will help you obtain the forgiveness available to those who truly repent.

Genesis 39:1–12; Doctrine and Covenants 38:42





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## **Satan Tries to Destroy Happiness**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Perhaps our greatest concern is with families. The family is falling apart all over the world. The old ties that bound together father and mother and children are breaking everywhere. We must face this in our own midst. There are too many broken homes among our own. The love that led to marriage somehow evaporates, and hatred fills its place. Hearts are broken; children weep. Can we not do better? Of course we can. It is selfishness that brings about most of these tragedies. If there is forbearance, if there is forgiveness, if there is an anxious looking after the happiness of one’s companion, then love will flourish and blossom.

“As I look to the future, I see little to feel enthusiastic about concerning the family in America and across the world. Drugs and alcohol are taking a terrible toll, which is not likely to decrease. Harsh language one to another, indifference to the needs of one another—all seem to be increasing. There is so much of child abuse. There is so much of spouse abuse. There is growing abuse of the elderly. All of this will happen and get worse unless there is an underlying acknowledgment, yes, a strong and fervent conviction, concerning the fact that the family is an instrument of the Almighty. It is His creation. It is also the basic unit of society.

“I lift a warning voice to our people. We have moved too far toward the mainstream of society in this matter. Now of course there are good families. There are good families everywhere. But there are

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too many who are in trouble. This is a malady with a cure. The prescription is simple and wonderfully effective. It is love. It is plain, simple, everyday love and respect. It is a tender plant that needs nurturing. But it is worth all of the effort we can put into it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 94; or Ensign, Nov. 1997, 69).

“There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace and truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97–98; or Ensign, May 1991, 74).



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## **Satan Tries to Destroy Happiness**

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The single purpose of Lucifer is to oppose the great plan of happiness, to corrupt the purest, most beautiful and appealing experiences of life: romance, love, marriage, and parenthood [2 Nephi 2:18; 28:20]. The specters of heartbreak and guilt follow him about [Alma 39:5; Moroni 9:9]. Only repentance can heal what he hurts” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 27–28; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 21).

“The ultimate purpose of the adversary, who has ‘great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time,’ [Revelation 12:12] is to disrupt, disturb, and destroy the home and the family. Like a ship without a rudder, without a compass, we drift from the family values which have anchored us in the past. Now we are caught in a current so strong that unless we correct our course, civilization as we know it will surely be wrecked to pieces” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 24; or Ensign, May 1994, 19).



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## **Effects of Pornography on Dating, Marriages, and Families**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“We urge, with Peter, ‘... Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.’ (1 Pet. 2:11.) No indecent exposure or pornography or other aberrations to defile the mind and spirit” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 8; or Ensign, May 1974, 7).

“We hope that our parents and leaders will not tolerate pornography. It is really garbage, but today is peddled as normal and satisfactory food. Many writers seem to take delight in polluting the atmosphere with it. Seemingly, it cannot be stopped by legislation. There is a link between pornography and the low, sexual drives and perversions. We live in a culture which venerates the orgasm, streaking, trading wives, and similar crazes. How low can humans plunge! We pray with our Lord that we may be kept from being in the world. It is sad that decent people are thrown into a filthy area of mental and spiritual pollution. We call upon all of our people to do all in their power to offset this ugly revolution.

“It is ridiculous to imply that pornography has no effect. There is a definite relationship to crime. Murder, robbery, rape, prostitution, and commercialized vice are fed on this immorality. Sex crime statistics seem to reflect a relationship between crime and pornography.

“It is utterly without redeeming social value. We urge our families to protect their children in every way possible. We live in a permis-



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sive world, but we must make certain we do not become a part of that permissive world, that degenerate world. We are shocked at the depths to which many people of this world go to assert their freedom. We fear that the trends of permissiveness toward immorality are destroying the moral fabric of our generation. ...

“Every form of homosexuality is sin. Pornography is one of the approaches to that transgression. There is no halfway” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 7–8; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, 7–8).

“Pornography degrades sex and humanity. Sex is an extremely delicate part of our human relationships. When you assault that and degrade it, you make it an animalistic act and it is an assault on our humanity generally.

“As that spreads, it has an over-all effect on our population. Obscenity is counter to civilization. It attacks our basic beliefs. It’s an attack on the family ethic.’ (Larry Parrish, U.S. Assistant Attorney, in “War on Pornography,” p. 76.) ...

“Sins spawned by pornography unfortunately perpetuate other serious transgressions, including abortion” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 6; or Ensign, Nov. 1976, 6).

“We need continually to fortify our homes and families and defend them against the onslaught of evils such as divorce, broken families, brutality, and abuse, especially of wives and children. We need to constantly guard against immorality, pornography, and sexual permissiveness that would destroy the purity of the family members,

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young and old” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, 5; or Ensign, May 1979, 5).



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## **Same-Gender Attraction**

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
Ensign, Oct. 1995, 7-14

Every Latter-day Saint knows that God has forbidden all sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage. Most are also aware of the Savior's teaching that it is sinful for a man to look upon and lust after a woman (see Matt. 5:28; D&C 42:23; 63:16).

Attraction between man and woman was instilled by the Creator to ensure the perpetuation of mortal life and to draw husband and wife together in the family setting he prescribed for the accomplishment of his purposes, including the raising of children. In contrast, deviations from God's commandments in the use of procreative powers are grave sins. President Joseph F. Smith taught:

“Sexual union is lawful in wedlock, and if participated in with right intent is honorable and sanctifying. But without the bonds of marriage, sexual indulgence is a debasing sin, abominable in the sight of Deity.”<sup>1</sup>

Some Latter-day Saints face the confusion and pain that result when a man or a woman engages in sexual behavior with a person of the same sex, or even when a person has erotic feelings that could lead toward such behavior. How should Church leaders, parents, and other members of the Church react when faced with the religious, emotional, and family challenges that accompany such behavior or feelings? What do we say to a young person who reports that he

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or she is attracted toward or has erotic thoughts or feelings about persons of the same sex? How should we respond when a person announces that he is a homosexual or she is a lesbian and that scientific evidence “proves” he or she was “born that way”? How do we react when persons who do not share our beliefs accuse us of being intolerant or unmerciful when we insist that erotic feelings toward a person of the same sex are irregular and that any sexual behavior of that nature is sinful?

## Gospel Doctrines

Our attitudes toward these questions are dictated by gospel doctrines we know to be true.

1. God created us “male and female” (D&C 20:18; Moses 2:27; Gen. 1:27). What we call gender was an essential characteristic of our existence prior to our birth.<sup>2</sup>
2. The purpose of mortal life and the mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to prepare the sons and daughters of God for their destiny—to become like our heavenly parents.
3. Our eternal destiny—exaltation in the celestial kingdom—is made possible only through the atonement of Jesus Christ (through which we became and can remain “innocent before God” [D&C 93:38]) and is only available to a man and a woman who have entered into and been faithful to the covenants of an eternal marriage in a temple of God (see D&C 131:1–4; 132).
4. Through the merciful plan of our Father in Heaven, persons who desire to do what is right but through no fault of their own are unable to have an eternal marriage in mortal life will have an opportu-



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nity to qualify for eternal life in a period following mortality, if they keep the commandments of God and are true to their baptismal and other covenants.<sup>3</sup>

5. In addition to the cleansing effect of the Atonement, God has given us agency—the power to choose between good (the path of life) and evil (the path of spiritual death and destruction [see 2 Ne. 2:27; Moses 4:3]). Although the conditions of mortality can limit our freedom (such as by restricting our mobility or our power to act on certain options), when we have reached the age or condition of accountability (see Moro. 8:5–12; D&C 68:27; 101:78) no mortal or spiritual power can deprive us of our agency.

6. To accomplish one of the purposes of mortal life, it is essential that we be tested against opposition to see if we will keep the commandments of God (see 2 Ne. 2:11; Abr. 3:25–26). To provide that opposition, Satan and his followers are permitted to tempt us to use our agency and our freedom to choose evil and to commit sin.

7. Because Satan desires that “all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Ne. 2:27), his most strenuous efforts are directed at encouraging those choices and actions that will thwart God’s plan for his children. He seeks to undermine the principle of individual accountability, to persuade us to misuse our sacred powers of procreation, to discourage marriage and childbearing by worthy men and women, and to confuse what it means to be male or female.

8. In all of this, the devil, who has no body, seeks to persuade mortals to corrupt their bodies by “choos[ing] eternal death, according to the will of the flesh ... , which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring [them] down to hell, that he may reign over [them] in his own kingdom” (2 Ne. 2:29).

9. The First Presidency has declared that “there is a distinction be-

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tween [1] immoral thoughts and feelings and [2] participating in either immoral heterosexual or any homosexual behavior.”<sup>4</sup> Although immoral thoughts are less serious than immoral behavior, such thoughts also need to be resisted and repented of because we know that “our thoughts will also condemn us” (Alma 12:14). Immoral thoughts (and the less serious feelings that lead to them) can bring about behavior that is sinful.

10. Because of God’s great love for his children, even the worst sinners (or almost all of them) will ultimately be rewarded with assignment to a kingdom of glory.<sup>5</sup> Persons who have lived good lives and received most of the ordinances of salvation but have failed to qualify for exaltation through eternal marriage will be saved in a lesser place in the celestial kingdom where there is no eternal increase (see D&C 131:1-4).

11. In the midst of the challenges and choices of mortal life, we are all under the Savior’s commandment to “love one another” (John 15:12, 17). As the First Presidency said in a recent message: “We are asked to be kinder with one another, more gentle and forgiving. We are asked to be slower to anger and more prompt to help. We are asked to extend the hand of friendship and resist the hand of retribution. We are called upon to be true disciples of Christ, to love one another with genuine compassion, for that is the way Christ loved us.”<sup>6</sup>

Kindness, compassion, and love are powerful instruments in strengthening us to carry heavy burdens imposed without any fault of our own and to do what we know to be right.

Application of Doctrines and Responsibilities

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These doctrines, commandments, and responsibilities guide us in answering the questions posed earlier in this article.

Our doctrines obviously condemn those who engage in so-called “gay bashing”—physical or verbal attacks on persons thought to be involved in homosexual or lesbian behavior.

We should extend compassion to persons who suffer from ill health, including those who are infected with HIV or who are ill with AIDS (who may or may not have acquired their condition from sexual relations). We should encourage such persons to participate in the activities of the Church.

Applying the First Presidency’s distinction to the question of same-sex relationships, we should distinguish between (1) homosexual (or lesbian) “thoughts and feelings” (which should be resisted and redirected), and (2) “homosexual behavior” (which is a serious sin).

We should note that the words homosexual, lesbian, and gay are adjectives to describe particular thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. We should refrain from using these words as nouns to identify particular conditions or specific persons. Our religious doctrine dictates this usage. It is wrong to use these words to denote a condition, because this implies that a person is consigned by birth to a circumstance in which he or she has no choice in respect to the critically important matter of sexual behavior.

Feelings are another matter. Some kinds of feelings seem to be in-

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born. Others are traceable to mortal experiences. Still other feelings seem to be acquired from a complex interaction of “nature and nurture.” All of us have some feelings we did not choose, but the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that we still have the power to resist and reform our feelings (as needed) and to assure that they do not lead us to entertain inappropriate thoughts or to engage in sinful behavior.

Different persons have different physical characteristics and different susceptibilities to the various physical and emotional pressures we may encounter in our childhood and adult environments. We did not choose these personal susceptibilities either, but we do choose and will be accountable for the attitudes, priorities, behavior, and “lifestyle” we engraft upon them.

Essential to our doctrinal position on these matters is the difference between our freedom and our agency. Our freedom can be limited by various conditions of mortality, but God’s gift of agency cannot be limited by outside forces, because it is the basis for our accountability to him. The contrast between freedom and agency can be illustrated in the context of a hypothetical progression from feelings to thoughts to behavior to addiction. This progression can be seen on a variety of matters, such as gambling and the use of tobacco and alcohol.

Just as some people have different feelings than others, some people seem to be unusually susceptible to particular actions, reactions, or addictions. Perhaps such susceptibilities are inborn or acquired without personal choice or fault, like the unnamed ailment the Apostle



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Paul called “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (2 Cor. 12:7). One person may have feelings that draw him toward gambling, but unlike those who only dabble, he becomes a compulsive gambler. Another person may have a taste for tobacco and a susceptibility to its addiction. Still another may have an unusual attraction to alcohol and the vulnerability to be readily propelled into alcoholism. Other examples may include a hot temper, a contentious manner, a covetous attitude, and so on.

In each case (and in other examples that could be given) the feelings or other characteristics that increase susceptibility to certain behavior may have some relationship to inheritance. But the relationship is probably very complex. The inherited element may be nothing more than an increased likelihood that an individual will acquire certain feelings if he or she encounters particular influences during the developmental years. But regardless of our different susceptibilities or vulnerabilities, which represent only variations on our mortal freedom (in mortality we are only “free according to the flesh” [2 Ne. 2:27]), we remain responsible for the exercise of our agency in the thoughts we entertain and the behavior we choose. I discussed this contrast in a talk I gave at Brigham Young University several years ago:

“Most of us are born with [or develop] thorns in the flesh, some more visible, some more serious than others. We all seem to have susceptibilities to one disorder or another, but whatever our susceptibilities, we have the will and the power to control our thoughts and our actions. This must be so. God has said that he holds us account-

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able for what we do and what we think, so our thoughts and actions must be controllable by our agency. Once we have reached the age or condition of accountability, the claim ‘I was born that way’ does not excuse actions or thoughts that fail to conform to the commandments of God. We need to learn how to live so that a weakness that is mortal will not prevent us from achieving the goal that is eternal.

“God has promised that he will consecrate our afflictions for our gain (see 2 Ne. 2:2). The efforts we expend in overcoming any inherited [or developed] weakness build a spiritual strength that will serve us throughout eternity. Thus, when Paul prayed thrice that his ‘thorn in the flesh’ would depart from him, the Lord replied, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Obedient, Paul concluded:

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong’ (2 Cor. 12:9–10).

“Whatever our susceptibilities or tendencies [feelings], they cannot subject us to eternal consequences unless we exercise our free agency to do or think the things forbidden by the commandments of God. For example, a susceptibility to alcoholism impairs its victim’s freedom to partake without addiction, but his free agency allows him to abstain and thus escape the physical debilitation of alcohol and the spiritual deterioration of addiction.

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“... Beware the argument that because a person has strong drives toward a particular act, he has no power of choice and therefore no responsibility for his actions. This contention runs counter to the most fundamental premises of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Satan would like us to believe that we are not responsible in this life. That is the result he tried to achieve by his contest in the pre-existence. A person who insists that he is not responsible for the exercise of his free agency because he was ‘born that way’ is trying to ignore the outcome of the War in Heaven. We are responsible, and if we argue otherwise, our efforts become part of the propaganda effort of the Adversary.

“Individual responsibility is a law of life. It applies in the law of man and the law of God. Society holds people responsible to control their impulses so we can live in a civilized society. God holds his children responsible to control their impulses in order that they can keep his commandments and realize their eternal destiny. The law does not excuse the short-tempered man who surrenders to his impulse to pull a trigger on his tormentor, or the greedy man who surrenders to his impulse to steal, or the pedophile who surrenders to his impulse to satisfy his sexual urges with children. ...

“There is much we do not know about the extent of freedom we have in view of the various thorns in the flesh that afflict us in mortality. But this much we do know; we all have our free agency and God holds us accountable for the way we use it in thought and deed. That is fundamental.”<sup>7</sup>

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We need to learn how to live so that a weakness that is mortal will not prevent us from achieving the goal that is eternal.

## The Insights of Science

In contrast to our doctrinal approach, many persons approach the problems of same-sex attraction solely from the standpoint of current science. While I am not qualified as a scientist, with the aid of scientific literature and with the advice of qualified scientists and practitioners, I will attempt to refute the claim of some that scientific discoveries demonstrate that avowed homosexuals and lesbians were “born that way.”

We live in a time of accelerating scientific discoveries about the human body. We know that our inheritance explains many of our physical characteristics. At the same time, we also know that our behavior is profoundly influenced by psychosocial factors such as parental and sibling relationships (especially during the formative years) and the culture in which we live. The debate over whether, or the extent to which, specific behavior is attributable to “nature” or to “nurture” is centuries old. Its application to the subject of same-sex feelings and behaviors is only one manifestation of a highly complex subject on which scientific knowledge is still in its infancy.

Some scientists deny that behavior is genetically influenced.<sup>8</sup> Others are advocates of evidence or theories suggesting that “there is substantial evidence for genetic influence on sexual orientation.”<sup>9</sup>



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We are, of course, aware of evidence that inheritance explains susceptibilities to certain diseases like some cancers and some other illnesses like diabetes mellitus. There are also theories and some evidence that inheritance is a factor in susceptibilities to various behavior-related disorders like aggression, alcoholism, and obesity. It is easy to hypothesize that inheritance plays a role in sexual orientation. However, it is important to remember, as conceded by two advocates of this approach, that “the concept of substantial heritability should not be confused with the concept of inevitable heritability. ... Most mechanisms probably involve interactions between constitutional predispositions and environmental events.”<sup>10</sup>

Wherever they fall along the spectrum between outright rejection and total acceptance of biological determinism of sexual orientation, most scientists concede that the current evidence is insufficient and that firm conclusions must await many additional scientific studies.

A study of fifty-six pairs of identical male twins in which one twin classified himself as “gay” reported that 52 percent of the co-twins also classified themselves as gay.<sup>11</sup> A similar study of female identical twins yielded approximately the same proportion of co-twins who classified themselves as gay (thirty-four of seventy-one pairs, 48 percent).<sup>12</sup> If these studies show some inherited influence on whatever causes a man or woman to classify himself or herself as homosexual or lesbian, it is clear that this influence is not determinative. As a prominent scientist observed, “Even the identical twin of a gay man has a 50 percent or more chance of being heterosexual—even though he has the exact same genes and is reared by the same parents.”<sup>13</sup> We should also note that the results of these studies (and

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others described below) are based on the subjects' self-classifications, a shaky foundation for scientific conclusions when "there is still no universally accepted definition of homosexuality among clinicians and behavioral scientists—let alone a consensus regarding its origins."<sup>14</sup>

In any emerging area of knowledge, a new source of evidence is most welcome. In July 1993, Dr. Dean Hamer made worldwide headlines when he announced that he had found "a statistically significant correlation between the inheritance of genetic markers [an identifiable strip of DNA] on chromosomal region Xq28 and sexual orientation in a selected group of ... homosexual men and their relatives over age 18." In other words, "it appears that Xq28 contains a gene that contributes to homosexual orientation in males."<sup>15</sup> Putting the most positive interpretation on his discovery, Dr. Hamer's subsequent book concludes:

"We can make only educated guesses about the importance of Xq28 in the population at large. On the high side, the region couldn't possibly influence more than 67 percent of gay men, the proportion 'linked' to this region in our highly selected group of gay siblings. On the low side, if much of homosexuality is caused by environmental factors, or by a large number of interacting genes, Xq28 could account for as little as a few percent of the variation in male sexual orientation. The median range, taken from our linkage data and from the available twin and family studies, suggests that Xq28 plays some role in about 5 to 30 percent of gay men. The broad range of these estimates is proof that much more work remains to be done."<sup>16</sup>

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“Some role in about 5 to 30 percent” of self-classified “gay” men surely falls far short of justifying the claim that science has shown that “homosexuality” is “caused by” genetic inheritance. One eminent scientist identified two of the uncertainties:

“What evidence exists thus far of innate biological traits underlying homosexuality is flawed. ... Confirmation of genetic research purporting to show that homosexuality is heritable makes clear neither what is inherited nor how it influences sexual orientation.”<sup>17</sup>

In their impressive reappraisal of biologic theories of human sexual orientation, Drs. Byne and Parsons of Columbia University’s Department of Psychiatry offer these important cautions and suggestions:

“It is imperative that clinicians and behavioral scientists begin to appreciate the complexities of sexual orientation and resist the urge to search for simplistic explanations, either psychosocial or biologic.

“Conspicuously absent from most theorizing on the origins of sexual orientation is an active role of the individual in constructing his or her identity. ... We propose an interactional model in which genes or hormones do not specify sexual orientation per se, but instead bias particular personality traits and thereby influence the manner in which an individual and his or her environment interact as sexual orientation and other personality characteristics unfold developmentally.”<sup>18</sup>

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This observation, but one of many suggestions from scientists, is particularly persuasive because it takes account of the vital element of individual choice that we know to be a true principle of our mortal condition.

## **The Responsibilities of Church Officers and Members**

In their 14 November 1991 letter concerning the importance of the law of chastity, the First Presidency declared: “Sexual relations are proper only between husband and wife appropriately expressed within the bonds of marriage. Any other sexual contact, including fornication, adultery, and homosexual and lesbian behavior, is sinful.”

Consistent with that direction, Church officers are responsible to call transgressors to repentance and to remind them of the principle the prophet Samuel taught the wicked Nephites: “Ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head” (Hel. 13:38).

Persons cannot continue to engage in serious sin and remain members of the Church. And discipline can be given for encouraging sin by others. There is no Church discipline for improper thoughts or feelings (though there is encouragement to improve them), but there are consequences for behavior. In the same sermon in which he taught that men should not be “cast out,” the Savior commanded his servants that “ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of



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my flesh and blood unworthily ... ; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy ... ye shall forbid him” (3 Ne. 18:28–29). The Savior also commanded, “But if he repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people” (v. 31; see also Mosiah 26:36; Alma 5:56–61). Consequently, if transgressors do not respond to calls to repentance, the shepherds of the Church flock must take disciplinary action in fulfillment of their God-given responsibilities.

At the same time, we should always distinguish between sinful acts and inappropriate feelings or potentially dangerous susceptibilities. We should reach out lovingly to those who are struggling to resist temptation. The First Presidency did this in their 14 November 1991 letter. After reaffirming the sinful nature of “fornication, adultery, and homosexual and lesbian behavior,” the Presidency added:

“Individuals and their families desiring help with these matters should seek counsel from their bishop, branch president, stake or district president. We encourage Church leaders and members to reach out with love and understanding to those struggling with these issues. Many will respond to Christlike love and inspired counsel as they receive an invitation to come back and apply the atoning and healing power of the Savior. (see Isaiah 53:4–5; Mosiah 4:2–3.)”

Similarly, in a conference address on this same subject, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I desire now to say with emphasis that our concern for the bitter fruit of sin is coupled with Christlike sympathy for its victims, innocent or culpable. We advocate the example of the Lord, who condemned the sin, yet loved the sinner. We

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should reach out with kindness and comfort to the afflicted, ministering to their needs and assisting them with their problems.”<sup>19</sup>

Despite such invitations and assurances, the Church and its members continue to experience misunderstandings about our positions on these matters. Last fall in an interview with a television reporter, one of our Church officials was asked, “What is being done in the Church to try to stop the atmosphere of hate towards homosexuals?” Nine years ago, during a television interview on this subject, I was questioned about reports that the Church taught or implied “that these people are somehow pariahs ... and these people hate themselves and that this is an attitude brought forth by the Church.”

More significantly, we also receive such questions from faithful members. A recent letter is illustrative:

“Another concern we have is the way in which our sons and daughters are classified as people who practice deviant and lascivious behavior. Perhaps some do, but most do not. These young men and women want only to survive, have a spiritual life, and stay close to their families and the Church. It is especially damaging when these negative references are spoken from the pulpit. We believe such talks only create more depression and a tremendous amount of guilt, shame, and lack of self-worth, which they have endured throughout their entire lives. There is sometimes a real lack of the pure love of Christ expressed to help them through their ordeals. We will all appreciate anything you can do to help with the plight of these much misunderstood children of our Father in Heaven. If some of the General Authorities could express more sensitivity to

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this problem, it would surely help to avoid suicides and schisms that are caused within families. Many simply cannot tolerate the fact that Church members judge them as ‘evil people,’ and they, therefore, find solace in gay-oriented lifestyles.”<sup>20</sup>

These communications surely show the need for improvement in our communications with brothers and sisters who are struggling with problems—all types of problems. Each member of Christ’s church has a clear-cut doctrinal responsibility to show forth love and to extend help and understanding. Sinners, as well as those who are struggling to resist inappropriate feelings, are not people to be cast out but people to be loved and helped (see 3 Ne. 18:22–23, 30, 32). At the same time, Church leaders and members cannot avoid their responsibility to teach correct principles and righteous behavior (on all subjects), even if this causes discomfort to some.

Church leaders are sometimes asked whether there is any place in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for persons with homosexual or lesbian susceptibilities or feelings. Of course there is. The degree of difficulty and the pattern necessary to forgo behavior and to control thoughts will be different with different individuals, but the message of hope and the hand of fellowship offered by the Church is the same for all who strive.

I tried to describe the crucial distinctions in my answer to the television reporter who implied that the Church taught that “these people are somehow pariahs.” I said:

“The person that’s working [to resist] those tendencies ought not

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to feel himself to be a pariah. Now, quite a different thing is sexual relations outside of marriage. A person engaging in that kind of behavior should well feel guilt. They should well feel themselves estranged from God, who has given commandments against that kind of behavior. It's not surprising to me that they would feel estranged from their church. What surprises me is that they would feel that the Church can revoke God's commandments. ... To the woman taken in adultery (which is a pretty good precedent for us), ... [the Savior] was merciful and loving ... , but he said, 'Go thy way and sin no more.' He loved the sinner; he condemned the sin. I think the Church does the same thing, imperfectly perhaps, but that's what we teach our members: love the sinner, condemn the sin."<sup>21</sup>

The struggles of those who are troubled by same-sex attraction are not unique. There are many kinds of temptations, sexual and otherwise. The duty to resist sin applies to all of them.

The most important help the Church can offer to persons who have surrendered to sin or to those who are struggling to resist it is to fulfill its divine mission to teach true doctrine and administer the divine ordinances of the restored gospel. The gospel applies on the same basis to everyone. Its central truth is our Savior's atonement and resurrection, that we might have immortality and eternal life. To achieve that destiny, an eternal marriage is the divine and prescribed goal for every child of God, in this life or in the life to come. Nevertheless, this sacred goal must come about in the Lord's way. For example, President Gordon B. Hinckley has declared that "marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices."<sup>22</sup>



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Through Christ and his church, those who struggle can obtain help. This help comes through fasting and prayer, through the truths of the gospel, through church attendance and service, through the counsel of inspired leaders, and, where necessary, through professional assistance with problems that require such help. Another important source of help is the strengthening influence of loving brothers and sisters. All should understand that persons (and their family members) struggling with the burden of same-sex attraction are in special need of the love and encouragement that is a clear responsibility of Church members, who have signified by covenant their willingness “to bear one another’s burdens” (Mosiah 18:8) “and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who gives us the light and the strength to overcome the obstacles of mortality and to use our God-given agency to choose the behavior that will lead us to our divine destiny. We are promised: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Sexual relations are proper only between husband and wife appropriately expressed within the bonds of marriage.

## **Conclusion**

The differing perspectives of scientific evidence and religious doc-

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trine can be likened to the difference between studying about an automobile by observing its operation and disassembling and analyzing its various parts or by reading the operator's manual written by the manufacturer. Much can be learned by observation and analysis, but that method will yield only partial knowledge of the function and potential of a machine. The best and most complete knowledge about the operation and potential of a machine will be revealed by studying the manual written by its manufacturer. The operator's manual for our bodies and souls is the scriptures, written by the God who created us and interpreted by his prophets. These are the best sources of knowledge about the purpose of life and the behavior and thoughts we should cultivate in order to live in happiness and to achieve our divine destiny.

All who struggle with the challenges of mortality can identify with the lament in the psalm of Nephi: "O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.

"I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me" (2 Ne. 4:17-18).

To have the will and strength to resist sin, we must trust in God and pray for his help. Nephi rejoiced in the Lord, who had supported him and led him through his afflictions (see v. 20). "Why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh?" Nephi asked (v. 27), adding a prayer that the Lord would redeem his soul and "make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin" (v. 31).

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Nephi concludes with words that apply directly to those who seek to find their way through the difficulties discussed in this article:

“O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.

“Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh” (vs. 34–35).

He who has commanded us to be perfect has shed his blood to provide us the opportunity to achieve our divine destiny. His confidence in our ability to achieve eternal life is manifest in his incredible invitation: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Ne. 27:27).



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## **Same-Gender Attraction**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“What is your Church’s attitude toward homosexuality?”

“In the first place, we believe that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God. We believe that marriage may be eternal through exercise of the power of the everlasting priesthood in the house of the Lord.

“People inquire about our position on those who consider themselves so-called gays and lesbians. My response is that we love them as sons and daughters of God. They may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control. Most people have inclinations of one kind or another at various times. If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church. If they violate the law of chastity and the moral standards of the Church, then they are subject to the discipline of the Church, just as others are.

“We want to help these people, to strengthen them, to assist them with their problems and to help them with their difficulties. But we cannot stand idle if they indulge in immoral activity, if they try to uphold and defend and live in a so-called same-sex marriage situation. To permit such would be to make light of the very serious and sacred foundation of God-sanctioned marriage and its very purpose, the rearing of families” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 91; or Ensign, Nov. 1998, 71).



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## The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).



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## **Morality and Modesty**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Immorality does not begin in adultery or perversion. It begins with little indiscretions like sex thoughts, sex discussions, passionate kissing, petting and such, growing with every exercise. The small indiscretion seems powerless compared to the sturdy body, the strong mind, the sweet spirit of youth who give way to the first temptation. But soon the strong has become weak, the master the slave, spiritual growth curtailed. But if the first unrighteous act is never given root, the tree will grow to beautiful maturity and the youthful life will grow toward God, our Father. ...

“The early apostles and prophets mention numerous sins that were reprehensible to them. Many of them were sexual sins—adultery, being without natural affection, lustfulness, infidelity, incontinence, filthy communications, impurity, inordinate affection, fornication. They included all sexual relations outside marriage—petting, sex perversion, masturbation, and preoccupation with sex in one’s thoughts and talking. Included are every hidden and secret sin and all unholy and impure thoughts and practices. ...

“Conscience tells the individual when he is entering forbidden worlds, and it continues to prick until silenced by the will or by sin’s repetition.

“Can anyone truthfully say he did not know such things were wrong? These unholy practices, whatever may be their unmentionable

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names with all their approaches and numerous manifestations, are condemned by the Lord and his church. Some may be more heinous than others, but all are sin, in spite of statements to the contrary of those who falsely pretend to know. The Lord's prophets declare they are not right.

“The world may have its norm; the Church has a different one. ... The world may countenance premarital sex experiences, but the Lord and his church condemn in no uncertain terms any and every sex relationship outside of marriage. ...

“Since courtship is prelude to marriage and encourages close associations, many have convinced themselves that intimacies are legitimate—a part of the courting process. Many have cast off bridle and harness and have relaxed the restraints. Instead of remaining in the field of simple expressions of affection, some have turned themselves loose to fondling, often called ‘necking,’ with its intimate contacts and its passionate kissing. Necking is the younger member of this unholy family. Its bigger sister is called ‘petting.’ When the intimacies have reached this stage, they are surely the sins condemned by the Savior. ...

“Who would say that he or she who pets has not become lustful, has not become passionate? Is it not this most abominable practice that God rebuked in his modern reiteration of the Ten Commandments: ‘Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it’ (D&C 59:6).

“What, may I ask you, is like unto adultery if it is not petting? Did

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not the Lord recognize that this heinous sin is but the devil's softening process for the final acts of adultery or fornication? Can a person in the light of the Lord's scriptures pursue the path of petting with clear conscience? Can anyone convince himself that this is not deep sin?

“We must repeat what we have said many times: Fornication with all its big and little brothers and sisters was evil and wholly condemned by the Lord in Adam's day, in Moses' day, in Paul's day, and in our own day. The Church has no tolerance for any kind of perversions. The Lord has indicated his lack of tolerance, stating:

“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance' (D&C 1:31).

“When the scriptures are so plain, how can anyone justify immoralities and call them love? Is black white? Is evil good? Is purity filthiness?

“That the Church's stand on morality may be understood, we declare firmly and unalterably, it is not an outworn garment, faded, old-fashioned, and threadbare. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and his covenants and doctrines are immutable; and when the sun grows cold and the stars no longer shine, the law of chastity will still be basic in God's world and in the Lord's church. Old values are upheld by the Church not because they are old, but rather because through the ages they have proved right. It will always be the rule” (“President Kimball Speaks Out on Morality,” Ensign, Nov. 1980, 95-96).



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## **The Law of Chastity**

President Ezra Taft Benson

“Watchmen—what of the night? We must respond by saying that all is not well in Zion. As Moroni counseled, we must cleanse the inner vessel (see Alma 60:23), beginning first with ourselves, then with our families, and finally with the Church. ...

“The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality. This, the Prophet Joseph said, would be the source of more temptations, more buffetings, and more difficulties for the elders of Israel than any other. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:55.)

“President Joseph F. Smith said that sexual impurity would be one of the three dangers that would threaten the Church within—and so it does. (See *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 312–13.) It permeates our society” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1986, 3, 6; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 4).



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **Morality and Modesty**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“We live in a world that is filled with filth and sleaze, a world that reeks of evil. It is all around us. It is on the television screen. It is at the movies. It is in the popular literature. It is on the Internet. You can’t afford to watch it, my dear friends. You cannot afford to let that filthy poison touch you. Stay away from it. Avoid it. You can’t rent videos and watch them as they portray degrading things. You young men who hold the priesthood of God cannot mix this filth with the holy priesthood. ...

“And while I speak of such matters I want to give emphasis again to the matter of pornography. It has become a \$10 billion industry in the United States, where a few men grow rich at the expense of thousands upon thousands who are their victims. Stay away from it. It is exciting, but it will destroy you. It will warp your senses. It will build within you an appetite that you will do anything to appease. And don’t try to create associations through the Internet and chat rooms. They can lead you down into the very abyss of sorrow and bitterness. ...

“You young men who plan to go on missions must recognize that sexual sin may keep you from that opportunity. You may think that you can hide it. Long experience has shown that you cannot. To serve an effective mission you must have the Spirit of the Lord, and truth withheld does not mix with that Spirit. Sooner or later you will feel compelled to confess your earlier transgressions. Well did Sir

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Galahad say, ‘My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure’ (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Sir Galahad* [1842], st. 1).

“My dear young friends, in matters of sex you know what is right. You know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean from the dark and disappointing evil of sexual transgression. Walk in the sunlight of that peace which comes from obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

“Now, if there be any who have stepped over the line, who may already have transgressed, is there any hope for you? Of course there is. Where there is true repentance, there will be forgiveness. That process begins with prayer. The Lord has said, ‘He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more’ (D&C 58:42). Share your burden with your parents if you can. And by all means, confess to your bishop, who stands ready to help you” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 7–8).

“If they want to get involved in pornography, they can do so very easily. They can pick up the phone and dial a number with which they are familiar. They can sit at a computer and revel in cyberspace filth.

“I fear this may be going on in some of your homes. It is vicious. It is lewd and filthy. It is enticing and habit forming. It will take a

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

young man or woman down to destruction as surely as anything in this world. It is foul sleaze that makes its exploiters wealthy, its victims impoverished.

“I regret to say that many fathers themselves like to hear the siren song of those who peddle filth. Some of them also work the Internet for that which is lewd and lascivious. If there be any man within the sound of my voice who is involved in this or who is moving in this direction, I plead with you to get it out of your life. Get away from it. Stay away from it. Otherwise it will become an obsession. It will destroy your home life. It will destroy your marriage. It will take the good and beautiful out of your family relationships and replace these with ugliness and suspicion.

“To you young men, and to the young women who are your associates, I plead with you not to befoul your minds with this ugly and vicious stuff. It is designed to titillate you, to absorb you into its net. It will take the beautiful out of your life. It will lead you into the dark and ugly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 68–69; or Ensign, Nov. 2000, 51).

Stand safely back from the cliff of sin.





# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **Consequences of Obedience or Disobedience**

Jacob 2:28-29, 33

The Nephites were warned that if they did not live the law of chastity, they would not prosper in the land. Violation of the law of chastity brings “a sore curse, even unto destruction.”

Helaman 13:38

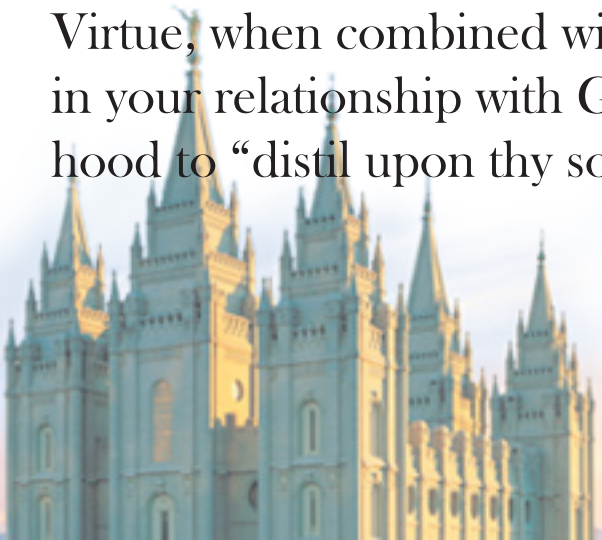
Those who seek happiness in the lusts of the flesh will not find it because doing iniquity is contrary to the nature of happiness. Compare with Alma 41:10, “Wickedness never was happiness.”

3 Nephi 6:16-18

The Nephites became so morally corrupted that they were “carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them, and to do whatsoever iniquity he desired they should.”

Doctrine and Covenants 121:45

Virtue, when combined with charity and faith, gives you confidence in your relationship with God and allows the doctrines of the priesthood to “distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.”



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **For the Strength of Youth: Fulfilling Our Duty to God**

[Booklet]

### Agency and Accountability

“Wherefore, men ... are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Your Heavenly Father has given you agency, the ability to choose right from wrong and to act for yourself. You have been given the Holy Ghost to help you know good from evil. While you are here on earth, you are being proven to see if you will use your agency to show your love for God by keeping His commandments.

While you are free to choose for yourself, you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. When you make a choice, you will receive the consequences of that choice. The consequences may not be immediate, but they will always follow, for good or bad. Wrong choices delay your progression and lead to heartache and misery. Right choices lead to happiness and eternal life. That is why it is so important for you to choose what is right throughout your life.

You are responsible for the choices you make. You should not blame your circumstances, your family, or your friends if you choose to disobey God’s commandments. You are a child of God with great strength. You have the ability to choose righteousness and

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happiness, no matter what your circumstances.

You are also responsible for developing the abilities and talents Heavenly Father has given you. You are accountable to Him for what you do with your abilities and how you spend your time. Do not idle away your time. Be willing to work hard. Choose to do many good things of your own free will.

Matthew 25:14-29

## Gratitude

“He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious” (D&C 78:19).

The Lord wants you to have a spirit of gratitude in all you do and say. Live with a spirit of thanksgiving and you will have greater happiness and satisfaction in life. Even in your most difficult times, you can find much to be grateful for. Doing so will strengthen and bless you.

In your prayers, before you ask for blessings, pour out your heart to God in thanks for the blessings you have already received. Thank Him for your family, for friends and loved ones, for leaders and teachers, for the gospel, and for His Son, Jesus Christ.

You can also express gratitude to the Lord by the way you live. When you keep His commandments and serve others, you show that you love Him and are grateful to Him. Express appreciation to

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everyone who helps you in any way.

Luke 17:12-19

## Education

“Learn wisdom in thy youth” (Alma 37:35).

The Lord wants you to educate your mind and improve your skills and abilities. Education will help you to be an influence for good in the world. It will help you better provide for yourself, your loved ones, and those in need.

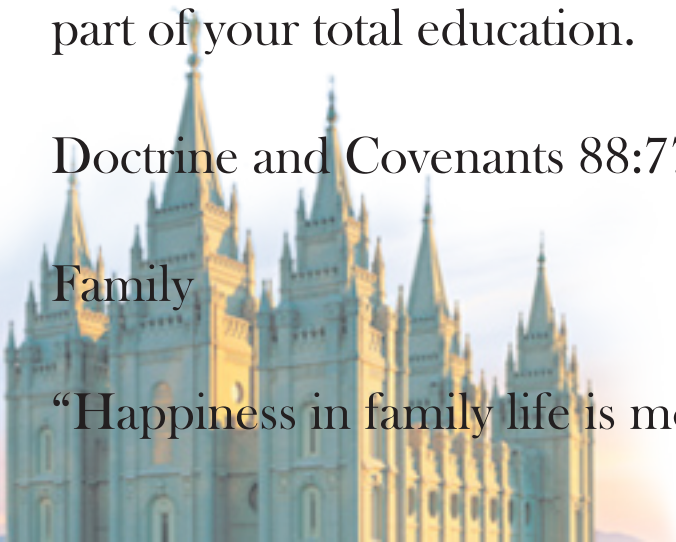
Be willing to work diligently and make sacrifices to obtain learning. Education is an investment that brings great rewards. You live in a competitive world where a good education opens the doors of opportunity that may otherwise be closed to you.

Maintain an enthusiasm for learning throughout your life. Find joy in continuing to learn about yourself, other people, and the world around you. Study the words of the Lord, and continue learning about your Heavenly Father’s plan. Make seminary an important part of your total education.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:77-80

## Family

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded





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upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

Being part of a family is a great blessing. Your family can provide you with companionship and happiness, help you learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and help you prepare for eternal life. Not all families are the same, but each is important in Heavenly Father’s plan.

Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. Many problems in the home are created because family members speak and act selfishly or unkindly. Concern yourself with the needs of other family members. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Remember that the family is the most sacred unit of the Church.

Honor your parents by showing love and respect for them and by being obedient. Be willing to help in the home with chores that need to be done. Participate in family activities and traditions, including family prayer, family home evenings, and family scripture reading. These traditions strengthen and unify families. Set a good example for other family members.

Strengthen your relationships with your brothers and sisters. They can become your closest friends. Support them in their interests and help them with problems they may be facing.

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Ephesians 6:1-3

Friends

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

Choose your friends carefully. They will greatly influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become. Choose friends who share your values so you can strengthen and encourage each other in living high standards. A true friend will encourage you to be your best self.

To have good friends, be a good friend yourself. Show interest in others and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Go out of your way to be a friend to those who are shy or do not feel included.

Invite your friends of other faiths to your Church meetings and activities, where they can learn about the gospel. Help them feel welcome and wanted. Many people have joined the Church through the example and fellowship of their friends. Don't be offended if your friends decline your invitation to learn more about the gospel. Just continue to be their friend.

Make a special effort to reach out to new converts and to those who are less active. Help them feel welcome among your group of friends. You can strengthen them by sharing your testimony and by

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setting a good example.

Alma 17:1-2

## Dress and Appearance

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ... The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Your body is God’s sacred creation. Respect it as a gift from God, and do not defile it in any way. Through your dress and appearance, you can show the Lord that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Prophets of God have always counseled His children to dress modestly. The way you dress is a reflection of what you are on the inside. Your dress and grooming send messages about you to others and influence the way you and others act. When you are well groomed and modestly dressed, you invite the companionship of the Spirit and can exercise a good influence on those around you.

Never lower your dress standards for any occasion. Doing so sends the message that you are using your body to get attention and approval and that modesty is important only when it is convenient.

Immodest clothing includes short shorts and skirts, tight clothing, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and other revealing attire.

Young women should wear clothing that covers the shoulder and

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avoid clothing that is low-cut in the front or the back or revealing in any other manner. Young men should also maintain modesty in their appearance. All should avoid extremes in clothing, appearance, and hairstyle. Always be neat and clean and avoid being sloppy or inappropriately casual in dress, grooming, and manners. Ask yourself, “Would I feel comfortable with my appearance if I were in the Lord’s presence?”

Someday you will receive your endowment in the temple. Your dress and behavior should help you prepare for that sacred time.

Do not disfigure yourself with tattoos or body piercings. If girls or women desire to have their ears pierced, they are encouraged to wear only one pair of modest earrings.

Show respect for the Lord and for yourself by dressing appropriately for Church meetings and activities, whether on Sunday or during the week. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask your parents or leaders for help.

Alma 1:27

## Entertainment and the Media

“If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Therefore, choose only entertainment and media that uplift you. Good en-



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ertainment will help you to have good thoughts and make righteous choices. It will allow you to enjoy yourself without losing the Spirit of the Lord.

While much entertainment is good, some of it can lead you away from righteous living. Offensive material is often found in web sites, concerts, movies, music, videocassettes, DVDs, books, magazines, pictures, and other media. Satan uses such entertainment to deceive you by making what is wrong and evil look normal and exciting. It can mislead you into thinking that everyone is doing things that are wrong.

Do not attend, view, or participate in entertainment that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in entertainment that in any way presents immorality or violent behavior as acceptable.

Pornography in all its forms is especially dangerous and addictive. What may begin as a curious indulgence can become a destructive habit that takes control of your life. It can lead you to sexual transgression and even criminal behavior. Pornography is a poison that weakens your self-control, changes the way you see others, causes you to lose the guidance of the Spirit, and can even affect your ability to have a normal relationship with your future spouse. If you encounter pornography, turn away from it immediately.

Depictions of violence often glamorize vicious behavior. They offend the Spirit and make you less able to respond to others in a sensitive, caring way. They contradict the Savior's message of love for

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one another.

Have the courage to walk out of a movie or video party, turn off a computer or television, change a radio station, or put down a magazine if what is being presented does not meet Heavenly Father's standards. Do these things even if others do not. Let your friends and family know that you are committed to keeping God's standards. You have the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will give you strength and help you make good choices.

Moroni 7:12-19

## Music and Dancing

“Praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing” (D&C 136:28).

Music is an important and powerful part of life. It can be an influence for good that helps you draw closer to Heavenly Father. However, it can also be used for wicked purposes. Unworthy music may seem harmless, but it can have evil effects on your mind and spirit.

Choose carefully the music you listen to. Pay attention to how you feel when you are listening. Don't listen to music that drives away the Spirit, encourages immorality, glorifies violence, uses foul or offensive language, or promotes Satanism or other evil practices.

Dancing can be fun and can provide an opportunity to meet new people. However, it too can be misused. When dancing, avoid full

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body contact with your partner. Do not use positions or moves that are suggestive of sexual behavior. Plan and attend dances where dress, grooming, lighting, lyrics, and music contribute to a wholesome atmosphere where the Spirit of the Lord may be present.

Doctrine and Covenants 25:12

## Language

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good” (Ephesians 4:29).

How you speak says much about who you are. Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Use language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others. Do not insult others or put them down, even in joking. Speak kindly and positively about others so you can fulfill the Lord’s commandment to love one another. When you use good language, you invite the Spirit to be with you.

Always use the names of God and Jesus Christ with reverence and respect. Misusing their names is a sin. Profane, vulgar, or crude language or gestures, as well as jokes about immoral actions, are offensive to the Lord and to others. Foul language harms your spirit and degrades you. Do not let others influence you to use it.

Choose friends who use good language. Help others around you use clean language by your example and by good-naturedly encouraging them to choose other words. Politely walk away or change the sub-

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ject when others around you use bad language.

If you have developed the habit of swearing, you can break it. Begin by making a decision to change. Pray for help. If you start to use words you know are wrong, keep quiet or say what you have to say in a different way.

James 3:2-13

## Dating

“The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. ... It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating” (President Gordon B. Hinckley).

In cultures where dating or courtship is acceptable, dating can help you develop lasting friendships and eventually find an eternal companion. Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards. A young man and a young woman on a date are responsible to help each other maintain their standards and to protect each other's honor and virtue. You must honor the sanctity of the priesthood and of womanhood.

Do not date until you are at least 16 years old. Dating before then can lead to immorality, limit the number of other young people you meet, and deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner.



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Not all teenagers need to date or even want to. Many young people do not date during their teen years because they are not yet interested, do not have opportunities, or simply want to delay forming serious relationships. However, good friendships can and should be developed at every age.

When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Make sure your parents meet those you date. You may want to invite your dates to activities with your family. Plan dating activities that are positive and inexpensive and that will help you get to know each other. Do things that will help you and your companions maintain your self-respect and remain close to the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 6:14

## Sexual Purity

“The sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”).

Physical intimacy between husband and wife is beautiful and sacred. It is ordained of God for the creation of children and for the expression of love between husband and wife. God has commanded that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage.

When you obey God’s commandment to be sexually pure, you prepare yourself to make and keep sacred covenants in the temple.

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

You prepare yourself to build a strong marriage and to bring children into the world as part of a loving family. You protect yourself from the emotional damage that always comes from sharing physical intimacies with someone outside of marriage.

Do not have any sexual relations before marriage, and be completely faithful to your spouse after marriage. Satan may tempt you to rationalize that sexual intimacy before marriage is acceptable when two people are in love. That is not true. In God's sight, sexual sins are extremely serious because they defile the power God has given us to create life. The prophet Alma taught that sexual sins are more serious than any other sins except murder or denying the Holy Ghost (see Alma 39:5).

Before marriage, do not do anything to arouse the powerful emotions that must be expressed only in marriage. Do not participate in passionate kissing, lie on top of another person, or touch the private, sacred parts of another person's body, with or without clothing. Do not allow anyone to do that with you. Do not arouse those emotions in your own body.

In cultures where dating or courting is acceptable, always treat your date with respect, never as an object to be used for your lustful desires. Stay in areas of safety where you can easily control your physical feelings. Do not participate in talk or activities that arouse sexual feelings.

Homosexual activity is a serious sin. If you find yourself struggling with same-gender attraction, seek counsel from your parents and

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

bishop. They will help you.

Victims of rape, incest, or other sexual abuse are not guilty of sin. If you have been a victim of any of these crimes, know that you are innocent and that God loves you. Seek your bishop's counsel immediately so he can help guide you through the process of emotional healing.

If you are tempted to commit sexual transgressions, seek help from your parents, your bishop, and friends you can trust. Pray to the Lord, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings.

If you have committed sexual transgressions, begin the process of repentance now so you can find inner peace and have the full companionship of the Spirit. Seek the Lord's forgiveness. Talk with your bishop. He will help you obtain the forgiveness available to those who truly repent.

Genesis 39:1–12; Doctrine and Covenants 38:42

## Repentance

“He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

The Savior gave His life for us and suffered for our sins. This great sacrifice is called the Atonement. Through the Atonement, you can receive forgiveness and be cleansed from your sins when you repent.

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When you do what is necessary to receive forgiveness, you will know for yourself the power of the Atonement and the love God has for you. You will feel the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which will bring you great strength.

Satan wants you to think that you cannot repent, but that is absolutely not true. The Savior has promised you forgiveness if you will do what is required. The sooner you repent, the sooner you will find the blessings that come from forgiveness.

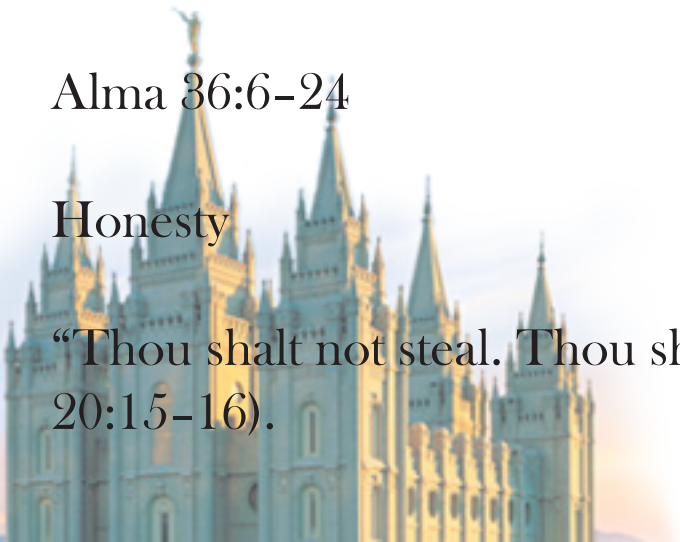
Some people knowingly break God's commandments, expecting to repent before they go to the temple or serve a mission. Such deliberate sin mocks the Savior's Atonement and invites Satan to influence your life. Repentance for such behavior is difficult and can take a long time. If you sin in this way, you may lose years of blessings and spiritual guidance. You may become trapped in the sinful behavior, making it difficult to find your way back.

You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. You should also confess your sins to those you have wronged. If you have committed serious sins, such as immorality, you need to confess them to your bishop.

Alma 36:6-24

Honesty

“Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:15-16).





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Be honest with yourself, others, and the Lord. When you are honest in every way, you build strength of character that will allow you to be of great service to God and others. You will be blessed with peace of mind and self-respect. When you are honest, you will be trusted by the Lord and by those around you.

Dishonesty hurts you and usually hurts others as well. When you lie, steal, shoplift, or cheat, you damage your spirit and become less able to do good things. Be honest in your job, giving a full amount of work for your pay.

Don't rationalize that wrong is right, even though many people around you may think there is no harm in being dishonest. Being honest requires courage and commitment to do what you know is right.

Alma 27:27

## Sabbath Day Observance

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

The Lord has given the Sabbath day for your benefit and has commanded you to keep it holy. Observing the Sabbath will bring you closer to the Lord and to your family. It will give you needed rest and rejuvenation.

Many uplifting activities are appropriate for the Sabbath. Worship



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the Lord, attend church, spend quiet time with your family, study the gospel, write letters, write in your journal, do family history work, and visit the sick or homebound. Your dress before, during, and after church meetings should show respect for the Sabbath.

When seeking a job, share with your potential employer your desire to attend your Sunday meetings and keep the Sabbath day holy. Many employers value employees with these personal convictions. Whenever possible, choose a job that does not require you to work on Sundays.

Sunday is not a holiday or a day for recreation or athletic events. Do not seek entertainment or spend money on this day. Let your friends know what your standards are so they will not try to persuade you to participate in activities that are not appropriate for the Sabbath.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13

Tithes and Offerings

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, ... and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10; 3 Nephi 24:10).

The law of tithing is an important commandment that you should obey throughout your life. A tithe is one-tenth of your income.

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Paying tithing shows your gratitude for all that God has given you. It is a way to help build God's kingdom on earth. Tithing is used to build temples and meetinghouses, translate and publish the scriptures, provide Church materials to members, do missionary work, perform temple and family history work, and support seminaries and institutes.

Your attitude is important in paying tithing. Pay it because you love the Lord and have faith in Him. Pay it willingly with a thankful heart. Pay it first, even when you think you don't have enough money to meet your other needs. Doing so will help you overcome selfishness and be more receptive to the Spirit.

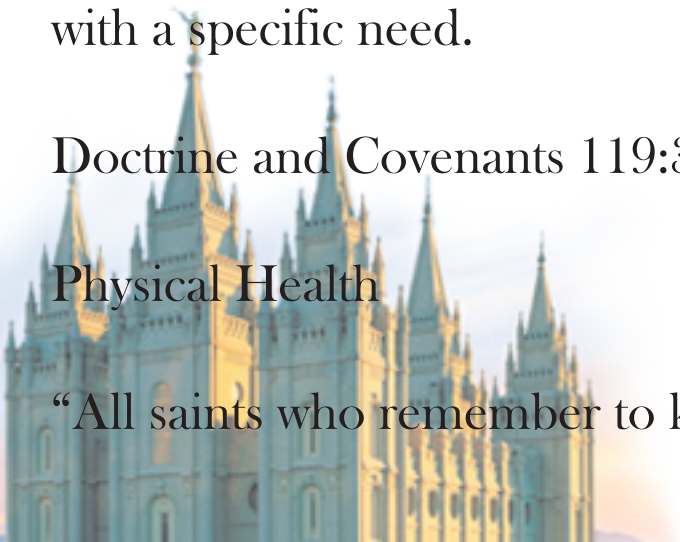
At the end of each year, schedule a time for tithing settlement with your bishop. This is a meeting in which you review your contribution records and declare whether you have paid a full tithe.

Obey the law of the fast by fasting once each month (if health permits), usually on the first Sunday of the month. A proper fast day observance includes not eating or drinking for two consecutive meals and giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need. Begin and end your fast with prayer, asking for special help with a specific need.

Doctrine and Covenants 119:3-4

Physical Health

“All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings ... shall re-



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ceive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18–20).

The Lord has commanded you to take good care of your body. To do this, observe the Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89. Eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. When you do all these things, you remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life. You gain the blessings of a healthy body, an alert mind, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Never use tobacco products, such as cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, cigars, and pipe tobacco. They are very addictive and will damage your body and shorten your life. Also, do not drink coffee or tea, for these are addictive and harmful.

Any form of alcohol is harmful to your body and spirit. Being under the influence of alcohol weakens your judgment and self-control and could lead you to break the law of chastity or other commandments. Drinking can lead to alcoholism, which destroys individuals and families.

Any drug, chemical, or dangerous practice that is used to produce a sensation or “high” can destroy your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These include hard drugs, prescription or over-the-counter medications that are abused, and household chemicals.

Never let Satan or others lead you to think that breaking the Word



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of Wisdom will make you happier or more attractive.

Daniel 1:3-20

Service to Others

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Service to others is one of the most important characteristics of a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple is willing to bear other people’s burdens and to comfort those who need comfort (see Mosiah 18:8-9). Often Heavenly Father will meet the needs of others through you.

When serving, look to the Savior as your example. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him.

There are many ways to serve others. You can serve in your Church assignments and in your home, school, and community. Seek daily the guidance of the Holy Ghost to know whom to serve and how to help meet their needs. Often the most important service is expressed through simple, everyday acts of kindness.

As you devote yourself to serving others, you will draw closer to Heavenly Father. Your heart will be filled with love. Your capacities will increase, and your life and the lives of those around you will be blessed.

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Luke 10:25-37

## Go Forward with Faith

The standards presented in this book will help you make correct choices. Review them often and ask yourself, “Am I living the way the Lord wants me to live?”

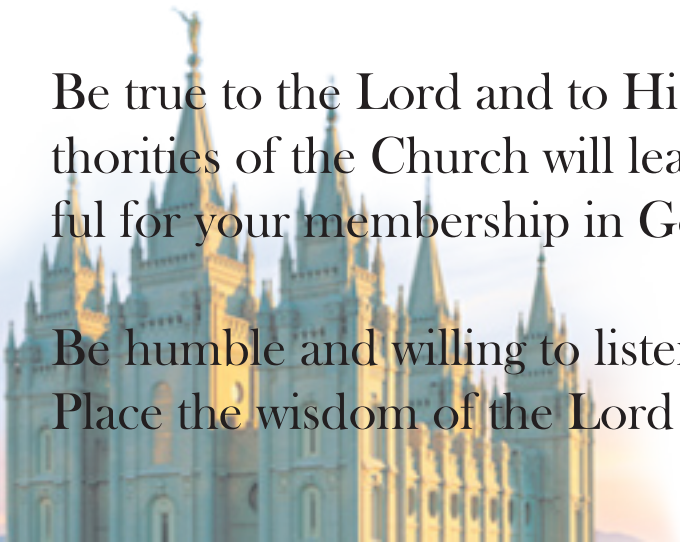
To help you become all that the Lord wants you to become, get on your knees each day and express to Him the desires of your heart. He is the source of all wisdom, and you need His help. He will hear and answer you.

Read the scriptures daily. They are a powerful source of personal revelation and a constant strength to your testimony.

Remember and keep the covenants you made when you were baptized and that you renew each week when you partake of the sacrament. You young men should keep the covenants you made when you received the priesthood. Keeping these covenants now will help you prepare for the temple covenants you will make in the future.

Be true to the Lord and to His Church in all circumstances. The authorities of the Church will lead you in paths of happiness. Be grateful for your membership in God’s great kingdom.

Be humble and willing to listen to the whisperings of the Spirit. Place the wisdom of the Lord above your own wisdom.



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When you do these things, the Lord will make much more out of your life than you can by yourself. He will increase your opportunities, expand your vision, and strengthen you. He will give you the help you need to meet your trials and challenges. You will find true joy as you come to know your Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, and feel their love for you.

2 Nephi 31:16-21



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## **Put on the Whole Armor of God**

President Harold B. Lee President of the Church

Stand Ye in Holy Places: Selected Sermons and Writings of President Harold B. Lee, 330–39

The Apostle Paul demonstrates his great ability as an inspired teacher as he pictures each of us as a warrior being clothed with the essential armor to protect the four parts of the human body which apparently Satan and his hosts, by their vigilant spy system, have found to be the most vulnerable parts through which the enemies of righteousness might make their “landing,” as it were, and invade the human soul. Here are his inspired teachings:

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

“And take the helmet of salvation. ...” (Ephesians 6:14–15, 17.)

Did you note carefully the four main parts of your bodies to be guarded:

1. A girdle about your loins.
2. A breastplate over your heart.
3. Your feet shod.
4. A helmet on your head.

These instructions take on full significance when it is remembered



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the loins are those portions of the body between the lower ribs and the hips in which are located the vital generative organs, and also that in the scriptures and other inspired writings the loins symbolize virtue or moral purity and vital strength. The heart suggests our daily conduct in life, for as the Master taught:

“... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man ... bringeth forth good things: and an evil man ... bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:34-35.)

The feet typify the course you chart in the journey of life. The head, of course, represents your intellect.

But now pay careful heed to the fabric from which the various parts of your armor are to be fashioned.

Truth is to be the substance of which the girdle about your loins is to be formed if your virtue and vital strength are to be safeguarded. How can truth protect you from one of the deadliest of all evils, unchastity? First, for a definition of truth: Truth is knowledge, so the Lord tells us, “knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.” (D&C 93:24.) Now consider for a few moments the essential knowledge which will put to flight immorality, the ever-present enemy of youth:

Man and woman are the offspring of God and created after His own image and likeness as mortal beings. One of the first commandments given to our first mortal parents, “to multiply and to replenish the earth,” has been repeated as a sacred instruction to every faithful

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and true Latter-day Saint young man and young woman married in holy wedlock. To the end that this sacred purpose of parenthood be realized, our Creator has placed within the breast of every true man and woman a strong mutual attraction for each other, which acquaintance ripens in friendship, thence through the romance of courtship, and finally matures into happy marriage. But now mark you, never once has God issued such a command to unmarried persons! Indeed, to the contrary; he has written high on the decalogue of crime and second only to murder the divine injunction, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (which is unquestionably interpreted to mean all unlawful sexual association, inasmuch as the Master used interchangeably the words adultery and fornication in defining sexual impurity, and it has been severely condemned in every dispensation by authorized church leaders).

Those who make themselves worthy and enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in the temple for time and all eternity will be laying the first cornerstone for an eternal family home in the celestial kingdom that will last forever. Their reward is to have “glory added upon their heads forever and forever.” These eternal truths, if you believe them with all your soul, will be as a girdle of armor about your loins to safeguard your virtue as you would protect your life.

But now again may I put you on guard as to Satan’s methods used in an attempt to destroy you. The Lord, after giving us the definition of truth quoted above, said this: “And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning.” (D&C 93:25.)

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When you are prompted to immodesty in dress or to unclean or obscene speech or brazen conduct in your courtship, you are playing Satan's game and are becoming the victim of his lying tongue. Just so, if you allow the vain theories of men to cause you to doubt your relationship to God, the divine purpose of marriage, and your future prospects for eternity, you are being victimized by the master of lies, because all such is contrary to truth, which saves you from these perils.

Now, what about the breastplate which will safeguard your heart or your conduct in life? The Apostle Paul says that breastplate shall be made of a stuff called righteousness. The righteous man, although far superior to his fellows who are not, is humble and does not parade his righteousness to be seen of men but conceals his virtues as he would modestly conceal his nudity. The righteous man strives for self-improvement knowing that he has daily need of repentance for his misdeeds or his neglect. He is not so much concerned about what he can get but more about how much he can give to others, knowing that along that course only can he find true happiness. He endeavors to make each day his masterpiece so that at night's close he can witness in his soul and to his God that whatever has come to his hand that day, he has done to the best of his ability. His body is not dissipated and weakened by the burdens imposed by the demands of riotous living; his judgment is not rendered faulty by the follies of youth; he is clear of vision, keen of intellect, and strong of body. The breastplate of righteousness has given him "the strength of ten—because his heart is clean."

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But to continue with your coat of armor. Your feet, which are to represent your goals or objectives in life, are to be shod. Shod with what? “With the preparation of the gospel of peace.” The apostle who wrote that phrase certainly knew life from actual experience—“preparation of the gospel of peace”! He knew that preparedness is the way to victory and that “eternal vigilance is the price of safety.” Fear is the penalty of unpreparedness and aimless dawdling with opportunity. Whether in speech or in song, whether in physical or moral combat, the tide of victory rests with him who is prepared.

The old philosophers understood the importance of having this preparation begin in the formative period of life, for we are admonished to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6.) To point out this same truth one old adage declared: “If you follow the river you will reach the sea,” and another suggests a warning: “Following the course of least resistance makes men and rivers crooked.”

Embodied in the gospel of Jesus Christ are the straightforward negative injunctions divinely given to the great lawgiver of Israel, Moses—“Thou shalt not ... !”—to be followed later by the positive declarations in the Sermon on the Mount, which outline a veritable blueprint for your course through life. The gospel plan enjoins us to the observance of prayer, to walk uprightly, to honor our parentage, to keep the Sabbath Day holy, and to refrain from idleness. Happy is that one whose feet are shod with the preparation of these teachings from his youth to withstand the evil day. He has found the way to peace by “overcoming the world.” He has built his house upon a rock, and when the storms come, the winds blow, and the rains



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do beat upon the house, it will not fall because it is founded upon a rock. (see Matthew 7:24–25.) Such a one is not afraid; he will not be overcome by a surprise attack, for he is ready for any emergency: he is prepared!

And now finally to the last piece of the prophet-teacher's armored dress. We will put a helmet upon the head. Our head or our intellect is the controlling member of our body. It must be well protected against the enemy, for "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7.) But now in order for this helmet to be effective, it must be of an exquisite design. It must be of a super-material to be effective in our eternal conflict with the invisible enemy of all righteousness. Ours is to be the "helmet of salvation." Salvation means the attainment of the eternal right to live in the presence of God the Father and the Son as a reward for a good life in mortality.

With the goal of salvation ever in our mind's eye as the ultimate to be achieved, our thinking and our decisions which determine action will always challenge all that would jeopardize that glorious future state. Lost indeed is that soul who is intellectually without the "helmet of salvation" which tells him that death is the end and that the grave is a victory over life, and brings to defeat the hopes, the aspirations, and the accomplishments of life. Such a one might well conclude that he may as well "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

The conclusion reached by a committee of eminent divines appointed to investigate the cause of the wave of "student suicides" which swept over the country a few years ago was very significant. The

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summary of their findings declared: “The philosophy of the students who took their lives was such that they had never given religion serious thought, and when a test came they had nothing to hold fast to.”

In contrast to the tragic picture, the one who confidently looks forward to an eternal reward for his efforts in mortality is constantly sustained through his deepest trials; when his bank fails, he does not commit suicide; when his loved ones die, he does not despair; when war and destruction dissipate his fortune, he does not falter. He lives above his world and never loses sight of the goal of his salvation.

Our intellects, so protected, must always measure learning by the gospel criteria: Is it true? Is it uplifting? Will it benefit mankind? In the choices of life—our friends, our education, our vocation, our companion in marriage—all these and more must be made with an eye single to eternal life. Our thoughts must “smell of the sunshine” if our association would be inspiring and uplifting. If we would refrain from murder, we must learn not to become angry; if we would free ourselves from sexual sin, we must control immoral thought; if we would avoid the penalty of imprisonment for theft, we must learn not to covet. So taught Jesus, the Master Teacher and our Savior. (see Matthew 5:21–28.)

“O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise; and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.” (2 Nephi 9:28.)

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Children of the covenant who have upon their heads the helmet of salvation are not as these. The thrill of victory is within their grasp.

But now may I call your attention to one significant fact concerning the armor with which you now have been clothed. You have no armor whatsoever to protect you from the rear. Does this suggest yet another quality essential to this eternal conflict with “spiritual wickedness in high places”? Evidently no one can win this battle running from the enemy. The contest must be face to face. There must be no retreat. So came the clear-ringing counsel of the First Presidency to our boys during the last World War: “Boys, keep yourselves clean! Better die clean than to come home unclean.” Courage and determination and continual aggressiveness to the right are the essential qualities for the battle of life, else all the armor in the world suggested for our protection would be of no avail. Thus equipped within and without, we are now ready.

But wait a moment! Are we to have no weapons with which to fight? Are we to be mere targets for the enemy to attack? Let’s read now what Paul, the great apostle-teacher, said about our weapons:

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

“And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”  
(Ephesians 6:16-17.)

May I attempt to describe briefly that shield of faith? Faith is a gift

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from God, and blessed is the man who possesses it. “He who carries the lamp will not despair,” wrote one of the great industrial leaders with reference to a business crisis, “no matter how dark the night. That lamp I call faith.” Suppose we examine a few of life’s problems to see just how effective the shield of faith can be.

In what we might liken unto a great “pincer movement” of enemy forces to encircle us, we are being surfeited with the doctrine that we can get “something for nothing.” When the smoke of the present frenzied social conflict has cleared away and the carnage resulting therefrom carefully counted, we shall have had proved again that we cannot get something for nothing and continue to prosper, and that the habit of giving instead of getting is the way to happiness. Then our faith in those tried and trusted virtues of thrift, self-sacrifice, and frugality will have triumphed over the vices of reckless spending, selfishness, and a disregard for decent standards of common civic virtue and morality.

It was the faith of our pioneer fathers that prompted them, as they pitched camp to begin a new settlement, to devoutly invoke the blessings of Almighty God upon their efforts. They prayed for the rains to come, for the fertility of the soil, for protection against destructive forces to the end that their crops would grow and that a harvest would be gathered. When a bounteous harvest came, they thanked God; for the protection of loved ones, they gave recognition to an Omnipotent Power; in death and sorrow, in floods and in storm, they saw the workings of a Divine Will. Out of such faith there was born in them, and can be likewise in you, a conviction that “a man and the Lord are a big majority in any test.”



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If we have faith in our kinship to a Great Creator, we recognize by that same token our relationship to man. Such faith banishes hate in time of war and supplants therefore a sympathy for our enemy; the envies and jealousies of human society become, in the white light of faith, merely the growing pains of a family of children growing up to maturity and to a better understanding of how, as grownups, they should act. By faith we surmount daily obstacles and disappointments, and our defeats we thus interpret as necessary for our experience and development; we realize that to be thrown upon one's own resources is to be cast into the lap of fortune where our faculties undergo an unexpected development. With faith we become pioneers for the generations yet unborn and find ourselves becoming joyous in the contemplation of service we may render to our fellowmen even though the reward be but a martyr's crown.

Note now how the "shield of faith" and the "sword of the spirit which is the word of God" work together, perfectly coordinated as weapons in the hands of one who has upon him the "armor of righteousness." The scriptures declare, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17.) Just as one in hand-to-hand combat with only a shield and without a sword would soon be overcome, just so without the word of God from the scriptures and by revelation, our faith becomes weak in the face of modern destructionists who call themselves "liberals." Shielded by faith, the commandments known as the Decalogue from Mount Sinai are transformed from mere platitudes of a philosopher to the thundering voice of authority from on high, and the teachings of the scriptures become the revealed word of God to guide us to our celestial

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home. Obedience to civil law would become a moral and a religious obligation, as well as a civic duty, if we believed that “the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. ...” (Romans 13:1-2.)

Armed with the word of God, the shattered dreams of youth and the frustrations which result from the stresses of war and the vigors of life do not embitter us or stifle our ambitions or prompt us in our despondency to cry out in despair, “Oh, what’s the use?” Guided by faith taught by the word of God, we view life as a great process of soul-training. Under the ever-watchful eye of a loving Father, we learn by “the things which we suffer,” we gain strength by overcoming obstacles, and we conquer fear by triumphant victory in places where danger lurks. By faith, as the word of God teaches, we understand that whatever contributes in life to the lofty standard of Jesus—“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48)—is for our good and for our eternal benefit even though into that molding may go the severe chastening of an all-wise God, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Hebrews 12:6.)

Thus schooled and drilled for the contest with the powers of darkness and with spiritual wickedness, we may be “troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9.)

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

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“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.” (Romans 13:12-13.)

Youth of Zion, put on the whole armor of God!

Our intellects ... must always measure learning by the gospel criteria:  
Is it true? Is it uplifting?

By faith we surmount daily obstacles and disappointments.



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## **Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse**

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 43-46; or Ensign, May 1992,  
31-33

### **The Tragic Scars of Abuse**

I speak from the depths of my heart to each one of you who have been scarred by the ugly sin of abuse, whether you are a member or nonmember of the Church. I would prefer a private setting to discuss this sensitive subject and ask that the Holy Spirit help us both that you may receive the relief of the Lord from the cruelty that has scarred your life.

Unless healed by the Lord, mental, physical, or sexual abuse can cause you serious, enduring consequences. As a victim you have experienced some of them. They include fear, depression, guilt, self-hatred, destruction of self-esteem, and alienation from normal human relationships. When aggravated by continued abuse, powerful emotions of rebellion, anger, and hatred are generated. These feelings often are focused against oneself, others, life itself, and even Heavenly Father. Frustrated efforts to fight back can degenerate into drug abuse, immorality, abandonment of home, and, tragically in extreme cases, suicide. Unless corrected, these feelings lead to despondent lives, discordant marriages, and even the transition from victim to abuser. One awful result is a deepening lack of trust in others, which becomes a barrier to healing.



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## Scars Need Not Be Permanent

To be helped, you must understand some things about eternal law. Your abuse results from another's unrighteous attack on your freedom. Since all of Father in Heaven's children enjoy agency, there can be some who choose willfully to violate the commandments and harm you. Such acts temporarily restrict your freedom. In justice, and to compensate, the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive results of others' acts against your will. That relief comes by applying eternal truths with priesthood assistance.

Know that the wicked choice of others cannot completely destroy your agency unless you permit it. Their acts may cause pain, anguish, even physical harm, but they cannot destroy your eternal possibilities in this brief but crucial life on earth. You must understand that you are free to determine to overcome the harmful results of abuse. Your attitude can control the change for good in your life. It allows you to have the help the Lord intends you to receive. No one can take away your ultimate opportunities when you understand and live eternal law. The laws of your Heavenly Father and the atonement of the Lord have made it possible that you will not be robbed of the opportunities which come to the children of God.

You may feel threatened by one who is in a position of power or control over you. You may feel trapped and see no escape. Please believe that your Heavenly Father does not want you to be held captive by unrighteous influence, by threats of reprisal, or by fear of repercussion to the family member who abuses you. Trust that the Lord will lead you to a solution. Ask in faith, nothing doubting (see

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James 1:6; Enos 1:15; Moroni 7:26; D&C 8:10; 18:18).

I solemnly testify that when another's acts of violence, perversion, or incest hurt you terribly, against your will, you are not responsible and you must not feel guilty. You may be left scarred by abuse, but those scars need not be permanent. In the eternal plan, in the Lord's timetable, those injuries can be made right as you do your part. Here is what you can do now.

You may be left scarred by abuse, but those scars need not be permanent.

## Seek Help

If you are now or have in the past been abused, seek help now. Perhaps you distrust others and feel that there is no reliable help anywhere. Begin with your Eternal Father and his beloved Son, your Savior. Strive to comprehend their commandments and follow them. They will lead you to others who will strengthen and encourage you. There is available to you a priesthood leader, normally a bishop, at times a member of the stake presidency. He can build a bridge to greater understanding and healing. Joseph Smith taught, "A man can do nothing for himself unless God direct him in the right way; and the Priesthood is for that purpose" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 364).

Talk to your bishop in confidence. His calling allows him to act as an instrument of the Lord in your behalf. He can provide a doctri-

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nal foundation to guide you to recovery. An understanding and application of eternal law will provide the healing you require. He has the right to be inspired of the Lord in your behalf. He can use the priesthood to bless you.

Your bishop can help you identify trustworthy friends to support you. He will help you regain self-confidence and self-esteem to begin the process of renewal. When abuse is extreme, he can help you identify appropriate protection and professional treatment consistent with the teachings of the Savior.

## Principles of Healing

These are some of the principles of healing you will come to understand more fully:

Recognize that you are a beloved child of your Heavenly Father. He loves you perfectly and can help you as no earthly parent, spouse, or devoted friend can. His Son gave his life so that by faith in him and obedience to his teachings you can be made whole. He is the consummate healer.

Gain trust in the love and compassion of your elder brother, Jesus Christ, by pondering the scriptures. As with the Nephites, he tells you: “I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. ... I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you” (3 Nephi 17:7-8).

Healing best begins with your sincere prayer asking your Father in

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Heaven for help. That use of your agency allows divine intervention. When you permit it, the love of the Savior will soften your heart and break the cycle of abuse that can transform a victim into an aggressor. Adversity, even when caused willfully by others' unrestrained appetite, can be a source of growth when viewed from the perspective of eternal principle (see D&C 122:7).

The victim must do all in his or her power to stop the abuse. Most often the victim is innocent because of being disabled by fear or the power or authority of the offender. At some point in time, however, the Lord may prompt a victim to recognize a degree of responsibility for abuse. Your priesthood leader will help assess your responsibility so that, if needed, it can be addressed. Otherwise the seeds of guilt will remain and sprout into bitter fruit. Yet no matter what degree of responsibility, from absolutely none to increasing consent, the healing power of the atonement of Jesus Christ can provide a complete cure (see D&C 138:1–4). Forgiveness can be obtained for all involved in abuse (see Articles of Faith 1:3). Then comes a restoration of self-respect, self-worth, and a renewal of life.

As a victim, do not waste effort in revenge or retribution against your aggressor. Focus on your responsibility to do what is in your power to correct. Leave the handling of the offender to civil and Church authorities. Whatever they do, eventually the guilty will face the Perfect Judge. Ultimately the unrepentant abuser will be punished by a just God. The purveyors of filth and harmful substances who knowingly incite others to acts of violence and depravation and those who promote a climate of permissiveness and corruption will be sentenced. Predators who victimize the innocent and justify their own



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corrupted life by enticing others to adopt their depraved ways will be held accountable. Of such the Master warned,

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Understand that healing can take considerable time. Recovery generally comes in steps. It is accelerated when gratitude is expressed to the Lord for every degree of improvement noted.

## Forgiveness Helps Heal

During prolonged recovery from massive surgery, a patient anticipates complete healing in patience, trusting in others' care. He does not always understand the importance of the treatment prescribed, but his obedience speeds recovery. So it is with you struggling to heal the scars of abuse. Forgiveness, for example, can be hard to understand, even more difficult to give. Begin by withholding judgment. You don't know what abusers may have suffered as victims when innocent. The way to repentance must be kept open for them. Leave the handling of aggressors to others. As you experience an easing of your own pain, full forgiveness will come more easily.

You cannot erase what has been done, but you can forgive (see D&C 64:10). Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord.

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The Master counseled, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you” (3 Nephi 12:44; italics added).

Bitterness and hatred are harmful. They produce much that is destructive. They postpone the relief and healing you yearn for. Through rationalization and self-pity, they can transform a victim into an abuser. Let God be the judge—you cannot do it as well as he can.

To be counseled to just forget abuse is not helpful. You need to understand the principles which will bring healing. I repeat, most often that comes through an understanding priesthood leader who has inspiration and the power of the priesthood to bless you.

## Cautions in Repairing Damage

I caution you not to participate in two improper therapeutic practices that may cause you more harm than good. They are (1) excessive probing into every minute detail of your past experiences, particularly when this involves penetrating dialogue in group discussion; and (2) blaming the abuser for every difficulty in your life.

While some discovery is vital to the healing process, the almost morbid probing into details of past acts, long buried and mercifully forgotten, can be shattering. There is no need to pick at healing wounds to open them and cause them to fester. The Lord and his teachings can help you without destroying self-respect.

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There is another danger. Detailed leading questions that probe your past may unwittingly trigger thoughts that are more imagination or fantasy than reality. They could lead to condemnation of another for acts that were not committed. I know of cases, likely few in number, where such therapy has caused great injustice to the innocent from unwittingly stimulated accusations that were later proven false. Memory, particularly adult memory of childhood experiences, is fallible. Remember, false accusation is also a sin.

Stated more simply, if someone intentionally poured a bucket of filth on your carpet, would you invite the neighbors to determine each ingredient that contributed to the ugly stain? Of course not. With the help of an expert, you would privately restore its cleanliness.

Likewise the repair of damage inflicted by abuse should be done privately, confidentially, with a trusted priesthood leader and, where needed, the qualified professional he recommends. There must be sufficient discussion of the general nature of abuse to allow you to be given appropriate counsel and to prevent the aggressor from committing more violence. Then, with the help of the Lord, you can bury the past.

I humbly testify that what I have told you is true. It is based upon eternal principles I have seen the Lord use to give a fulness of life to those scarred by wicked abuse.

The Savior's Healing Power

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If you feel there is only a thin thread of hope, believe me, it is not a thread. It can be the unbreakable connecting link to the Lord which puts a life preserver around you. He will heal you as you cease to fear and place your trust in him by striving to live his teachings.

Please, don't suffer more. Ask now for the Lord to help you (see Mormon 9:27; Moroni 7:26, 33). Decide now to talk to your bishop. Don't view all that you experience in life through lenses darkened by the scars of abuse. There is so much in life that is beautiful. Open the windows of your heart and let the love of the Savior in. And should ugly thoughts of past abuse come back, remember his love and his healing power. Your depression will be converted to peace and assurance. You will close an ugly chapter and open volumes of happiness.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.





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## **Principle of Repentance**

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The single purpose of Lucifer is to oppose the great plan of happiness, to corrupt the purest, most beautiful and appealing experiences of life: romance, love, marriage, and parenthood [see 2 Nephi 2:18; 28:20]. The specters of heartbreak and guilt [see Alma 39:5; Moroni 9:9] follow him about. Only repentance can heal what he hurts” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 27–28; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 21).

“In the battle of life, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners, and many who know of no way to escape and are pressed into his service. Every soul confined to a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The adversary cannot hold them if they know how to use it. The key is labeled Repentance. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

“I know of no sins connected with the moral standard for which we cannot be forgiven. I do not exempt abortion. The formula is stated in forty words:

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them’ (D&C 58:42–43).

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“However long and painful the process of repentance, the Lord has said:

“This is the covenant ... I will make with them. ... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more’ (Hebrews 10:16–17; italics added)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 95; or Ensign, May 1992, 68).

The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.



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## **Temptations of Satan and the Natural Man**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

“Many things happened in the process of the Fall, including changes that came to the physical bodies of Adam and Eve. For one thing, they fell into ‘nature.’ ...

“Part of the natural world Adam and Eve entered included the addition to their bodies of blood—a corruptible ingredient—in what had been to that point an uncorrupted body of bloodless flesh and bone. But even more important than such physical changes were the temptations of and threats to the spirit. Spiritual as well as physical separation from God came with the Fall. Humankind was cut off from the immediate personal companionship with God that Adam and Eve had enjoyed in the garden of Eden. As a result, they were distanced from the Holy Spirit and became less responsive to many of the things of righteousness. ...

“Because this doctrine [of the natural man] is so basic to the plan of salvation and also because it is so susceptible to misunderstanding, we must note that these references to ‘natural’ evil emphatically do not mean that men and women are ‘inherently’ evil. There is a crucial difference. As spiritual sons and daughters of God, all mortal men and women are divine in origin and divine in their potential destiny. As Doctrine and Covenants 93:38–39 teaches, the spirit of every man, woman, and child ‘was innocent in the beginning.’ But it is also true that as a result of the Fall they are now in a ‘natural’ (fallen) world where the devil ‘taketh away light’ and where some

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elements of nature—including temporal human nature—need discipline, restraint, and refinement. It is as if men and women are given, as part of their next step in development along the path to godhood, raw physical and spiritual ingredients—‘natural’ resources, if you will. Those resources are not to run rampant but are to be harnessed and focused so that their power and potential (as is sometimes done with a ‘natural’ river or a ‘natural’ waterfall) can be channeled and thereby made even more productive and beneficial.

“Natural man, with all of his new and wonderful but as yet unbridled and unregenerated potential, must be made ‘submissive’ to the Holy Spirit, a spirit that still entices and lifts us upward. ... Our deepest desires, our premortal yearnings, are still divine in their origins, and they are still deep in our souls. The echoes of our earlier innocence still reverberate, and the light that forsakes the evil one still shines. Our hearts can—and in their purity, do—desire that which is spiritual and holy rather than that which is ‘carnal, sensual, and devilish.’ If that were not so, we would be in a hopeless condition indeed, and the idea of real choice would be jeopardized forever. We praise God our Father that our true heritage is of him and that by yielding and submitting to his eternal influence we can overcome the enmity which separated us from him and turn those gifts from nature to our blessing rather than our cursing” (Christ and the New Covenant, 205–7).





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## **Put Off the Natural Man, and Come Off Conqueror**

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 15-19; or Ensign, Nov. 1990,  
14-16

### **The Dangers of Selfishness**

So many times prophets warn about the dangers of selfishness—the inordinate and excessive concern with self. The distance between constant self-pleasing and self-worship is shorter than we think. Stubborn selfishness is actually rebellion against God, because, warned Samuel, “stubbornness is as ... idolatry” (1 Samuel 15:23).

Selfishness is much more than an ordinary problem because it activates all the cardinal sins! It is the detonator in the breaking of the Ten Commandments.

By focusing on oneself, it is naturally easier to bear false witness if it serves one’s purpose. It is easier to ignore one’s parents instead of honoring them. It is easier to steal, because what one wants prevails. It is easier to covet, since the selfish conclude that nothing should be denied them.

It is easier to commit sexual sins, because to please oneself is the name of that deadly game in which others are often cruelly used. The Sabbath day is easily neglected, since one day soon becomes just like another. If selfish, it is easier to lie, because the truth is conveniently subordinated.

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The selfish individual thus seeks to please not God, but himself. He will even break a covenant in order to fix an appetite.

Selfishness has little time to regard the sufferings of others seriously; hence the love of many waxes cold (see Matthew 24:12; D&C 45:27; Moses 6:27).

The last days will be rampant with the cardinal sins, just “as in the days of Noah.” Society in the days of Noah, scriptures advise, “was corrupt before God” and “filled with violence” (Genesis 6:11; Moses 8:28). Corruption and violence—sound familiar? Both of these awful conditions crest because of surging individual selfishness. When thus engulfed, no wonder men’s hearts in our day will fail them because of fear (see Luke 21:26; D&C 45:26). Even the faithful can expect a few fibrillations.

Some selfishness exists even in good people. Jane Austen’s character Elizabeth mused, “I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle” (*Pride and Prejudice* [New York: Airmont Books, 1962], p. 58). The selfish individual has a passion for the vertical pronoun I. Significantly, the vertical pronoun I has no knees to bend, while the first letter in the pronoun we does.

Selfishness, in its preoccupation with self, withholds from others deserved, needed praise, causing a deprivation instead of giving a commendation.

We see in ourselves other familiar forms of selfishness: accepting or

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claiming undeserved credit; puffing deserved credit; being glad when others go wrong; resenting the genuine successes of others; preferring public vindication to private reconciliation; and taking “advantage of one because of his words” (2 Nephi 28:8). All things are thus viewed selfishly—what are their implications for “me,” much like the mattress on the highway which delayed traffic. When frustrated motorists finally got around the mattress, none stopped to remove it because now there was nothing in it for him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “Mankind [is] naturally selfish, ambitious, and striving to excel one above another” (The Words of Joseph Smith, comp. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980], p. 201).

Saul, swollen with selfishness, was reminded about an earlier time “when thou wast little in thine own sight” (1 Samuel 15:17).

## Jesus’ Example of Meekness

Selfishness is often expressed in stubbornness of mind. Having a “mind hardened in pride” often afflicts the brightest who could also be the best (Daniel 5:20). “One thing” the brightest often lack: meekness! Instead of having “a willing mind” which seeks to emulate the “mind of Christ,” a “mind hardened in pride” is impervious to counsel and often seeks ascendancy (1 Chronicles 28:9; 1 Corinthians 2:16; D&C 64:34). Jesus, who was and is “more intelligent than they all,” is also more meek than they all (Abraham 3:19).

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Jesus put everything on the altar without fanfare or bargaining. Both before and after His astonishing atonement, He declared, “Glory be to the Father” (D&C 19:19; see also Moses 4:2). Jesus, stunningly brilliant, nevertheless allowed His will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7; see also John 6:38). Those with pride-hardened minds are simply unable to do this.

## Put off the Natural Man

Stubborn selfishness leads otherwise good people to fight over herds, patches of sand, and strippings of milk. All this results from what the Lord calls coveting “the drop,” while neglecting “the more weighty matters” (D&C 117:8). Myopic selfishness magnifies a mess of pottage and makes thirty pieces of silver look like a treasure trove. In our intense acquisitiveness, we forget Him who once said, “What is property unto me?” (D&C 117:4).

Such is the scope of putting off the burdensome natural man, who is naturally selfish (see Mosiah 3:19). So much of our fatigue, brothers and sisters, in fact, comes from carrying that needless load. This heaviness of the natural man prevents us from doing our Christian calisthenics; so we end up too swollen with selfishness to pass through the narrow needle’s eye.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh wrote of the need to “shed my Martha-like anxiety about many things, ... shedding pride, ... shedding hypocrisy in human relationships. What a rest that will be! The most exhausting thing in life, I have discovered,” she said, “is being insincere. That is why so much of social life is exhausting” (Gift from the



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Sea [New York: Vintage Books, 1978], p. 32).

Unchecked selfishness thus stubbornly blocks the way for developing all of the divine qualities: love, mercy, patience, long-suffering, kindness, graciousness, goodness, and gentleness. Any tender sprouts from these virtues are sheared off by sharp selfishness. Contrariwise, brothers and sisters, I cannot think of a single gospel covenant the keeping of which does not shear off selfishness from us!

But what a battle for some of us! We are all afflicted in different degrees. The question is, How goes the battle? Is our selfishness being put off—even if only gradually? Or is the natural man like “the man who came to dinner”? Divine tutoring is given largely in order to help us shed our selfishness, “for what son [or daughter] is [there] whom the father chasteneth not?” (Hebrews 12:7).

Divine tutoring is given largely in order to help us shed our selfishness.

## Important Spiritual Perspectives

Restoration scriptures tell us much more about how we can really be forgiven through the atonement of Christ by means of which, finally, “mercy ... overpowereth justice” (Alma 34:15). We can have real and justified hope for the future—enough hope to develop the faith necessary both to put off the natural man and to strive to become more saintly.

Furthermore, because the centerpiece of the Atonement is already

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in place, we know that everything else in God's plan will likewise finally succeed. God is surely able to do His own work! (see 2 Nephi 27:20–21.) In His plans for the human family, long ago God made ample provision for all mortal mistakes. His purposes will all triumph and without abrogating man's moral agency. Moreover, all His purposes will come to pass in their time (see D&C 64:32).

However, without these later and other spiritual perspectives, see how differently we behave. Take away an acknowledgment of divine design, and then watch the selfish scurrying to redesign political and economic systems to make life pain-free and pleasure-filled. Misguided governments mean to live, even if they live beyond their means, thereby mortgaging future generations.

Take away regard for the divinity in one's neighbor, and watch the decline in our regard for his property.

Take away basic moral standards, and observe how quickly tolerance changes into permissiveness.

Take away the sacred sense of belonging to a family or community, and observe how quickly citizens cease to care for big cities.

Take away regard for the seventh commandment, and behold the current celebration of sex, the secular religion with its own liturgy of lust and supporting music. Its theology focuses on "self." Its hereafter is "now." Its chief ritual is "sensation"—though, ironically, it finally desensitizes its obsessed adherents, who become "past feeling" (Ephesians 4:19; Moroni 9:20).

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Thus, in all its various expressions, selfishness is really self-destruction in slow motion!

Each spasm of selfishness narrows the universe that much more by shutting down our awareness of others and by making us more and more alone. Sensations are then desperately sought precisely in order to verify that one really exists. A variation occurs when one is full of self-pity over affectional deprivation. He ends up in transgression.

Surging selfishness presents us with a sobering scene as the natural man acts out his wants. Many assert their needs—but where have we lodged the corresponding obligations? So many have become demanders, but where are all the providers? There are many more people with things to say than there are listeners. There are more neglected and aging parents than there are attentive sons and daughters—though, numerically, clearly it should not be so!

Come off Conqueror

Just as Jesus warned that some evil spirits would come out only with “prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21), the “natural man” does not come off without difficulty either.

Of this personal battle, the Lord has urged us to so live that we would “come off conqueror” (D&C 10:5). But we cannot “come off conqueror,” except we first “put off” the selfish, natural man!

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The natural man is truly God's enemy, because the natural man will keep God's precious children from true and everlasting happiness. Our full happiness requires our becoming the men and women of Christ.

## Men and Women of Christ

The meek men and women of Christ are quick to praise, but are also able to restrain themselves. They understand that on occasion the biting of the tongue can be as important as the gift of tongues.

The man and woman of Christ are easily entreated, but the selfish person is not. Christ never brushed aside those in need because He had bigger things to do! Furthermore, the men and women of Christ are constant, being the same in private as in public. We cannot keep two sets of books while heaven has but one.

The men and women of Christ magnify their callings without magnifying themselves. Whereas the natural man says "Worship me" and "Give me thine power," the men and women of Christ seek to exercise power by long-suffering and unfeigned love (see Moses 1:12; 4:3; D&C 121:41).

Whereas the natural man vents his anger, the men and women of Christ are "not easily provoked" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Whereas the natural man is filled with greed, the men and women of Christ "seeketh not [their] own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Whereas the natural man seldom denies himself worldly pleasures, the men and women of Christ seek to bridle all their passions (see Alma 38:12).



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Whereas the natural man covets praise and riches, the men and women of Christ know such things are but the “drop” (D&C 117:8). Human history’s happiest irony will be that the covenant-keeping, unselfish individuals will finally receive “all that [the] Father hath”! (D&C 84:38).

## **We Do Not Own Ourselves**

One of the last, subtle strongholds of selfishness is the natural feeling that we “own” ourselves. Of course we are free to choose and are personally accountable. Yes, we have individuality. But those who have chosen to “come unto Christ” soon realize that they do not “own” themselves. Instead, they belong to Him. We are to become consecrated along with our gifts, our appointed days, and our very selves. Hence, there is a stark difference between stubbornly “owning” oneself and submissively belonging to God. Clinging to the old self is not a mark of independence, but of indulgence!

## **Blessings of Shedding Selfishness**

The Prophet Joseph promised that when selfishness is annihilated, we “may comprehend all things, present, past, and future” (The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, comp. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], p. 485). Even now, however, in gospel glimpses we can see “things as they really are” (Jacob 4:13).

Indeed, the gospel brings glorious illumination as to our possibilities. Scales fall from our eyes with the shedding of selfishness. Then

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we see our luminous and true identity:

On a clear day, rise and look around you,  
And you'll see who you are.

On a clear day, how it will astound you—  
That the glow of your being outshines every star ...  
And on a clear day ...

You can see forever and ever more.

[Alan Jay Lerner, “On a Clear Day” (Chappell and Co., 1965)]

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Further reading on the “natural man”:

Genesis 39:7–12

1 Corinthians 2:14; 10:13

Ephesians 3:16

1 Thessalonians 5:22

James 1:13–15; 4:4

Mosiah 3:19

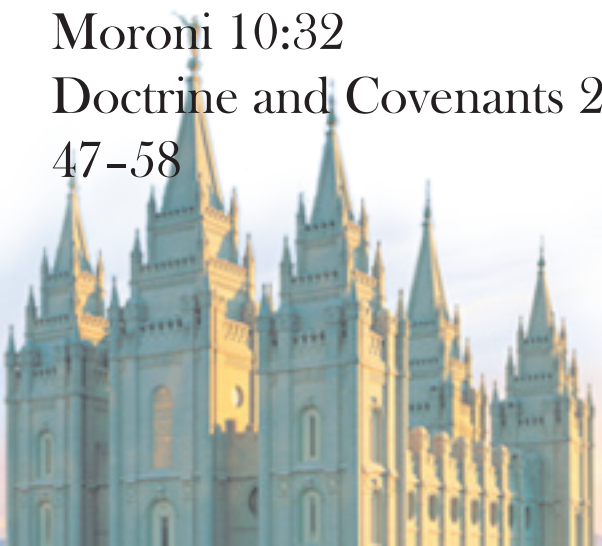
Alma 13:11–12; 26:21

Helaman 12

Ether 3:2

Moroni 10:32

Doctrine and Covenants 29:43; 45:32; 50:41; 62:1; 67:12; 84:33,  
47–58



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## **Beware of Pride**

President Ezra Taft Benson President of the Church

In Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3-7; or Ensign, May 1989, 4-7

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice to be with you in another glorious general conference of the Church. How grateful I am for the love, prayers, and service of the devoted members of the Church throughout the world.

May I commend you faithful Saints who are striving to flood the earth and your lives with the Book of Mormon. Not only must we move forward in a monumental manner more copies of the Book of Mormon, but we must move boldly forward into our own lives and throughout the earth more of its marvelous messages.

This sacred volume was written for us—for our day. Its scriptures are to be likened unto ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

### **The Sin of Pride**

The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the Book of Mormon is the “record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9). Why did they fall? This is one of the major messages of the Book of Mormon. Mormon gives the answer in the closing chapters of the book in these words: “Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction” (Moroni 8:27). And then, lest we miss that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord warns us in the Doctrine and Covenants, “Beware

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of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39).

I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers as I strive to bring forth light on this Book of Mormon message—the sin of pride. This message has been weighing heavily on my soul for some time. I know the Lord wants this message delivered now.

## “Beware of Pride”

In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer, “a son of the morning” (2 Nephi 24:12–15; see also D&C 76:25–27; Moses 4:3). At the end of this world, when God cleanses the earth by fire, the proud will be burned as stubble and the meek shall inherit the earth (see 3 Nephi 12:5, 25:1; D&C 29:9; Joseph Smith—History 1:37; Malachi 4:1).

Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord uses the phrase “beware of pride,” including a warning to the second elder of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, and to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet (D&C 23:1; see also D&C 25:14; 38:39).

## God’s Definition of Pride

Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18). In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby (see 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma



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5:61).

Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means “hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.” It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

## Enmity toward God

Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of “my will and not thine be done.” As Paul said, they “seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's” (Philippians 2:21).

Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30).

The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with

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them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

## Enmity toward Fellowmen

Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is enmity toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them (see Helaman 6:17; D&C 58:41).

The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. ... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone" (Mere Christianity [New York: Macmillan, 1952], pp. 109-10).

In the pre-earthly council, Lucifer placed his proposal in competition with the Father's plan as advocated by Jesus Christ (see Moses 4:1-3). He wished to be honored above all others (see 2 Nephi 24:13). In short, his prideful desire was to dethrone God (see D&C 29:36; 76:28).

## Consequences of Pride

The scriptures abound with evidences of the severe consequences of the sin of pride to individuals, groups, cities, and nations. "Pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). It destroyed the Nephite

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nation and the city of Sodom (see Moroni 8:27; Ezekiel 16:49–50).

It was through pride that Christ was crucified. The Pharisees were wroth because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which was a threat to their position, and so they plotted His death (see John 11:53).

Saul became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of Israelite women were singing that “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands” (1 Samuel 18:7; see also 18:6, 8).

The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment (see D&C 3:6–7; 30:1–2; 60:2). “What will men think of me?” weighs heavier than “What will God think of me?”

King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames (see Mosiah 17:11–12). Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to “them which sat with him at meat” caused him to kill John (Matthew 14:9; see also Mark 6:26).

Fear of men’s judgment manifests itself in competition for men’s approval. The proud love “the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:42–43). Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did “always those things” that pleased God (John 8:29). Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above

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our brother and outdo another?

Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride.

When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men's judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod (see 1 Nephi 8:19–28; 11:25; 15:23–24).

## Manifestations of Pride

Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us (see 2 Nephi 9:42). There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

Disobedience is essentially a prideful power struggle against someone in authority over us. It can be a parent, a priesthood leader, a teacher, or ultimately God. A proud person hates the fact that some-



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one is above him. He thinks this lowers his position.

Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. “How everything affects me” is the center of all that matters—self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking.

Pride results in secret combinations which are built up to get power, gain, and glory of the world (see Helaman 7:5; Ether 8:9, 16, 22–23; Moses 5:31). This fruit of the sin of pride, namely secret combinations, brought down both the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations and has been and will yet be the cause of the fall of many nations (see Ether 8:18–25).

Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.

Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from a hostile spoken word to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that “only by pride cometh contention” (Proverbs 13:10; see also Proverbs 28:25).

The scriptures testify that the proud are easily offended and hold grudges (see 1 Nephi 16:1–3). They withhold forgiveness to keep another in their debt and to justify their injured feelings.

The proud do not receive counsel or correction easily (see Proverbs 15:10; Amos 5:10). Defensiveness is used by them to justify and ra-

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tionalize their frailties and failures (see Matthew 3:9; John 6:30–59). The proud depend upon the world to tell them whether they have value or not. Their self-esteem is determined by where they are judged to be on the ladders of worldly success. They feel worthwhile as individuals if the numbers beneath them in achievement, talent, beauty, or intellect are large enough. Pride is ugly. It says, “If you succeed, I am a failure.”

If we love God, do His will, and fear His judgment more than men’s, we will have self-esteem.

## “A Damning Sin”

Pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression (see Alma 12:10–11). The proud are not easily taught (see 1 Nephi 15:3, 7–11). They won’t change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong.

Pride adversely affects all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, teacher and student, and all mankind. Our degree of pride determines how we treat our God and our brothers and sisters. Christ wants to lift us to where He is. Do we desire to do the same for others?

Pride fades our feelings of sonship to God and brotherhood to man. It separates and divides us by “ranks,” according to our “riches” and our “chances for learning” (3 Nephi 6:12). Unity is impossible for a proud people, and unless we are one we are not the Lord’s (see Mo-

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siah 18:21; D&C 38:27; 105:2-4; Moses 7:18).

## The Cost of Pride

Think of what pride has cost us in the past and what it is now costing us in our own lives, our families, and the Church.

Think of the repentance that could take place with lives changed, marriages preserved, and homes strengthened, if pride did not keep us from confessing our sins and forsaking them (see D&C 58:43).

Think of the many who are less-active members of the Church because they were offended and their pride will not allow them to forgive or fully sup at the Lord's table.

Think of the tens of thousands of additional young men and couples who could be on missions except for the pride that keeps them from yielding their hearts unto God (see Alma 10:6; Helaman 3:34-35).

Think how temple work would increase if the time spent in this godly service were more important than the many prideful pursuits that compete for our time.

## The Universal Sin

Pride affects all of us at various times and in various degrees. Now you can see why the building in Lehi's dream that represents the pride of the world was large and spacious and great was the multitude that did enter into it (see 1 Nephi 8:26, 33; 11:35-36).

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Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride is the universal sin, the great vice.

## Humility: The Antidote for Pride

The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 7:23). It is the broken heart and contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 12:19; D&C 20:37; 59:8; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). As Rudyard Kipling put it so well:

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart.  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget, lest we forget.  
("God of Our Fathers, Known of Old," Hymns, no. 80.)

## Choose to Be Humble

God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:16).

Let us choose to be humble.

We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward



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our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are (see D&C 38:24; 81:5; 84:106).

We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement (see Jacob 4:10; Helaman 15:3; D&C 63:55; 101:4–5; 108:1; 124:61, 84; 136:31; Proverbs 9:8).

We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us (see 3 Nephi 13:11, 14; D&C 64:10).

We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service (see Mosiah 2:16–17).

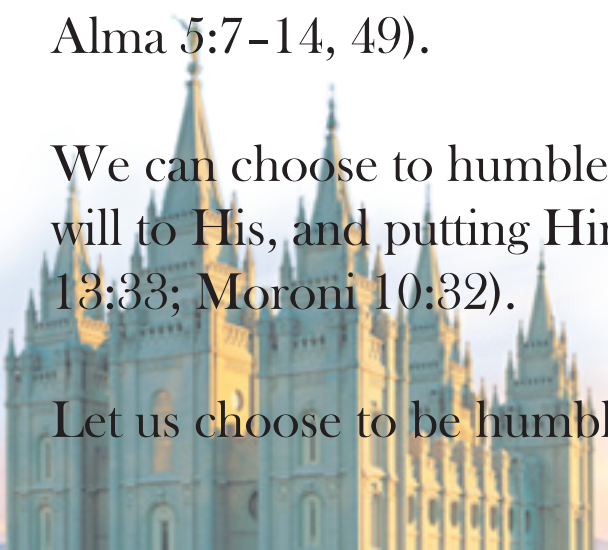
We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others (see Alma 4:19; 31:5; 48:20).

We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently.

We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God (see D&C 58:43; Mosiah 27:25–26; Alma 5:7–14, 49).

We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives (see 3 Nephi 11:11; 13:33; Moroni 10:32).

Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can.



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## The Great Stumbling Block to Zion

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites (see 4 Nephi 1:24–25).

Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion.

We must cleanse the inner vessel by conquering pride (see Alma 6:2–4; Matthew 23:25–26).

We must yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” put off the prideful “natural man,” become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,” and become “as a child, submissive, meek, humble” (Mosiah 3:19; see also Alma 13:28).

That we may do so and go on to fulfill our divine destiny is my fervent prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Discipline a Violent Temper**

President Gordon B. Hinckley First Counselor in the First Presidency

In Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 70-71, 73; or Ensign, Nov. 1991, 50-52

Permit me to read from another letter. Said the writer: “My husband is a good man with many outstanding qualities and character traits, but underneath it all there is a strong streak of authoritarianism. ... His volatile temper flares up often enough to remind me of all the potential ugliness of which he is capable.

“President Hinckley, ... please remind the brethren that the physical and verbal abuse of women is inexcusable, never acceptable, and a cowardly way of dealing with differences, especially and particularly despicable if the abuser is a priesthood holder.”

Now, I believe that most marriages in the Church are happy, that both husbands and wives in those marriages experience a sense of security and love, of mutual dependence, and an equal sharing of burdens. I am confident that the children in those homes, at least in the vast majority of them, are growing up with a sense of peace and security, knowing that they are appreciated and loved by both of their parents, who, they feel, love one another. But I am confident, my brethren, that there is enough of the opposite to justify what I am saying.

Who can calculate the wounds inflicted, their depth and pain, by

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harsh and mean words spoken in anger? How pitiful a sight is a man who is strong in many ways but who loses all control of himself when some little thing, usually of no significant consequence, disturbs his equanimity. In every marriage there are, of course, occasional differences. But I find no justification for tempers that explode on the slightest provocation.

Said the writer of Proverbs, “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous” (Proverbs 27:4).

A violent temper is such a terrible, corrosive thing. And the tragedy is that it accomplishes no good; it only feeds evil with resentment and rebellion and pain. To any man or boy within the sound of my voice who has trouble controlling his tongue, may I suggest that you plead with the Lord for the strength to overcome your weakness, that you apologize to those you have offended, and that you marshal within yourselves the power to discipline your tongue.

To the boys who are here, may I suggest that you watch your temper now, in these formative years of your life. As Brother [David B.] Haight has reminded you, this is the season to develop the power and capacity to discipline yourselves. You may think it is the macho thing to flare up in anger and swear and profane the name of the Lord. It is not the macho thing. It is an indication of weakness. Anger is not an expression of strength. It is an indication of one's inability to control his thoughts, words, his emotions. Of course it is easy to get angry. When the weakness of anger takes over, the strength of reason leaves. Cultivate within yourselves the mighty power of self-discipline. ...



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Who can calculate the wounds inflicted, their depth and pain, by harsh and mean words spoken in anger?

## Beauty of Happy Marriage

How beautiful is the marriage of a young man and a young woman who begin their lives together kneeling at the altar in the house of the Lord, pledging their love and loyalty one to another for time and all eternity. When children come into that home, they are nurtured and cared for, loved and blessed with the feeling that their father loves their mother. In that environment they find peace and strength and security. Watching their father, they develop respect for women. They are taught self-control and self-discipline, which bring the strength to avoid later tragedy.

The years pass. The children eventually leave the home, one by one. And the father and the mother are again alone. But they have each other to talk with, to depend on, to nurture, to encourage, and to bless. There comes the autumn of life and a looking back with satisfaction and gladness. Through all of the years there has been loyalty, one to the other. There has been deference and courtesy. Now there is a certain mellowness, a softening, an effect that partakes of a hallowed relationship. They realize that death may come anytime, usually to one first with a separation of a season brief or lengthy. But they know also that because their companionship was sealed under the authority of the eternal priesthood and they have lived worthy of the blessings, there will be a reunion sweet and certain.

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Brethren, this is the way our Father in Heaven would have it. This is the Lord's way. He has so indicated. His prophets have spoken of it.

It takes effort. It takes self-control. It takes unselfishness. It requires the true essence of love, which is an anxious concern for the well-being and happiness of one's companion. I could wish nothing better for all of you than this, and I pray that this may be your individual blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Our Fading Civility**

President Gordon B. Hinckley President of the Church  
Brigham Young University commencement and inauguration ceremony, 25 Apr. 1996

Your secular education is designed to give you an improved opportunity in the great marketplace of the world. You, in most cases, will be compensated according to the value society places upon your skills.

But, as you have been told before, there should be, there must be, another side to the coin you carry with you from BYU. President David O. McKay, who for many years served as chairman of the Board of Trustees, once said:

“True education does not consist merely in the acquiring of a few facts of science, history, literature or art, but in the development of character. True education awakens a desire to conserve health by keeping the body clean and undefiled. True education trains in self denial and self mastery. True education regulates the temper, subdues passion and makes obedience to social laws and moral order a guiding principle of life. It develops reason and inculcates faith in the living God as the Eternal Father of all” (Conference Report, April 1928, 102). ...

In your studies many of you have chronicled the march of civilization. It has been a truly remarkable odyssey as through the centuries society has made progress as people have lived together in commu-

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nities with respect and concern one for another. This is the hallmark of civilization. And yet at times we wonder how much progress we have really made. This century which now draws to a close has witnessed more wars and more death and suffering than any other century in human history. ... Civility and mutual respect seem to have disappeared as people kill one another over ethnic differences.

But civility also appears to be fading much closer to home. Civility covers a host of matters in the relationships among human beings. Its presence is described in such terms as “good manners” and “good breeding.” But everywhere about us we see the opposite. ...

It is appalling. It is alarming. And when all is said and done the cost can be attributed almost entirely to human greed, to uncontrolled passion, to a total disregard for the rights of others. In other words to a lack of civility. As one writer has said, “People might think of a civilized community as one in which there is a refined culture. Not necessarily; first and foremost it is one in which the mass of people subdue their selfish instincts in favor of the common well being” (Royal Bank Letter, May-June 1995). He continues: “In recent years the media have raised boorishness to an art form. The hip heroes of movies today deliver gratuitous put downs to ridicule and belittle anyone who gets in their way. Bad manners, apparently, make a saleable commodity. Television situation comedies wallow in vulgarity, stand up comedians base their acts on insults to their audiences, and talk show hosts become rich and famous by snarling at callers and heckling guests” (Ibid).

All of this speaks of anything but refinement. It speaks of anything



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but courtesy. It speaks of anything but civility. Rather, it speaks of crudeness and rudeness, and an utter insensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

It is so with much of the language of the day. In schools and in the workplace there is so much of sleazy, evil, filthy language. I hope that every one of you will rise above it. You are now graduates of this great institution. You cannot afford the image of those whose vocabularies are so impoverished that they must reach into the gutter for words with which to express themselves. Along with such uncouth talk is so much of profanity. It too marks a lack of civility. The finger of the Lord wrote on the tablets of stone, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Ex. 20:7).

Sloppy language and sloppy ways go together. I hope that you have learned more than the sciences, the humanities, law, engineering and the arts, while you have been here. I hope that you will carry with you from this hallowed place a certain polish that will mark you as one in love with the better qualities of life, the culture which adds luster to the mundane world of which we are a part, a patina which puts a quiet glow on what otherwise might be base metal.

Said the Savior to the multitude: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matt. 5:13).

Civility is what gives savor to our lives. It is the salt that speaks of

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good taste, good manners, good breeding.

It becomes an expression of the Golden Rule: “Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12).

Civility is what gives savor to our lives. It is the salt that speaks of good taste, good manners, good breeding.



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## **Maturity Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Two years make a tremendous difference in the life of a young man. He goes out a boy and comes back a man. He goes out immature, he comes back mature and strong, gracious, and a worker and willing to serve. He goes back to college in most cases and there he will make higher grades than he ever made before, because he has purpose in his life. He is already enjoying purpose, and now he has a new purpose” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 590–91).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Each of us, with discipline and effort, has the capacity to control his thoughts and his actions. This is part of the process of developing spiritual, physical, and emotional maturity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 57; or Ensign, May 1987, 47).

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

“Some weeks ago a man holding a high office in the Church asked a special favor of me. ‘Would you be good enough to take the time to listen while a mother, father, and their teenage daughter, special friends of mine, try to talk to each other?’

“As the four of us sat together, it immediately became obvious that all channels of communication were jammed with prejudice, threats, accusations, and resentment. As the verbal storms developed with

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bitter intensity, I found myself the only listener. Even though they had individually and collectively agreed I would be the counselor, judge, arbiter, or referee, if you please, I found myself waiting patiently for an opportunity to be heard. During the heated and emotional confrontation, the teenager repeatedly expressed her resentment with: ‘You can’t talk to me like that. I am an adult now. You can’t treat me like that. I am an adult now. You can’t dominate my life anymore. I am an adult now.’

“Each time she said ‘I am an adult now,’ I cringed. By definition, an adult is a person who has attained the age of maturity—full grown. While it is true a person may be legally classified as an adult when he or she reaches a certain age, for our purposes today the kind of adult status we are talking about must be earned by actions and attitude.

“I am not quite sure who has the right or responsibility to declare someone an adult, but I am quite certain that often the least qualified to make the declaration would be the individual himself. If a person is mature, he or she will not need to announce it. Personal conduct is the only true measurement of maturity. Adult classification, when it pertains to behavior, does not come with age, wrinkles, or gray hair. Perhaps it is not too far off the mark to say adult conduct is a process. Mature conduct is generally developed through self-discipline, resilience, and continuing effort.

“In fairness to the teenager, even though her declaration of ‘I am an adult now’ didn’t impress me favorably, there were times during the visit when I thought she showed more maturity than others in the



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room. When we who are more senior use an expression like ‘I am older than you’ to clinch a point, I am not too sure it is very effective. How much better it is to gain respect and love through worthy parental conduct than to seek it through the means of the age differential.

“Young men and young women worldwide, you, as well as your parents, need not announce or proclaim your maturity. By your faith and works you will be known for what you are. By your fruits you will be known and classified. Those among us who use abusive arguments, temper tantrums, demeaning and painful criticism, fruitless counter-complaints, and disrespect will benefit no one. Let us put away petty malice, resentment, and retaliatory practices that are self-destructive and return to a path of safety well marked by the Good Shepherd.

“It takes courage to flee from verbal contention. When maturity begins to set in, adult lives set in. ‘Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you’ (Ephesians 4:31–32). It is alarming how many older people go through life without ever becoming real adults.

“For many years I have had a very vivid picture in my mind of Jesus Christ standing before Pilate. While Jesus stood in front of an angry mob, who sneered and condemned, Pilate tried to get Him to re-

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spond and retaliate. He tried to get Him to declare himself a king. Jesus was silent. His life was his sermon. He was perfect in character, a worthy son, the Only Begotten of the Father. His maturity, if you please, would speak for itself” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 78–79; or Ensign, May 1987, 65).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“Just as the capacity to defer gratification is a sign of real maturity, likewise the willingness to wait for deferred explanation is a sign of real faith and of trust spread over time” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 91; or Ensign, May 1985, 71).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 38; or Ensign, Nov. 1989, 30).

Elder Marion D. Hanks

“We live in a universe of moral law. We can choose evil and get what we want right now and then pay for it afterward. Or we can choose good and pay for it first, before we get it.’ (Fosdick.) So it is with a life of honesty and responsibility, of sexual purity, of integrity, of selfless service. ...

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“When Paul spoke of charity out of the ‘pure heart,’ I believe he was talking about the sense of honest, unselfish concern for others that is the mark of moral and spiritual maturity. ... To truly care about others, to be considerate and kind and responsible reflects true maturity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 59–60).



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## **Prepare for the Future**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

To the priesthood. “Be smart about training your minds and hands for the future. ... You have an obligation to make the most of your life. Plan now for all the education you can get, and then work to bring to pass a fulfillment of that plan.

“You live in a complex age. The world needs men and women of ability and training. Do not short-circuit your education.

“I am not suggesting that all of you should become professional men. What I am suggesting is this: whatever you choose to do, train for it. Qualify yourselves. ... Regardless of the vocation you choose, you can speed your journey in getting there through education. ...

“Be smart. Do not forfeit the schooling that will enhance your future in order to satisfy your desire for immediate, fleeting pleasure. Cultivate the long view of your life. Most of you are going to be around for a good while” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 57; or Ensign, Nov. 1981, 40).

“We believe in the training of our youth, girls as well as boys. ...

“You have available to you tremendous opportunities for training your minds and your hands. You will wish for marriage and the companionship of a good husband. But none of us can foretell the future. Prepare yourselves for any eventuality. ...



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“Hopefully, most of you will marry. But the training you have received will not have been in vain. It will be a blessing whether you be single or married” (“Live up to Your Inheritance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 82).

“The world into which you will move will be terribly competitive. You need to increase your education, to refine your skills, to hone your abilities so that you may fill responsibilities of consequence in the society of which you will become a part” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1992, 100; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 71).

To the priesthood. “Work for an education. Get all the training that you can. The world will largely pay you what it thinks you are worth. Paul did not mince words when he wrote to Timothy, ‘But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel’ (1 Timothy 5:8).

“It is your primary obligation to provide for your family.

“Your wife will be fortunate indeed if she does not have to go out and compete in the marketplace. She will be twice blessed if she is able to remain at home while you become the breadwinner of the family.

“Education is the key to economic opportunity. The Lord has laid a mandate upon us as a people to acquire learning ‘by study, and also by faith’ (D&C 109:14). It is likely that you will be a better provider if your mind and hands are trained to do something worthwhile in

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the society of which you will become a part” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 68; or Ensign, May 1998, 50).



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## **Importance of Education for Women**

Elder Howard W. Hunter

“There are impelling reasons for our sisters to plan toward employment also. We want them to obtain all the education and vocational training possible before marriage. If they become widowed or divorced and need to work, we want them to have dignified and rewarding employment. If a sister does not marry, she has every right to engage in a profession that allows her to magnify her talents and gifts” (“Prepare for Honorable Employment, *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 124).



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## **Importance of Education for Women**

Elder Russell M. Nelson

“A wise woman renews herself. In proper season, she develops her talents and continues her education. She musters the discipline to reach her goals. She dispels darkness and opens windows of truth to light her way.

“A woman teaches priorities by precept and example. Recently I watched a television program in which a female lawyer was being interviewed. She was at home with her child on a full-time basis. When asked of her decision, she replied, ‘Oh, I may go back to the law sometime, but not now. For me, the issue is simple. Any lawyer could take care of my clients, but only I should be the mother of this child.’

“Such a decision is made not in terms of rights but in terms of obligations and responsibilities. She knows that as she rises to meet responsibilities, rights will take care of themselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 26–27; or Ensign, Nov. 1989, 21).





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## **Temporal Preparedness Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“I like the way the Relief Society teaches personal and family preparedness as ‘provident living.’ This implies the husbanding of our resources, the wise planning of financial matters, full provision for personal health, and adequate preparation for education and career development, giving appropriate attention to home production and storage as well as the development of emotional resiliency” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 125; or Ensign, Nov. 1977, 78).

Elder L. Tom Perry

“On a daily basis we witness widely fluctuating inflation; wars; interpersonal conflicts; national disasters; variances in weather conditions; innumerable forces of immorality, crime, and violence; attacks and pressures on the family and individuals; technological advances that make occupations obsolete; and so on. The need for preparation is abundantly clear. The great blessing of being prepared gives us freedom from fear, as guaranteed to us by the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants: ‘If ye are prepared ye shall not fear’ (D&C 38:30).”

“Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs. Each of us needs to take the time to ask ourselves, What preparation should I make to care for my needs and the needs of my family?”

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“We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come.

“First, gain an adequate education. ...

“Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day. ...

“Third, avoid excessive debt. ...

“Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 46–47; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 35–36).

## Health

President Spencer W. Kimball

“We teach our people to live the laws of health. It is paying important dividends in longer and more healthy lives” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 6; or Ensign, May 1975, 6).

“The principle of self-reliance stands behind the Church’s emphasis on personal and family preparedness. ... We hope that you are conscious of proper diet and health habits, that you may be fit physically and able to respond to the many challenges of life” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 120–21; or Ensign, May 1978, 79–80).

“We refrain from taking harmful substances into our body. Through

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wisdom and moderation in all things, we seek good health and a sense of physical well-being” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 7; or Ensign, Nov. 1978, 6).

## Employment and Finances

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I urge you, brethren, to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

“This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe. May the Lord bless you, my beloved brethren, to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 69–72; or Ensign, Nov. 1998, 52–54).

Elder Howard W. Hunter

“May we refer specifically to vocational work or employment. The employment we choose should be honorable and challenging. Ideally, we need to seek that work to which we are suited by interest, by aptitude, and by training. A man’s work should do more than provide adequate income; it should provide him with a sense of self-worth and be a pleasure—something he looks forward to each day. ...

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“There are impelling reasons for our sisters to plan toward employment also. We want them to obtain all the education and vocational training possible before marriage. If they become widowed or divorced and need to work, we want them to have dignified and rewarding employment. If a sister does not marry, she has every right to engage in a profession that allows her to magnify her talents and gifts” (“Prepare for Honorable Employment,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 122, 124).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“Do not ever belittle anyone, including yourself, nor count them, or you, a failure, if your livelihood has been modest. Do not ever look down on those who labor in occupations of lower income. There is great dignity and worth in any honest occupation. Do not use the word menial for any labor that improves the world or the people who live in it” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1982, 121; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 84).

Elder M. Russell Ballard

“Brothers and sisters, what can we do to improve our family finances? May I suggest three important keys that will help us. They are attitude, planning, and self-discipline.

“The first key is to have a positive attitude toward ourselves.

“Attitude is an important part of the foundation upon which we build a productive life. In appraising our present attitude, we might



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ask: ‘Am I working to become my best self? Do I set worthy and attainable goals? Do I look toward the positive in life? Am I alert to ways that I can render more and better service? Am I doing more than is required of me?’ ...

“Some people who lived through the Great Depression and the period following, when the government bestowed gratuities upon the people, developed a feeling that the world owed them a living. In that climate, the First Presidency said in 1936: ‘The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership.’ (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3.) ...

“The love for work needs to be reenthroned in our lives. Every family should have a plan for work that touches the lives of each family member so that this eternal principle will be ingrained in their lives. ...

“Brothers and sisters, let us discuss the second key, planning, which means to think out beforehand how we intend to reach our goals in life. Do we all have a plan to increase our value where we are employed? Have we taken the time to write down specific goals, and have we designed a plan of action to become more effective and productive? ...

“The third key is to practice self-discipline both at our work and as we attempt to reduce our expenses in our homes. Regarding the latter, Church leaders should set the example by seeing that stake and ward financial requests are kept to a minimum. Members should—

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“1. Avoid debt-pooling where exorbitant fees are charged. We may want to consolidate debts using a bank or credit union loan that can be repaid at a sensible interest rate over a reasonable length of time. We may need to stop using our credit cards.

“2. Exercise self-discipline by telling ourselves ‘We can’t afford it’ and refusing to take on further credit obligations.

“An argument was overheard one day. One spouse said, while scolding the other for extravagant spending, ‘How many times do I have to tell you that spending money before you get it is economically unsound?’

“‘Oh,’ said the other spouse, ‘I don’t know about that. This way, if you don’t get the money, at least you have something to show for it.’

“Please be patient and carefully control your purchases so that you will not become enslaved to your creditors.

“3. Make a budget and stick to it.

“4. Cut expenses by distinguishing between wants and needs. Economize by controlling the use of goods, services, and energy.

“5. Increase homemaking skills and have family members complete home and car repairs, when feasible.

“6. Invest wisely. Avoid speculations and get-rich-quick schemes.

“Brothers and sisters, every one of us has the potential to improve and increase his earning capacity. We are far better off if we can improve and become more valuable on our full-time jobs than if we attempt to hold two jobs or to have mothers leave home to join the work force.

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“When we learn to expect more success than failure in life, we soon will develop an attitude of success.

“‘Nothing succeeds like success.’

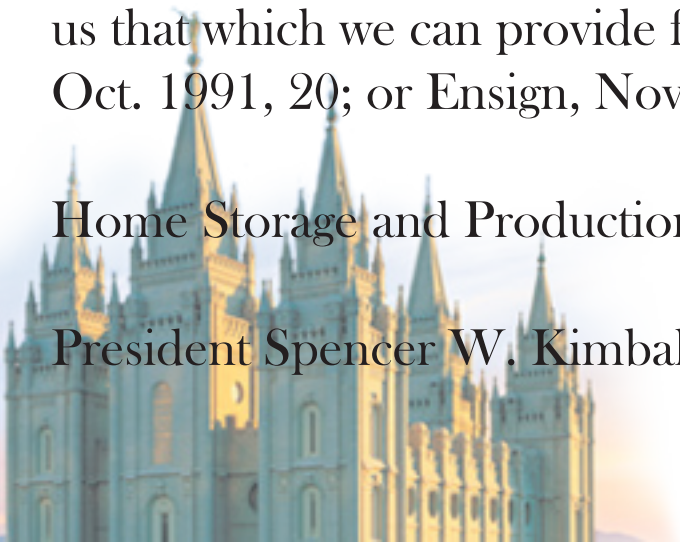
“Remember—a positive attitude, a well-thought-out plan, and consistent self-discipline can help us improve our circumstances. Applying these keys in our daily work will help produce more income, and practicing them in our homes will help reduce expenses. When we combine these principles with keeping the commandments of God, we can learn to become better managers of our time and resources and become financially secure” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 115–18; or Ensign, May 1981, 85–87).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

“The foundation of self-reliance is hard work. Parents should teach their children that work is the prerequisite to achievement and success in every worthwhile endeavor. Children of legal age should secure productive employment and begin to move away from dependence on parents. None of us should expect others to provide for us that which we can provide for ourselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 20; or Ensign, Nov. 1991, 16).

Home Storage and Production

President Spencer W. Kimball



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“Recognizing that the family is the basic unit of both the Church and society generally, we call upon Latter-day Saints everywhere to strengthen and beautify the home with renewed effort in these specific areas: food production, preservation, storage; the production and storage of nonfood items” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 170; or Ensign, May 1976, 124).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“I ask you earnestly, have you provided for your family a year’s supply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel? The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 61; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, 49; To the Fathers in Israel, 4).





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## **Independence Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Couples do well to immediately find their own home, separate and apart from that of the in-laws on either side. The home may be very modest and unpretentious, but still it is an independent domicile. Your married life should become independent of her folks and his folks. You love them more than ever; you cherish their counsel; you appreciate their association; but you live your own lives, being governed by your decisions, by your own prayerful considerations after you have received the counsel from those who should give it” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 5).

President Marion G. Romney

“This scripture [D&C 29:34–35] tells us there is no such thing as a temporal commandment. It also tells us that man is to be ‘an agent unto himself.’ Man cannot be an agent unto himself if he is not self-reliant. Herein we see that independence and self-reliance are critical keys to our spiritual growth. Whenever we get into a situation which threatens our self-reliance, we will find our freedom threatened as well. If we increase our dependence, we will find an immediate decrease in our freedom to act” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 134; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).

Elder Ezra Taft Benson

“Another sterling virtue which builds manliness and independence

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is frugality or thrift. ‘Waste not, want not’ has long been the clarion call. In more recent years, however, this maxim has given way to so-called ‘deficit spending.’ Many have been teaching that we must spend our way into prosperity. How do you regard this philosophy? Have you stopped to analyze its effect upon the independence, self-reliance, and character of the individual? And what of its possible effect upon the very existence of this nation as a haven for freedom-loving men and women?” (... So Shall Ye Reap, 165).

Elder Marion G. Romney

“First, every individual should value his or her independence and labor with all his might to maintain it by being self-sustaining. This the Lord enjoined upon us when from the Garden of Eden He sent forth our first parents under the stern command, ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground’ (Gen. 3:19)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1943, 27).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The principle of self-reliance or personal independence is fundamental to the happy life. In too many places, in too many ways, we are getting away from it.

“The substance of what I want to say is this: The same principle—self-reliance—has application to the spiritual and to the emotional. ...

“We must not set up a network of counseling services without at the same time emphasizing the principle of emotional self-reliance and

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individual independence.

“If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially.

“If we are not careful, we can lose the power of individual revelation. ...

“Spiritual independence and self-reliance is a sustaining power in the Church. If we rob the members of that, how can they get revelation for themselves? How will they know there is a prophet of God? How can they get answers to prayers? How can they know for sure for themselves?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 136–37; or Ensign, May 1978, 91–92).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

“Temporal and economic independence is essential if there is to be absolute freedom of worship. ... Anyone whose support comes from another person or agency is to a greater or lesser degree subject to the will and control of the supporting power” (Mormon Doctrine, 378).

Elder James E. Faust

“The Lord said that it is important for the Church to ‘stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world’ (D&C 78:14). Members of the Church are also counseled to be indepen-

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dent. Independence means many things. It means being free of drugs that addict, habits that bind, and diseases that curse. It also means being free of personal debt and of the interest and carrying charges required by debt the world over” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 24–25; or Ensign, May 1986, 21).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“One of the last, subtle strongholds of selfishness is the natural feeling that we ‘own’ ourselves. Of course we are free to choose and are personally accountable. Yes, we have individuality. But those who have chosen to ‘come unto Christ’ soon realize that they do not ‘own’ themselves. Instead, they belong to Him. We are to become consecrated along with our gifts, our appointed days, and our very selves. Hence, there is a stark difference between stubbornly ‘owning’ oneself and submissively belonging to God. Clinging to the old self is not a mark of independence, but of indulgence!” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 18; or Ensign, Nov. 1990, 16).





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## **Becoming Self-Reliant**

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 87-90; or Ensign, Nov. 1991,  
64-66

### Nephi's Self-Reliance

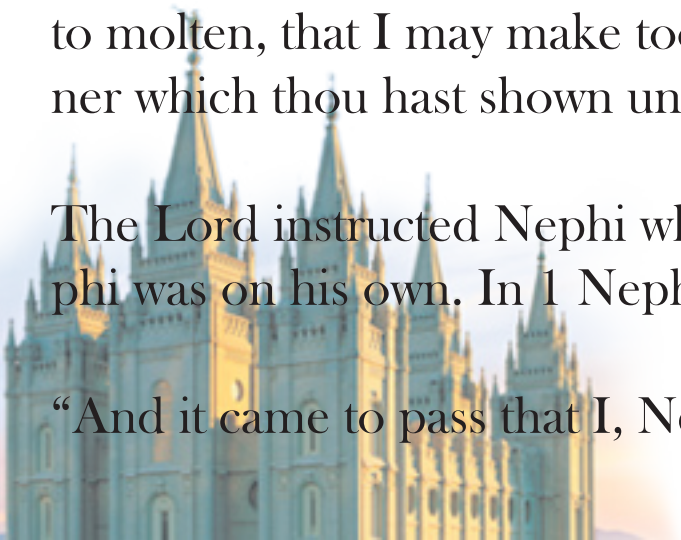
Lehi and his family, after wandering in the wilderness for eight years, came to a land they called Bountiful because it was a place of much fruit and wild honey. They came to a great sea, and they rejoiced unto the Lord because He had preserved them. After they had been in the land Bountiful for a space of many days, the Lord spoke to Nephi and said, "Arise, and get thee into the mountain" (1 Nephi 17:7).

Nephi obeyed the Lord; he went into the mountain and prayed. And the Lord commanded Nephi, "Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters" (1 Nephi 17:8).

Then Nephi asked the Lord, "Whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me?" (1 Nephi 17:9).

The Lord instructed Nephi where he could find ore, but then Nephi was on his own. In 1 Nephi, chapter 17, we read:

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did make a bellows wherewith to



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blow the fire, of the skins of beasts; and after I had made a bellows, that I might have wherewith to blow the fire, I did smite two stones together that I might make fire. ...

“And it came to pass that I did make tools of the ore which I did molten out of the rock” (17:11, 16).

This is one of the more interesting stories we have in the scriptures because it tells of an instance in which the Lord provided help but then stepped aside to allow one of His sons to exercise his own initiative. I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if Nephi had asked the Lord for tools instead of a place to find the ore to make the tools. I doubt the Lord would have honored Nephi’s request. You see, the Lord knew that Nephi could make the tools, and it is seldom the Lord will do something for us that we can do for ourselves.

## **Importance of Self-Reliance**

The Lord does help when we go to Him in times of need, especially when we are committed to His work and respond to His will. But the Lord only helps those who are willing to help themselves. He expects His children to be self-reliant to the degree they can be.

Brigham Young instructed the Saints, “Instead of searching after what the Lord is going to do for us, let us inquire what we can do for ourselves” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 293).

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Independence and self-reliance are critical to our spiritual and temporal growth. Whenever we get into situations which threaten our self-reliance, we will find our freedoms threatened as well. If we increase our dependence on anything or anyone except the Lord, we will find an immediate decrease in our freedom to act. As President Heber J. Grant declared, “Nothing destroys the individuality of a man, a woman, or a child as much as the failure to be self-reliant” (“Address,” Relief Society Magazine, Oct. 1937, p. 627).

Never before in my life has the doctrine of self-reliance been more needed to be preached and encouraged for the benefit of the Saints. We live in a time of rapid change. Governments are rising and falling. Industries are blooming and then all too soon becoming obsolete. New discoveries in science are soon overshadowed by new findings. Unless we are continuously expanding our understanding and vision, we too will become out-of-date. Research tells us that individuals entering the labor market today will be forced to find three to five different career paths during their productive years.

What must we do to become more self-reliant?

Independence and self-reliance are critical to our spiritual and temporal growth.

## **A Family Tradition**

My parents established a family tradition in our home which was fun for me in my early years and has become even more meaningful as I reflect back on it as the years have passed. On the first birthday of

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each child, the family would gather in the living room. In the center of the living room floor, our parents would place articles for the one-year-old child to select. The selection to be made might indicate an interest the child would pursue in life. The articles were the Bible, a child's bottle filled with milk, a toy, and a savings bank filled with coins. The child was placed on one side of the room and the family on the other side. Family members would encourage the child to crawl toward the objects and make a selection. This was all in fun, of course.

I was told that I selected the bank and went into finance as my profession. I watched my brother Ted select the scriptures, and he pursued law as his chosen profession. Over the years he has relied on the scriptures as a basis for his judgments. My youngest brother, Bob, was the well-rounded member of the family. He crawled over, sat down on the Bible, put the bottle of milk in his mouth, and then held the toy in one hand and the bank in the other.

## **Spiritual Nourishment**

Now I propose to you that in this entertaining family activity we can find the most fundamental principles of self-reliance. First, the scriptures represent our need for spiritual nourishment. In the scriptures, the Lord reveals His will to His children. From the very beginning of time, He has instructed His prophets to record His communications with them for the benefit of His children. The holy scriptures declare eternal values; they are the firm foundation on which we can build a successful mortal experience. We become more self-reliant when we study the holy scriptures, which teach the principles that



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provide a divine center to our lives here in mortality.

We should be comforted by the fact that we have the best text which has ever been written or ever will be written as our guide. We can turn to 2 Kings, the fifth chapter, and learn about obedience. We can study the life of Job and learn integrity. King Benjamin's address in Mosiah teaches industry. The life of Joseph, as told in Genesis 39, tells us what we should do when our standard of morality is being tested.

These are just a few examples of the lessons we could learn from the holy scriptures. They are lessons which have stood the test of time. Our challenge is to make them come alive in the hearts and minds of our families as we assume the responsibility to teach them.

## **Temporal Self-Reliance**

Second, the bottle filled with milk symbolizes the physical body's need for nourishment. Our welfare services program has taught us by using the spokes of a wheel to define the essential elements of temporal self-reliance. The elements contained in the wheel are education; physical health; employment; home storage; resource management; and social, emotional, and spiritual strength.

This summer my wife and I had the opportunity to visit an eighty-year-old man who certainly demonstrated each of these elements in his life. He was born in a small Idaho town and worked long hours on the farm to finance his education. He spent his professional life teaching English and Spanish in a small high school. To set aside

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funds for missions and the education of his large family, he grew strawberry and raspberry crops to be picked and sold to the local markets. This labor occupied his summers.

Because these fruits were so labor-intensive, few people had the ambition to grow them. They were much-wanted crops. The demand was always there for as many berries as he could produce. He was never satisfied with the productivity of his crops, so he studied new varieties in an attempt to find the best producers. His backyard was literally an experimental farm for testing the variety of bushes that produced the sweetest and most abundant fruit in his particular climate. His studies yielded increased productivity. The labor kept him in good physical health. The fields of berries furnished automatic employment for his children each summer. The berries delivered to the market could be exchanged not only for cash but also for commodities to be used in their home storage. He managed his resources to build a beautiful home and supply the needs of his family.

This man loved to watch the Lord's system of multiplying and replenishing the earth, which gave him social, emotional, and spiritual strength. Now retired from active teaching, he continues to grow his berries, not for profit but for satisfaction. Six mornings each week during the berry harvest season, you will see him leading a parade of ten to twelve cars out of the city toward his berry patch. Families come to add to their home storage by picking the berries. I asked him the price per case if we supplied our own labor. He answered: "I don't know. My pay is seeing the look on people's faces as they leave the field holding the fruits of their labors in their arms."

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I am convinced there are thousands of ways for families to build self-reliance by working together in productive pursuits. Perhaps a good family home evening discussion could produce some ideas to help make your family unit more temporally self-reliant.

## **Proper Use of Resources**

Third, the toy I mentioned earlier represents the acquisition of things of the world. We are bombarded today with powerful media to acquire now and pay later in what are purported to be painless monthly installments. We live in an impatient world where everyone wants everything now. The acquisition of worldly goods seems to foster an appetite for more rather than any kind of lasting satisfaction.

Using our resources and worldly goods wisely and extending their life will help us become more self-reliant. I watched a young family move this summer, and I was intrigued by the labels on the boxes coming out of the storage room. They read, “Clothing—Girls—2 years old,” “Clothing—Girls—3 years old,” and so on up. Clearly, this family had a well-conceived plan to maximize the usage of purchased items of clothing.

We live in a world blessed with so much abundance. Let us be certain that the resources with which we are blessed are never wasted.

## **Financial Well-Being**



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Finally, the fourth item—the bank. It is a symbol of our financial well-being. I learned a great lesson early in my business career. My boss called me into his office. I could tell he had something on his mind. He said, “Give me a definition of interest.” Of course, I reached back in my training and gave him a definition I had learned from a textbook. He said, “No, no, no, that’s not the one I want. You listen and remember this one: Them that understands it, earns it; and them that don’t, pays it.”

Now it doesn’t take a genius to understand that before you can collect interest, you must first have some savings. Having savings while continuing to increase one’s standard of living requires understanding of one simple practice and then religiously applying it. After paying your tithing of 10 percent to the Lord, you pay yourself a predetermined amount directly into savings. That leaves you a balance of your income to budget for taxes, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, etc. It is amazing to me that so many people work all of their lives for the grocer, the landlord, the power company, the automobile salesman, and the bank and yet think so little of their own efforts that they pay themselves nothing.

Be prudent, wise, and conservative in your investment programs. It is by consistently and regularly adding to your investments that you will build your emergency and retirement savings. This will add to your progress in becoming self-reliant.

The principle of self-reliance is spiritual as well as temporal. It is not a doomsday program; it is something to be practiced each and every day of our lives. May we continue to hold fast to the eternal truths of



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self-reliance is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Family Communications**

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 79-82; or Ensign, May 1976,  
52-54

Some weeks ago a bewildered father asked, “Why is it I seem to be able to communicate with everyone except my own son?”

I responded with, “What do you mean you can’t communicate with your son?”

“It’s just that whenever I try to tell him anything, he tunes me out,” he replied.

### **Family Communication**

During our private discussion which followed, and very often since, I have concluded that perhaps one of the principal reasons we fail to relate appropriately with family members is because we fail to apply some basics of personal communications. In Hebrews 13:16 we read, “But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Communications in the family will often be a sacrifice because we are expected to use our time, our means, our talent, and our patience to impart, share, and understand. Too often we use communication periods as occasions to tell, dictate, plead, or threaten. Nowhere in the broadest sense should communication in the family be used to impose, command, or embarrass.

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To be effective, family communication must be an exchange of feelings and information. Doors of communication will swing open in the home if members will realize time and participation on the part of all are necessary ingredients. In family discussions, differences should not be ignored, but should be weighed and evaluated calmly. One's point or opinion usually is not as important as a healthy, continuing relationship. Courtesy and respect in listening and responding during discussions are basic in proper dialogue. As we learn to participate together in meaningful associations, we are able to convey our thoughts of love, dependence, and interest. When we are inclined to give up in despair in our efforts to communicate because other family members have failed to respond, perhaps we would do well not to give up, but rather to give and take in our conversations. How important it is to know how to disagree with another's point of view without being disagreeable. How important it is to have discussion periods ahead of decisions. Jones Stephens wrote, "I have learned that the head does not hear anything until the heart has listened, and that what the heart knows today the head will understand tomorrow."

Let me share with you seven basic suggestions for more effective family communication.

To be effective, family communication must be an exchange of feelings and information.

Sacrifice



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1. A willingness to sacrifice. Be the kind of a family member who is willing to take time to be available. Develop the ability and self-discipline to think of other family members and their communication needs ahead of your own—a willingness to prepare for the moment—the sharing moment, the teaching moment. Shed the very appearance of preoccupation in self, and learn the skill of penetrating a family member's shield of preoccupation. Sad is the day when a daughter is heard to say, "My mother gives me everything except herself."

Too early and too often we sow the seeds of "Can't you see I'm busy? Don't bother me now." When we convey the attitude of "Go away, don't bother me now," family members are apt to go elsewhere or isolate themselves in silence. All family members on some occasion or other must be taken on their own terms so they will be willing to come, share, and ask.

It takes personal sacrifice to communicate when conditions are right for the other person—during the meal preparation, after a date, a hurt, a victory, a disappointment, or when someone wants to share a confidence. One must be willing to forego personal convenience to invest time in establishing a firm foundation for family communication. When communication in the family seems to be bogging down, each individual should look to himself for the remedy.

If we would know true love and understanding one for another, we must realize that communication is more than a sharing of words. It is the wise sharing of emotions, feelings, and concerns. It is the sharing of oneself totally. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowl-



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edge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” (James 3:13.)

## Setting Stage

2. A willingness to set the stage. The location, setting, or circumstances should be comfortable, private, and conversation-conducive. Effective communications have been shared in a grove of trees, on the mount, by the sea, in family home evening, during a walk, in a car, during a vacation, a hospital visit, on the way to school, during the game. When the stage is set, we must be willing to let the other family member be front and center as we appropriately respond.

Months and years after the score of a baseball game is long forgotten, the memory of having been there all alone with Dad will never dim. I'll not soon forget a ten-year-old girl excitedly telling me she had just ridden in the car with her daddy all the way from Salt Lake to Provo and back. “Was the radio on?” I asked. “Oh, no,” she responded, “all Daddy did was listen and talk to me.” She had her daddy all to herself in a setting she'll not soon forget. Let the stage be set whenever the need is there. Let the stage be set whenever the other person is ready.

## Listening

3. A willingness to listen. Listening is more than being quiet. Listening is much more than silence. Listening requires undivided attention. The time to listen is when someone needs to be heard. The time to deal with a person with a problem is when he has the prob-

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lem. The time to listen is the time when our interest and love are vital to the one who seeks our ear, our heart, our help, and our empathy.

We should all increase our ability to ask comfortable questions, and then listen—intently, naturally. Listening is a tied-in part of loving. How powerful are the words, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”  
(James 1:19–20.)

## Voice Feelings

4. A willingness to vocalize feelings. How important it is to be willing to voice one’s thoughts and feelings. Yes, how important it is to be able to converse on the level of each family member. Too often we are inclined to let family members assume how we feel toward them. Often wrong conclusions are reached. Very often we could have performed better had we known how family members felt about us and what they expected.

John Powell shares this touching experience: “It was the day my father died. ... In the small hospital room, I was supporting him in my arms, when ... my father slumped back, and I lowered his head gently onto the pillow. I ... told my mother ... :

“It’s all over, Mom. Dad is dead.”

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“She startled me. I will never know why these were her first words to me after his death. My mother said: ‘Oh, he was so proud of you. He loved you so much.’

“Somehow I knew ... that these words were saying something very important to me. They were like a sudden shaft of light, like a startling thought I had never before absorbed. Yet there was a definite edge of pain, as though I were going to know my father better in death than I had ever known him in life.

“Later, while a doctor was verifying death, I was leaning against the wall in the far corner of the room, crying softly. A nurse came over to me and put a comforting arm around me. I couldn’t talk through my tears. I wanted to tell her:

“I’m not crying because my father is dead. I’m crying because my father never told me that he was proud of me. He never told me that he loved me. Of course, I was expected to know these things. I was expected to know the great part I played in his life and the great part I occupied of his heart, but he never told me.” (The Secret of Staying in Love, Niles, Ill.: Argus, 1974, p. 68.)

How significant are God’s words when he took the time to vocalize his feelings with, “This is my beloved Son,” yes, even the powerful communication, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17.)

Often parents communicate most effectively with their children by the way they listen to and address each other. Their conversations

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showing gentleness and love are heard by our ever-alert, impressionable children. We must learn to communicate effectively not only by voice, but by tone, feeling, glances, mannerisms, and total personality. Too often when we are not able to converse with a daughter or wife we wonder, “What is wrong with her?” when we should be wondering, “What is wrong with our methods?” A meaningful smile, an appropriate pat on the shoulder, and a warm handshake are all-important. Silence isolates. Strained silent periods cause wonderment, hurt, and, most often, wrong conclusions.

God knows the full impact of continuing communication as he admonishes us to pray constantly. He, too, has promised to respond as we relate to him effectively.

## Do Not Judge

5. A willingness to avoid judgment. Try to be understanding and not critical. Don't display shock, alarm, or disgust with others' comments or observations. Don't react violently. Work within the framework of a person's free agency. Convey the bright and optimistic approach. There is hope. There is a way back. There is a possibility for better understanding.

Let a common ground for personal decision be developed. “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:11) are words that are just as gentle and effective today as when they were first uttered.

Avoid imposing your values on others. When we can learn to deal with issues without involving personalities and at the same time



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avoid bias and emotions, we are on our way to effective family communications. When a family member makes a decision which may be inadequate or improper, do we have the ability and patience to convey the attitude that we don't agree with his decision but he has the right of choice and is still a loved member of the family?

It is easy to point out mistakes and pass judgment. Sincere compliments and praise come much harder from most of us. It takes real maturity for a parent to apologize to a child for an error. An honest apology often makes the son or daughter feel surprisingly warm toward the mother or father or brother or sister. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2.)

## Be Worthy of Trust

6. A willingness to maintain confidences. Be worthy of trust even in trivial questions and observations. Weighty questions and observations will only follow if we have been trustworthy with the trivial. Treat innermost trusts and concerns with respect. Build on deserved trust. Individuals who are blessed to have a relationship with someone to whom they can confidently talk and trust are fortunate indeed. Who is to say a family trust is not greater than a community trust?

## Communicate Patiently

7. A willingness to practice patience. Patience in communication is that certain ingredient of conduct we hope others will exhibit to-

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ward us when we fail to measure up. Our own patience is developed when we are patient with others.

“Be patient; be sober; be temperate; have patience, faith, hope and charity.” (D&C 6:19.)

“I get sick and tired of listening to your complaints” and “I have told you a thousand times” are but two of many often-repeated family quotations that indicate patience is gone and channels of communication are plugged.

It takes courage to communicate patiently. We constantly need to express pride, hope, and love on a most sincere basis. Each of us needs to avoid coming through as one who has given up and has become totally weary in trying.

The correction of family members in front of others is to be avoided. Much more notice is taken in quiet, private conversation. Calm endurance is a priceless virtue in one’s relationship with all family members.

When family members tune each other out, communication is not taking place. Words spoken are unheard, unwanted, and resisted when we fail to understand the basics for proper interchange. Each must be willing to do his part to improve, since the family unit is the basic foundation of the Church. Proper communication will always be a main ingredient for building family solidarity and permanence.

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I pray our Heavenly Father will help us to communicate more effectively in the home through a willingness to sacrifice, a willingness to listen, a willingness to vocalize feelings, a willingness to avoid judgment, a willingness to maintain confidences, and a willingness to practice patience. “How forcible are right words!” (Job 6:25.) Yes, how forcible are right words shared at the right moment with the right person.

May our gracious and kind Heavenly Father help us in our needs and desires for more effective family communication. Communication can help build family unity if we will work at it and sacrifice for it. For this goal, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



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## **Differences Inherent between Men and Women Selected Teachings**

President Harold B. Lee

“From my experience, it would seem that faithful mothers have a special gift that we often refer to as mother’s intuition. Perhaps with the great blessing of motherhood, our Heavenly Father has endowed them with this quality, since fathers, busy in priesthood callings and with the work of earning a livelihood, never draw quite as close to heavenly beings in matters that relate to the more intimate details of bringing up children in the home” (Teachings of Harold B. Lee, 291).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“In his wisdom and mercy, our Father made men and women dependent on each other for the full flowering of their potential. Because their natures are somewhat different, they can complement each other; because they are in many ways alike, they can understand each other. Let neither envy the other for their differences; let both discern what is superficial and what is beautifully basic in those differences, and act accordingly” (“Relief Society—Its Promise and Potential,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 5).

“We had full equality as his spirit children. We have equality as recipients of God’s perfected love for each of us. ...

“Within those great assurances, however, our roles and assignments



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differ. These are eternal differences—with women being given many tremendous responsibilities of motherhood and sisterhood and men being given the tremendous responsibilities of fatherhood and the priesthood” (“The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 102).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“You [women] were not created to be the same as men. Your natural attributes, affections, and personalities are entirely different from a man’s. They consist of faithfulness, benevolence, kindness, and charity. They give you the personality of a woman. They also balance the more aggressive and competitive nature of a man.

“The business world is competitive and sometimes ruthless. We do not doubt that women have both the brainpower and skills—and in some instances superior abilities—to compete with men. But by competing they must, of necessity, become aggressive and competitive. Thus their godly attributes are diminished and they acquire a quality of sameness with man” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 547–48).

President Howard W. Hunter

“I suppose you would say it is a man’s viewpoint to throw a burden upon a woman to maintain the stability and the sweetness of marriage, but this seems to be her divine nature. She has a superior spirituality in the marriage relationship, and the opportunity to encourage, uplift, teach, and be the one who sets the example in the family for righteous living. When women come to the point of realizing

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that it is more important to be superior than to be equal, they will find the real joy in living those principles that the Lord set out in his divine plan” (Teachings of Howard W. Hunter, 139).

“It seems strange that women want to enter into professions and into work and into places in society on an equality with men, wanting to dress like men and carry on men’s work. I don’t deny the fact that women are capable of doing so, but as I read the scriptures, I find it hard to reconcile this with what the Lord has said about women—what he has said about the family, what he has said about children. It seems to me that in regard to men and women, even though they might be equal in many things, there is a differentiation between them that we fully understand. I hope the time never comes when women will be brought down to the level with men, although they seem to be making these demands in meetings held ... all over the world” (Teachings of Howard W. Hunter, 150).

President James E. Faust

“Before we were born, male and female, we made certain commitments and ... agreed to come to this earth with great, rich, but different gifts. We were called, male and female, to do great works with separate approaches and separate assignments.

“... Becoming like men is not the answer. Rather, the answer lies in being who you are and living up to your divine potential by fulfilling eternal commitments. ...

“All of you will have to sometime answer to your natural womanly

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instincts, which the Prophet Joseph said are according to your natures. He said, ‘If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates.’ [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 226.] You should respond generously to those instincts and promptings to do good. Hold your soul very still, and listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Follow the noble, intuitive feelings planted deep within your souls by Deity in the previous world. In this way you will be responding to the Holy Spirit of God and will be sanctified by truth. By so doing, you will be eternally honored and loved. Much of your work is to enrich mankind with your great capacity for care and mercy” (“How Near to the Angels,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 95–97).

President Boyd K. Packer

“The tender hand of the sister gives a gentle touch of healing and encouragement which the hand of a man, however well intentioned, can never quite duplicate” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1998, 94; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 72).

“In the home and in the Church, sisters should be esteemed for their very nature. Be careful lest you unknowingly foster influences and activities which tend to erase the masculine and feminine differences nature has established. A man, a father, can do much of what is usually assumed to be a woman’s work. In turn, a wife and a mother can do much—and in time of need, most things—usually considered the responsibility of the man, without jeopardizing their distinct roles. Even so, leaders, and especially parents, should recognize that there is a distinct masculine nature and a distinct femi-

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nine nature essential to the foundation of the home and the family. Whatever disturbs or weakens or tends to erase that difference erodes the family and reduces the probability of happiness for all concerned” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 96; or Ensign, May 1998, 73).

There is a distinct masculine nature and a distinct feminine nature essential to the foundation of the home and the family.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

“What the modernists, even the liberationists, fail to remember is that women, in addition to being persons, also belong to a sex, and that with the differences in sex are associated important differences in function and behavior. Equality of rights does not imply identity of functions. As Paul the apostle declared: ‘... neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.’ (1 Cor. 11:11.)” (“The Women’s Movement: Liberation or Deception?” Ensign, Jan. 1971, 20).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“Except Adam and Eve by nature be different from one another, they could not multiply and fill the earth [see Genesis 1:28, note 28 c]. The complementing differences are the very key to the plan of happiness.

“Some roles are best suited to the masculine nature and others to the feminine nature” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 28; or En-



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sign, Nov. 1993, 21).

Elder James E. Faust

“How should those who bear the priesthood treat their wives and the other women in their family? Our wives need to be cherished. They need to hear their husbands call them blessed, and the children need to hear their fathers generously praise their mothers (see Proverbs 31:28). The Lord values his daughters just as much as he does his sons. In marriage, neither is superior; each has a different primary and divine responsibility. Chief among these different responsibilities for wives is the calling of motherhood. I firmly believe that our dear faithful sisters enjoy a special spiritual enrichment which is inherent in their natures” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 54; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 38–39).

“Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both mothers and fathers are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families, present and future. Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to function in the environment outside the family” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 44–45; or Ensign, May 1993, 35).

In marriage, neither is superior.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

“We live in a day when there are many political, legal, and social

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pressures for changes that confuse gender and homogenize the differences between men and women. Our eternal perspective sets us against changes that alter those separate duties and privileges of men and women that are essential to accomplish the great plan of happiness. We do not oppose all changes in the treatment of men and women, since some changes in laws or customs simply correct old wrongs that were never grounded in eternal principles” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 99; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 73–74).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Our Heavenly Father endowed His sons and daughters with unique traits especially fitted for their individual responsibilities as they fulfill His plan. To follow His plan requires that you do those things He expects of you as a son or daughter, husband or wife. Those roles are different, but entirely compatible. In the Lord’s plan, it takes two—a man and a woman—to form a whole. Indeed, a husband and wife are not two identical halves, but a wondrous, divinely determined combination of complementary capacities and characteristics.

“Marriage allows these different characteristics to come together in oneness—in unity—to bless a husband and wife, their children and grandchildren. For the greatest happiness and productivity in life, both husband and wife are needed. Their efforts interlock and are complementary. Each has individual traits that best fit the role the Lord has defined for happiness as a man or woman. When used as the Lord intends, those capacities allow a married couple to think, act, and rejoice as one—to face challenges together and overcome them as one, to grow in love and understanding, and through temple

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ordinances to be bound together as one whole, eternally. That is the plan.

“You can learn how to be more effective parents by studying the lives of Adam and Eve. Adam was Michael who helped create the earth—a glorious, superb individual. Eve was his equal—a full, powerfully contributing partner. After they had partaken of the fruit, the Lord spoke with them. Their comments reveal some different characteristics of a man and woman. To Adam He said, ‘Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?’ [Moses 4:17.] Now, Adam’s response was characteristic of a man who wants to be perceived as being as close to right as possible. Adam responded, ‘The woman thou gavest me, and commandest that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat.’ [Moses 4:18.] And the Lord said unto Eve, ‘What is this thing which thou hast done?’ [Moses 4:19.] Eve’s response was characteristic of a woman. Her answer was very simple and straightforward. ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.’ [Moses 4:19.]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 101; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 73–74).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“We know so little, brothers and sisters, about the reasons for the division of duties between womanhood and manhood as well as between motherhood and priesthood. These were divinely determined in another time and another place. ...

“We men know the women of God as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, associates, and friends. You seem to tame us and to gen-

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tle us, and, yes, to teach us and to inspire us. For you, we have admiration as well as affection, because righteousness is not a matter of role, nor goodness a matter of gender. In the work of the Kingdom, men and women are not without each other, but do not envy each other, lest by reversals and renunciations of role we make a wasteland of both womanhood and manhood” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 13; or Ensign, May 1978, 10).

Elder Merrill J. Bateman

“When a man understands how glorious a woman is, he treats her differently. When a woman understands that a man has the seeds of divinity within him, she honors him not only for who he is but for what he may become. An understanding of the divine nature allows each person to have respect for the other. The eternal view engenders a desire in men and women to learn from and share with each other.

“Men and women are created as complements. They complete one another. Paul told the Corinthians: ‘Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 11:11). Men and women complement each other not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. The apostle Paul taught that ‘the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband’ and through them both the children are made holy (1 Corinthians 7:14). Men and women have different strengths and weaknesses, and marriage is a synergistic relationship in which spiritual growth is enhanced because of the differences” (“The Eternal Family,” 113).



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **The Joy of Womanhood**

Sister Margaret D. Nadauld Young Women General President  
In Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 14-17; or Ensign, Nov. 2000,  
14-16

### **Faithful Women Have a Glorious Mission**

It is a remarkable blessing to be a daughter of God today. We have the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have the priesthood restored to the earth. We are led by a prophet of God who holds all of the priesthood keys. I love and honor President Gordon B. Hinckley and all of our brethren who bear the priesthood worthily.

I am inspired by the lives of good and faithful women. From the beginning of time the Lord has placed significant trust in them. He has sent us to earth for such a time as this to perform a grand and glorious mission. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that even before we were born, we were among those who “received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:56). What a wonderful vision that gives us of our purpose on earth.

Where much is given, much is required. Our Heavenly Father asks His daughters to walk in virtue, to live in righteousness so that we can fulfill our life’s mission and His purposes. He wants us to be successful, and He will help us as we seek His help.

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## Women Were Given Special Qualities

That women were born into this earth female was determined long before mortal birth, as were the divine differences of male and female. I love the clarity of the teachings of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in the proclamation on the family, where they state, “Gender is an essential characteristic of individual pre-mortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”<sup>1</sup> From that statement we are taught that every girl was feminine and female in spirit long before her mortal birth.

God sent women to earth with some qualities in extra capacity. In speaking to young women, President Faust observed that femininity “is the divine adornment of humanity. It finds expression in your ... capacity to love, your spirituality, delicacy, radiance, sensitivity, creativity, charm, graciousness, gentleness, dignity, and quiet strength. It is manifest differently in each girl or woman, but each ... possesses it. Femininity is part of your inner beauty.”<sup>2</sup>

## Care for Outward Appearance

Our outward appearance is a reflection of what we are on the inside. Our lives reflect that for which we seek. And if with all our hearts we truly seek to know the Savior and to be more like Him, we shall be, for He is our divine, eternal Brother. But He is more than that. He is our precious Savior, our dear Redeemer. We ask with Alma of old, “Have ye received his image in your countenances?” (Alma 5:14).

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You can recognize women who are grateful to be a daughter of God by their outward appearance. These women understand their stewardship over their bodies and treat them with dignity. They care for their bodies as they would a holy temple, for they understand the Lord's teaching, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16).

Women who love God would never abuse or deface a temple with graffiti. Nor would they throw open the doors of that holy, dedicated edifice and invite the world to look on. How even more sacred is the body, for it was not made by man. It was formed by God. We are the stewards, the keepers of the cleanliness and purity with which it came from heaven. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17).

Grateful daughters of God guard their bodies carefully, for they know they are the wellspring of life and they reverence life. They don't uncover their bodies to find favor with the world. They walk in modesty to be in favor with their Father in Heaven, for they know He loves them dearly.

## Minister to Others

You can recognize women who are grateful to be a daughter of God by their attitude. They know that the errand of angels is given to women, and they desire to be on God's errand to love His children and minister to them, to teach them the doctrines of salvation,

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to call them to repentance, to save them in perilous circumstances, to guide them in the performance of His work, to deliver His messages.<sup>3</sup> They understand that they can bless their Father's children in their homes and neighborhoods and beyond. Women who are grateful to be daughters of God bring glory to His name.

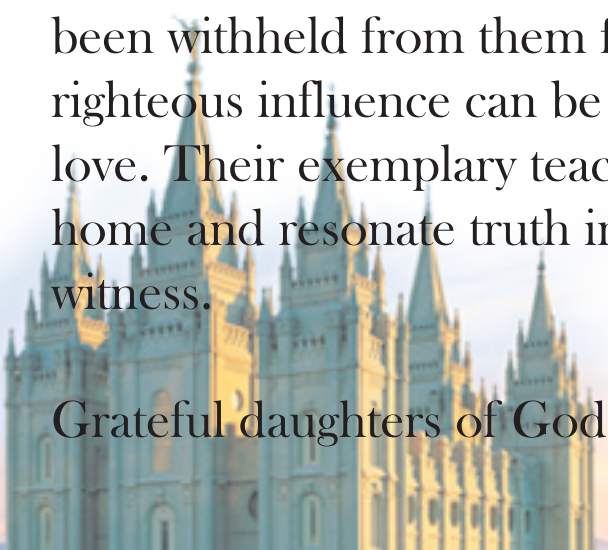
## Magnify Gifts

You can recognize women who are grateful to be a daughter of God by their abilities. They fulfill their divine potential and magnify their God-given gifts. They are capable, strong women who bless families, serve others, and understand that “the glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36). They are women who embrace enduring virtues in order to be all that our Father needs them to be. The prophet Jacob spoke of some of those virtues when he said their “feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate before God, which thing is pleasing unto God” (Jacob 2:7).

## Reverence Motherhood

You can recognize women who are grateful to be daughters of God by their reverence for motherhood, even when that blessing has been withheld from them for a time. In those circumstances, their righteous influence can be a blessing in the lives of children they love. Their exemplary teachings can echo the voice of a faithful home and resonate truth in the hearts of children who need another witness.

Grateful daughters of God love Him and teach their children to love





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Him without reservation and without resentment. They are like the mothers of Helaman's youthful army, who had such great faith and "had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47).

When you observe kind and gentle mothers in action, you see women of great strength. Their families can feel a spirit of love and respect and safety when they are near her as she seeks the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the guidance of His Spirit. They are blessed by her wisdom and good judgment. The husbands and children whose lives they bless will contribute to the stability of societies all over this world. Grateful daughters of God learn truths from their mothers and grandmothers and aunts. They teach their daughters the joyful art of creating a home. They seek fine educations for their children and have a thirst for knowledge themselves. They help their children develop skills that they can use in serving others. They know that the way they have chosen is not the easy way, but they know it is absolutely worth their finest efforts.

They understand what Elder Neal A. Maxwell meant when he said: "When the real history of mankind is fully disclosed, will it feature the echoes of gunfire or the shaping sound of lullabies? The great armistices made by military men or the peacemaking of women in homes and in neighborhoods? Will what happened in cradles and kitchens prove to be more controlling than what happened in congresses?"<sup>4</sup>

Daughters of God know that it is the nurturing nature of women that can bring everlasting blessings, and they live to cultivate this divine

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attribute. Surely when a woman reverences motherhood, her children will arise up and call her blessed (see Prov. 31:28).

## Not like Women of the World

Women of God can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity.

Oh, how we pray that every young woman will grow up to be all the wonderful things she is meant to be. We pray that her mother and father will show her the right way. May daughters of God honor the priesthood and sustain worthy priesthood holders. May they understand their own great capacity for strength in the timeless virtues that some would scoff at in a modern, liberated world for women.

Women of God can never be like women of the world.

## Understand and Nourish Potential

May mothers and fathers understand the great potential for good their daughters inherited from their heavenly home. We must nourish their gentleness, their nurturing nature, their innate spirituality and sensitivity, and their bright minds. Celebrate the fact that girls

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are different from boys. Be thankful for the position they have in God's grand plan. And always remember what President Hinckley said, "Only after the earth had been formed, after the day had been separated from the night, after the waters had been divided from the land, after vegetation and animal life had been created, and after man had been placed on the earth, was woman created; and only then was the work pronounced complete and good."<sup>5</sup>

Fathers, husbands, young men, may you catch a vision of all that women are and can be. Please be worthy of God's holy priesthood, which you bear, and honor that priesthood, for it blesses all of us.

Sisters, regardless of your age, please understand all that you are and must be, all that you were prepared to be in royal courts on high by God Himself. May we use with gratitude the priceless gifts we have been given for the lifting of mankind to higher thinking and nobler aspirations, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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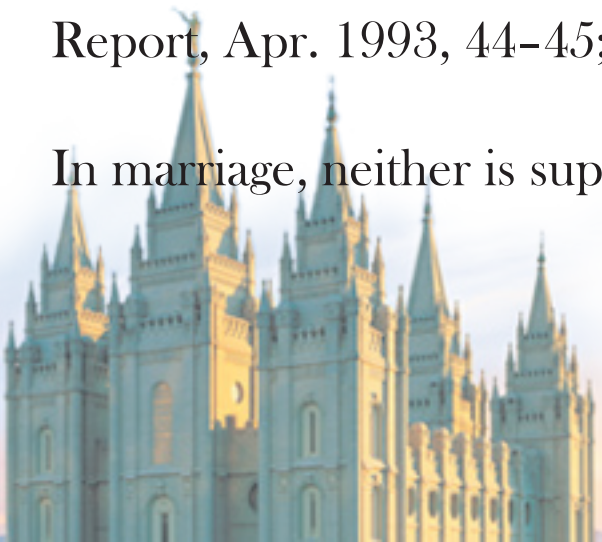
## **Equality of Men and Women**

Elder James E. Faust

“How should those who bear the priesthood treat their wives and the other women in their family? Our wives need to be cherished. They need to hear their husbands call them blessed, and the children need to hear their fathers generously praise their mothers (see Proverbs 31:28). The Lord values his daughters just as much as he does his sons. In marriage, neither is superior; each has a different primary and divine responsibility. Chief among these different responsibilities for wives is the calling of motherhood. I firmly believe that our dear faithful sisters enjoy a special spiritual enrichment which is inherent in their natures” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 54; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 38–39).

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In marriage, neither is superior.





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## **Equality of Men and Women**

Sister Eliza R. Snow

“The status of women is one of the questions of the day. Socially and politically it forces itself upon the attention of the world. Some ... refuse to concede that woman is entitled to the enjoyment of any rights other than those which the whims, fancies or justice, as the case may be, of men may choose to grant her. The reasons which they cannot meet with argument they decry and ridicule; an old refuge for those opposed to correct principles which they are unable to controvert. Others, again, not only recognize that woman’s status should be improved, but are so radical in their extreme theories that they would set her in antagonism to man, assume for her a separate and opposing existence; and to show how entirely independent she should be would make her adopt the more reprehensible phases of character which men present, and which should be shunned or improved by them instead of being copied by women. These are two extremes, and between them is the ‘golden mean.’” (“Woman’s Status,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 15 July 1872, 29).



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## **Men's Divine Roles and Responsibilities Selected Teachings**

President Harold B. Lee

“All women have a desire for companionship. They want to be wives; they want to be mothers; and when men refuse to assume their responsibility of marriage, for no good reason, they are unable to consummate marriage. Brethren, we are not doing our duty as holders of the priesthood when we go beyond the marriageable age and withhold ourselves from an honorable marriage to these lovely women, who are seeking the fulfillment of a woman's greatest desire to have a husband, a family, and a home” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 119–20; or Ensign, Jan. 1974, 100).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“The Lord organized the whole program in the beginning with a father who procreates, provides, and loves and directs, and a mother who conceives and bears and nurtures and feeds and trains. The Lord could have organized it otherwise but chose to have a unit with responsibility and purposeful associations where children train and discipline each other and come to love, honor, and appreciate each other. The family is the great plan of life as conceived and organized by our Father in heaven” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 151; or Ensign, July 1973, 15).

President Howard W. Hunter

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

“Together with your wife, you determine the spiritual climate of your home” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 51).

## Father, Consider Your Ways Pamphlet

Brethren, have you considered the challenge it is to be a successful father? It takes hard work and planning to rear your children in righteousness and have unity with your wife, to build a constant feeling of love and harmony in the home. Why is being a successful, righteous father such a challenge for almost any man?

The Lord’s plan of salvation requires that you pass through trials in this mortal life. Those trials seem to be greatest when you reach fatherhood; but be assured—fatherhood, in a sense, is an apprenticeship to godhood. This presentation will help give you a broader perspective of what it means to be a father; to give you an understanding and a feeling of your worth to your Father in heaven. Father, consider your ways!

Through his Son, Jesus Christ, God created the heavens and the earth. At this time you lived with him as his spirit child, and you shouted for joy when this earth was formed. You knew the necessity of coming to earth, of gaining a physical body, and of passing through the many trials of earth life. You knew that at times you would make mistakes. You also knew that through the atoning sacrifice of your Brother and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, you could repent of these mistakes and be found clean.

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You also knew that Jesus Christ was to be your example and would show you the way to return back to your Father in heaven. “So God created man in his own image ... male and female created he them.” (Genesis 1:27.) And he gave man dominion, or stewardship, over all things on the earth and made him accountable for them. His greatest stewardship and accountability would be for children.

Marriage, as ordained of God, is the lawful union of man and wife, not only for this earth life, but for all eternity. A paramount purpose of marriage is to clothe spirit children of our Father in heaven with earthly bodies. When your first child is born, you become a father. The title father is sacred and eternal. It is significant that of all the titles of respect and honor and admiration that are given to Deity, he has asked us to address him as Father.

A father is the presiding authority in his family. On this earth your initial experience of being a father of a family gives you opportunities to learn to govern with love and patience, and with your wife to teach each of your children correct principles; to prepare them to become proper fathers and mothers. When you do this according to the pattern given us by the Lord, and you endure to the end, your family will be added upon eternally. A righteous family is an eternal unit. On this earth, priesthood quorums and all other organizations of the Church aid you, the father, and your wife and family in achieving these eternal goals.

Father, with your wife you have entrusted to you from God the power to be cocreators with him, to multiply and replenish the earth. As



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cocreators, you have delegated to you the opportunity and responsibility to bring into mortality and teach in light and truth spirit children of our Father in heaven.

When you recognize the importance of teaching your children, you become humble, because at once you realize that this is accomplished by precept and example. You cannot be one thing and effectively teach another. You must live and study and pray for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. You must purify and organize your life so that your example and leadership reflect the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You must plan your day as guided by the Spirit of the Lord, earnestly seeking your own welfare and the welfare of your family before other cares blind you to these first responsibilities. As we have been taught by living prophets, “No other success in life can compensate for failure in the home,” (see David O. McKay in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, p. 5) and “The greatest work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home.” (See Harold B. Lee, *Strengthening the Home*, 1973, p. 7.)

It must be emphasized that as a father, you are always teaching. For good or ill your family learns your ways, your beliefs, your heart, your ideas, your concerns. Your children may or may not choose to follow you, but the example you give is the greatest light you hold before your children, and you are accountable for that light.

At one time a young father acted somewhat unkindly to his wife. Three days later this same man saw his three-year-old daughter use

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his very words in acting unkindly to her mother. The man was sobered and came to ask himself this question, “Do I love my children and family enough to repent, to change my life for their welfare?”

The obligations, the burdens, the responsibility of being a proper father may seem overwhelming. Fortunately, you are not required to preside and judge and act without counsel, without assistance. You have a wife—a companion, a counselor, a partner, a helpmeet, a friend.

Is she one with you? Do you thank the Lord daily for her? Do you keep the covenants you made with her and with the Lord in the temple? Do you always strive to keep your thoughts and words and actions pure? Do you realize that when you offend her in any way it is like offending yourself, since you are one?

Does she know of your love for her? Is your relationship one of continual courtship? Do you regularly spend time together—alone, where your expression and actions reassure her of your appreciation and reliance on her companionship? Do you exercise righteous leadership with her?

Do you always keep sight of your marriage goal, the creation of an eternal unit bound together by love and by the power and ordinances of the priesthood?

Father, you are accountable to the Lord for what you have and what you are. In the future you will surely stand before him. What will be your report concerning your family? Will you be able to report that

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your home was a place of love, a bit of heaven? That daily family prayer and secret prayer were fostered? That it was a house of fasting? That in family home evenings and at other times you and your wife taught your children the basic principles of the gospel?

Will you be able to report that you created an environment in your home to build faith in a living God, to encourage learning, to teach order, obedience, and sacrifice? That you often shared your testimony of the reality of your Father in heaven, of the truthfulness of the restored gospel with your wife and children? Will you be able to report that you followed the living prophets? That your home was where your tender children could feel protected and safe, and where they felt the love, and acceptance, and warmth of you and their mother?

And what will be your report concerning the temporal welfare of your family? It is God's plan that you work for what you get. Your occupation should be honorable and should provide sufficiently to meet the needs of your family. Are your duties and labors undertaken with a joyful and thankful spirit? Do your wife and children feel secure because you feel good about your occupation? Do you practice frugality and thrift and avoid debt by living within your income, your tithed income? Do your wife and children feel a sense of tradition and stability because the family home is not relocated on a whim, for unsound reasons?

Father, are you committed to the eternal welfare of each of your children? Do you labor and love and strive with them as long as they live?

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Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home. It is not a matter of whether you are most worthy or best qualified, but it is a matter of law and appointment. You preside at the meal table, at family prayer. You preside at family home evening; and as guided by the Spirit of the Lord, you see that your children are taught correct principles. It is your place to give direction relating to all of family life.

You give father's blessings. You take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline. As a leader in your home you plan and sacrifice to achieve the blessing of a unified and happy family. To do all of this requires that you live a family-centered life.

Now, you are a son of God. You were sent to this earth to gain a physical body and to prove yourself in the trials and experiences of this earth life. It is the plan of your Father in heaven that you have been or will be sealed for eternity to a companion. In marriage, you and your wife are one in purpose as you strive to fulfill the purposes of the Lord. As a cocreator with God you bring forth children.

You prepare your family and each member in the family to serve their fellowman, to build the kingdom of God on earth. You conscientiously provide for their material well-being. In the family you learn to govern righteously. You teach your family generally and each child individually the doctrines of the kingdom.



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The day will come when you will stand before the Lord and report your stewardship as a father on earth. Father, consider your ways. What will be your report?

## A Summary

1. Your fatherhood is, in a sense, an apprenticeship to godhood.
2. Your earth life is a part of the plan of salvation that enables you to become like your Father in heaven.
3. Jesus Christ is your example to show you the way to return to your Father in heaven.
4. A righteous family is an eternal unity.
5. You are the presiding authority in the home.
6. The Church exists to assist you to return with your family to the presence of our Father in heaven.
7. You and your wife are cocreators with God for the eternal welfare of his spirit children.
8. You teach most effectively by example.
9. The greatest work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home.
10. You must seek the spirit of the Lord in leading your family.
11. The mother sustains the father and is his helpmeet, his counselor.
12. You and your wife are one in purpose.
13. You have the responsibility for the physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being of your children.
14. You have the responsibility to lead your family by—
  - A. Governing, correcting, nurturing, and blessing them in meekness, tenderness, and love on the principles of righteousness. (see D&C

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121.)

B. Creating an environment in the home conducive to order, prayer, worship, learning, fasting, happiness, and the Spirit of the Lord.

C. Teaching them the principles of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, enduring to the end, and praying vocally and in secret.

D. Loving God and keeping his commandments.



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## **Being a Righteous Husband and Father**

President Howard W. Hunter President of the Church

In Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 66-70; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 49-51

My dear brethren of the priesthood, I consider it a privilege to meet with you this evening in this general priesthood meeting. The priesthood is the greatest brotherhood on the earth. I feel great strength in seeing your faithfulness and feeling your love and sustaining vote. We are particularly grateful to have so many of our Aaronic Priesthood brethren here with their fathers or advisers.

### **Marriage Is a Sacred Privilege and Obligation**

The subject of my address this evening will be more particularly directed to the husbands and fathers. All of you who hold the Aaronic Priesthood will soon arrive at the years of marriage and fatherhood. Therefore, what I say tonight has application to all present.

I wish to speak of the relationship that a man holding the priesthood should have with his wife and children. With a knowledge of the plan of salvation as a foundation, a man who holds the priesthood looks upon marriage as a sacred privilege and obligation. It is not good for man nor for woman to be alone. Man is not complete without woman. Neither can fill the measure of their creation without the other (see 1 Corinthians 11:11; Moses 3:18). Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God (see D&C 49:15-17). Only through the new and everlasting covenant of marriage can they real-

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ize the fulness of eternal blessings (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:15–19). As a matter of priesthood responsibility, a man, under normal circumstances, should not unduly postpone marriage. Brethren, the Lord has spoken plainly on this matter. It is your sacred and solemn responsibility to follow his counsel and the words of his prophets.

The prophets of the past have spoken also of those who may not have opportunity to marry in this life. President Lorenzo Snow said:

“There is no Latter-day Saint who dies after having lived a faithful life who will lose anything because of having failed to do certain things when opportunities were not furnished him or her. In other words, if a young man or a young woman has no opportunity of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation, and glory that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it. That is sure and positive” (The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, comp. Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984], p. 138).

I believe President Snow’s statement to be true.

## Show Perfect Moral Fidelity

A man who holds the priesthood shows perfect moral fidelity to his wife and gives her no reason to doubt his faithfulness. A husband is to love his wife with all his heart and cleave unto her and none else (see D&C 42:22–26). President Spencer W. Kimball explained:

“The words none else eliminate everyone and everything. The



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spouse then becomes pre-eminent in the life of the husband or wife and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse” (The Miracle of Forgiveness [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], p. 250).

The Lord forbids and his church condemns any and every intimate relationship outside of marriage. Infidelity on the part of a man breaks the heart of his wife and loses her confidence and the confidence of his children (see Jacob 2:35).

Be faithful in your marriage covenants in thought, word, and deed. Pornography, flirtations, and unwholesome fantasies erode one’s character and strike at the foundation of a happy marriage. Unity and trust within a marriage are thereby destroyed. One who does not control his thoughts and thus commits adultery in his heart, if he does not repent, shall not have the Spirit but shall deny the faith and shall fear (see D&C 42:23; 63:16).

Be faithful in your marriage covenants in thought, word, and deed.

## Show Reverence for Motherhood

A man who holds the priesthood has reverence for motherhood. Mothers are given a sacred privilege to “bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of [the] Father continued, that he may be glorified” (D&C 132:63).

The First Presidency has said: “Motherhood is near to divinity. It is

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the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind” (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:178). The priesthood cannot work out its destiny, nor can God’s purposes be fulfilled, without our helpmates. Mothers perform a labor the priesthood cannot do. For this gift of life, the priesthood should have love unbounded for the mothers of their children.

Honor your wife’s unique and divinely appointed role as a mother in Israel and her special capacity to bear and nurture children. We are under divine commandment to multiply and replenish the earth and to bring up our children and grandchildren in light and truth (see Moses 2:28; D&C 93:40). You share, as a loving partner, the care of the children. Help her to manage and keep up your home. Help teach, train, and discipline your children.

You should express regularly to your wife and children your reverence and respect for her. Indeed, one of the greatest things a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

## Regard the Family as Most Important

A man who holds the priesthood regards the family as ordained of God. Your leadership of the family is your most important and sacred responsibility. The family is the most important unit in time and in eternity and, as such, transcends every other interest in life.

We reiterate what was stated by President David O. McKay: “No

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other success [in life] can compensate for failure in the home” (quoting J. E. McCulloch, *Home: the Savior of Civilization*, p. 42; in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1935, p. 116) and President Harold B. Lee: “The most important of the Lord’s work you and I will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 255). Effective family leadership, brethren, requires both quantity and quality time. The teaching and governance of the family must not be left to your wife alone, to society, to school, or even to the Church.

## **Accept Wife as an Equal Partner**

A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. Of necessity there must be in the Church and in the home a presiding officer (see D&C 107:21). By divine appointment, the responsibility to preside in the home rests upon the priesthood holder (see Moses 4:22). The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (meet means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership. Presiding in righteousness necessitates a shared responsibility between husband and wife; together you act with knowledge and participation in all family matters. For a man to operate independently of or without regard to the feelings and counsel of his wife in governing the family is to exercise unrighteous dominion.

## **Be Tender in the Intimate Relationship**

Keep yourselves above any domineering or unworthy behavior in

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the tender, intimate relationship between husband and wife. Because marriage is ordained of God, the intimate relationship between husbands and wives is good and honorable in the eyes of God. He has commanded that they be one flesh and that they multiply and replenish the earth (see Moses 2:28; 3:24). You are to love your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it (see Ephesians 5:25–31).

Tenderness and respect—never selfishness—must be the guiding principles in the intimate relationship between husband and wife. Each partner must be considerate and sensitive to the other’s needs and desires. Any domineering, indecent, or uncontrolled behavior in the intimate relationship between husband and wife is condemned by the Lord.

## Be Loving, Not Abusive

Any man who abuses or demeans his wife physically or spiritually is guilty of grievous sin and in need of sincere and serious repentance. Differences should be worked out in love and kindness and with a spirit of mutual reconciliation. A man should always speak to his wife lovingly and kindly, treating her with the utmost respect. Marriage is like a tender flower, brethren, and must be nourished constantly with expressions of love and affection.

You who hold the priesthood must not be abusive in your relationship with children. Seek always to employ the principles of priesthood government set forth in the revelations (see D&C 93:40; 121:34–36, 41–45).



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President George Albert Smith wisely counseled: “We should not lose our tempers and abuse one another. ... Nobody ever abused anybody else when he had the spirit of the Lord. It is always when we have some other spirit” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1950, p. 8).

No man who has been ordained to the priesthood of God can with impunity abuse his wife or child. Sexual abuse of children has long been a cause for excommunication from the Church.

We encourage you, brethren, to remember that priesthood is a righteous authority only. Earn the respect and confidence of your children through your loving relationship with them. A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities. Tender expressions of love and affection toward children are as much the responsibility of the father as the mother. Tell your children you love them.

## **Provide Temporal Support**

You who hold the priesthood have the responsibility, unless disabled, to provide temporal support for your wife and children. No man can shift the burden of responsibility to another, not even to his wife. The Lord has commanded that women and children have claim on their husbands and fathers for their maintenance (see D&C 83; 1 Timothy 5:8). President Ezra Taft Benson has stated that when a husband encourages or insists that his wife work out of the home for their convenience, “not only will the family suffer in such

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instances, ... but [his] own spiritual growth and progression will be hampered” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, pp. 60–61; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, p. 49).

We urge you to do all in your power to allow your wife to remain in the home, caring for the children while you provide for the family the best you can. We further emphasize that men who abandon their family and fail to meet their responsibility to care for those they have fathered may find their eligibility for a temple recommend and their standing in the Church in jeopardy. In cases of divorce or separation, men must demonstrate that they are meeting family support payments mandated by law and obligated by the principles of the Church in order to qualify for the blessings of the Lord.

## **Lead Family in Church Participation**

A man who holds the priesthood leads his family in Church participation so they will know the gospel and be under the protection of the covenants and ordinances. If you are to enjoy the blessings of the Lord, you must set your own homes in order. Together with your wife, you determine the spiritual climate of your home. Your first obligation is to get your own spiritual life in order through regular scriptural study and daily prayer. Secure and honor your priesthood and temple covenants; encourage your family to do the same.

## **Teach the Gospel to Family Members**

Take seriously your responsibility to teach the gospel to your family through regular family home evening, family prayer, devotional and

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scripture reading time, and other teaching moments. Give special emphasis to preparation for missionary service and temple marriage. As patriarch in the home, exercise your priesthood through performing the appropriate ordinances for your family and by giving blessings to your wife and children. Next to your own salvation, brethren, there is nothing so important to you as the salvation of your wife and children.

Brethren, I have spoken plainly to you regarding your responsibility as holders of the holy priesthood. If there are areas in your life where improvement may be needed, I encourage you to make this a matter of prayerful consideration.

I testify that this is what the Lord would have the brethren of the priesthood receive at this time. May you be blessed in your efforts to be righteous husbands and fathers, I pray as I bear solemn witness of the truthfulness of that which has been spoken this evening and do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry**

President Gordon B. Hinckley President of the Church

In Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 66-69; or Ensign, May 1998, 49-51

A week ago President [James E.] Faust and the Young Women general presidency spoke to the young women of the Church in this Tabernacle.

As I looked at that gathering of beautiful young women, the question moved through my mind,

“Are we rearing a generation of young men worthy of them?”

Those girls are so fresh and vibrant. They are beautiful. They are bright. They are able. They are faithful. They are virtuous. They are true. They are simply wonderful and delightful young women.

And so tonight, in this great priesthood meeting, I wish to speak to you young men, their counterpart. The title of my talk: “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry.”

The girl you marry will take a terrible chance on you. She will give her all to the young man she marries. He will largely determine the remainder of her life. She will even surrender her name to his name.

As Adam declared in the Garden of Eden:



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“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. ...

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:23–24).

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as young men holding the priesthood of God, you have a tremendous obligation toward the girl you marry. Perhaps you are not thinking much of that now. But the time isn’t far away when you will think of it, and now is the time to prepare for that most important day of your lives when you take unto yourself a wife and companion equal with you before the Lord.

## Be Absolutely Loyal

That obligation begins with absolute loyalty. As the old Church of England ceremony says, you will marry her “for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse.” She will be yours and yours alone, regardless of the circumstances of your lives. You will be hers and hers alone. There can be eyes for none other. There must be absolute loyalty, undeviating loyalty one to another. Hopefully you will marry her forever, in the house of the Lord, under the authority of the everlasting priesthood. Through all the days of your lives, you must be as true one to another as the polar star.

## Be a Young Man of Virtue

The girl you marry can expect you to come to the marriage altar

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absolutely clean. She can expect you to be a young man of virtue in thought and word and deed.

I plead with you boys tonight to keep yourselves free from the stains of the world. You must not indulge in sleazy talk at school. You must not tell sultry jokes. You must not fool around with the Internet to find pornographic material. You must not dial a long-distance telephone number to listen to filth. You must not rent videos with pornography of any kind. This salacious stuff simply is not for you. Stay away from pornography as you would avoid a serious disease. It is as destructive. It can become habitual, and those who indulge in it get so they cannot leave it alone. It is addictive.

It is a five-billion-dollar business for those who produce it. They make it as titillating and attractive as they know how. It seduces and destroys its victims. It is everywhere. It is all about us. I plead with you young men not to get involved in its use. You simply cannot afford to.

The girl you marry is worthy of a husband whose life has not been tainted by this ugly and corrosive material.

Live the Word of Wisdom

Look upon the Word of Wisdom as more than a commonplace thing. I regard it as the most remarkable document on health of which I know. It came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833, when relatively little was known of dietary matters. Now the greater the scientific research, the more certain becomes the proof of Word

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of Wisdom principles. The evidence against tobacco is now overwhelming, yet we see a tremendous increase in its use by young men and women. The evidence against liquor is just as great.

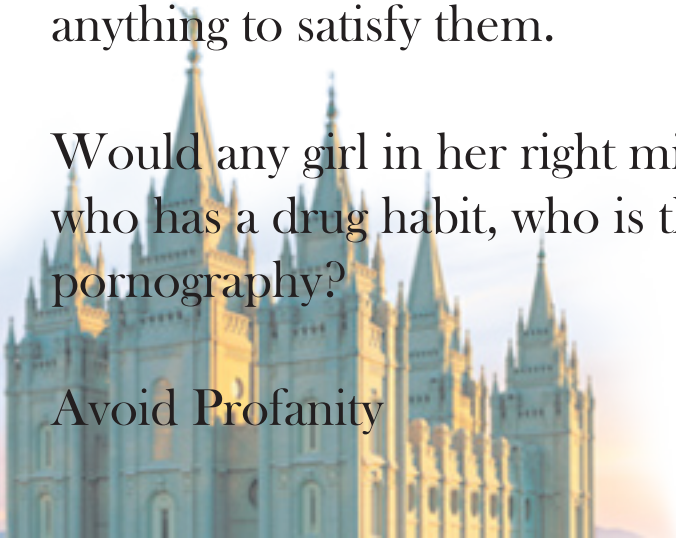
To me it is an ironic thing that service stations offer beer sales. An individual can get as drunk on beer and be as dangerous on the road as he can on any other alcoholic substance. It is simply a matter of how much he drinks. How absolutely inconsistent it is for a service station, where you get gas so you can drive, to also sell beer that can cause you to drive “under the influence” and become a terrible menace on the highway.

Stay away from it. It will do you no good. It could do you irreparable harm. Suppose you drink and drive and cause the death of someone. You will never get over it as long as you live. It will haunt you night and day. The one simple thing to do is simply to not touch it.

Likewise, stay away from illegal drugs. They can absolutely destroy you. They will take away your powers of reason. They will enslave you in a vicious and terrible way. They will destroy your mind and your body. They will build within you such cravings that you will do anything to satisfy them.

Would any girl in her right mind ever wish to marry a young man who has a drug habit, who is the slave of alcohol, who is addicted to pornography?

Avoid Profanity



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Avoid profanity. It is all around you in school. Young people seem to pride themselves on using filthy and obscene language as well as indulging in profanity, taking the name of our Lord in vain. It becomes a vicious habit which, if indulged in while you are young, will find expression throughout your life. Who would wish to be married to a man whose speech is laden with filth and profanity?

## **Learn Now to Control Your Temper**

There is another serious thing to which many young men become addicted. This is anger. With the least provocation they explode into tantrums of uncontrolled rage. It is pitiful to see someone so weak. But even worse, they are prone to lose all sense of reason and do things which bring later regret.

We hear much these days of the phenomenon called road rage. Drivers become provoked over some small irritation. They fly into a rage, even resulting in murder. A life of regret follows.

As the writer of Proverbs has said, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

If you have a temper, now is the time to learn to control it. The more you do so while you are young, the more easily it will happen. Let no member of this Church ever lose control of himself in such an unnecessary and vicious manner. Let him bring to his marriage words of peace and composure.



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I constantly deal with those cases of members of the Church who have been married in the temple and who later divorce and then apply for a cancellation of their temple sealing. When first married, they are full of great expectations, with a wonderful spirit of happiness. But the flower of love fades in an atmosphere of criticism and carping, of mean words and uncontrolled anger. Love flies out the window as contention enters. I repeat, my brethren, if any of you young men have trouble controlling your temper, I plead with you to begin the work of making that correction now. Otherwise you will bring only tears and sorrow into the homes which you will someday establish. Jacob, in the Book of Mormon, condemns his people for their wickedness in marriage. Says he: “Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you. And because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds” (Jacob 2:35).

## Work for an Education

Work for an education. Get all the training that you can. The world will largely pay you what it thinks you are worth. Paul did not mince words when he wrote to Timothy, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

It is your primary obligation to provide for your family.

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Your wife will be fortunate indeed if she does not have to go out and compete in the marketplace. She will be twice blessed if she is able to remain at home while you become the breadwinner of the family.

Education is the key to economic opportunity. The Lord has laid a mandate upon us as a people to acquire learning “by study, and also by faith” (D&C 109:14). It is likely that you will be a better provider if your mind and hands are trained to do something worthwhile in the society of which you will become a part.

Education is the key to economic opportunity.

## Be Modest in Your Wants

Be modest in your wants. You do not need a big home with a big mortgage as you begin your lives together. You can and should avoid overwhelming debt. There is nothing that will cause greater tensions in marriage than grinding debt, which will make of you a slave to your creditors. You may have to borrow money to begin ownership of a home. But do not let it be so costly that it will preoccupy your thoughts day and night.

When I was married, my wise father said to me, “Get a modest home and pay off the mortgage so that if economic storms should come, your wife and children will have a roof over their heads.”

The girl who marries you will not wish to be married to a tightwad. Neither will she wish to be married to a spendthrift. She is entitled

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to know all about family finances. She will be your partner. Unless there is full and complete understanding between you and your wife on these matters, there likely will come misunderstandings and suspicions that will cause trouble that can lead to greater problems.

## **Go on a Mission and Be Married in the Temple**

She will wish to be married to someone who loves her, who trusts her, who walks beside her, who is her very best friend and companion. She will wish to be married to someone who encourages her in her Church activity and in community activities which will help her to develop her talents and make a greater contribution to society. She will want to be married to someone who has a sense of service to others, who is disposed to contribute to the Church and to other good causes. She will wish to be married to someone who loves the Lord and seeks to do His will. It is well, therefore, that each of you young men plan to go on a mission, to give unselfishly to your Father in Heaven a tithe of your life, to go forth with a spirit of total unselfishness to preach the gospel of peace to the world wherever you may be sent. If you are a good missionary, you will return home with the desire to continue to serve the Lord, to keep His commandments, and to do His will. Such behavior will add immeasurably to the happiness of your marriage.

As I have said, you will wish to be married in one place and one place only. That is the house of the Lord. You cannot give to your companion a greater gift than that of marriage in God's holy house, under the protective wing of the sealing covenant of eternal marriage. There is no adequate substitute for it. There should be no

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other way for you.

## Prepare to Become a Righteous Father

Choose carefully and wisely. The girl you marry will be yours forever. You will love her and she will love you through thick and thin, through sunshine and storm. She will become the mother of your children. What greater thing in all this world can there be than to become the father of a precious child, a son or daughter of God, our Father in Heaven, for whom we are given the rights and responsibilities of mortal stewardship.

How precious a thing is a baby. How wonderful a thing is a child. What a marvelous thing is a family. Live worthy of becoming a father of whom your wife and children will be proud.

The Lord has ordained that we should marry, that we shall live together in love and peace and harmony, that we shall have children and rear them in His holy ways.

And so, my dear young men, you may not think seriously about it now. But the time will come when you will fall in love. It will occupy all of your thoughts and be the stuff of which your dreams are made. Make yourself worthy of the loveliest girl in all the world. Keep yourself worthy through all the days of your life. Be good and true and kind one to another. There is so much of bitterness in the world. There is so much of pain and sorrow that come of angry words. There is so much of tears that follow disloyalty. But there can be so much of happiness if there is an effort to please and an over-



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whelming desire to make comfortable and happy one's companion.

When all is said and done, this is what the gospel is about. The family is a creation of God. It is the basic creation. The way to strengthen the nation is to strengthen the homes of the people.

I am satisfied that if we would look for the virtues in one another and not the vices, there would be much more of happiness in the homes of our people. There would be far less of divorce, much less of infidelity, much less of anger and rancor and quarreling. There would be more of forgiveness, more of love, more of peace, more of happiness. This is as the Lord would have it.

## **Now Is the Time to Prepare for the Future**

Young men, now is the time to prepare for the future. And in that future for most of you is a beautiful young woman whose greatest desire is to bond with you in a relationship that is eternal and everlasting.

You will know no greater happiness than that found in your home. You will have no more serious obligation than that which you face in your home. The truest mark of your success in life will be the quality of your marriage.

God bless you, my dear young men. I could wish for you nothing more wonderful than the love, the absolute total love of a companion of whom you are proud and worthy in every respect. This choice will be the most important of all the choices you make in

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your life. I pray that heaven may smile upon you in the choice you make, that you may be guided, that you may live without regret, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

This choice will be the most important of all the choices you make in your life.



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## **To the Fathers in Israel**

President Ezra Taft Benson President of the Church

In Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 59–63; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, 48–51; see also To the Fathers in Israel, pamphlet

My dear brethren, I am grateful to be here with you in this glorious assembly of the priesthood of God. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me and with you as I address you on a most vital subject. This evening I would like to speak to the fathers assembled here and throughout the Church about their sacred callings.

I hope you young men will also listen carefully, inasmuch as you are now preparing to become the future fathers of the Church.

### **An Eternal Calling**

Fathers, yours is an eternal calling from which you are never released. Callings in the Church, as important as they are, by their very nature are only for a period of time, and then an appropriate release takes place. But a father's calling is eternal, and its importance transcends time. It is a calling for both time and eternity.

President Harold B. Lee truly stated that “the most important of the Lord’s work that you [fathers] will ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home. Home teaching, bishopric’s work, and other Church duties are all important, but the most important work is within the walls of your home” (Strengthening the Home [pamphlet, 1973], p. 7).

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What, then, is a father's specific responsibility within the sacred walls of his home? May I suggest two basic responsibilities of every father in Israel.

Fathers, yours is an eternal calling from which you are never released.

## **Provide for Material Needs**

First, you have a sacred responsibility to provide for the material needs of your family.

The Lord clearly defined the roles of providing for and rearing a righteous posterity. In the beginning, Adam, not Eve, was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow.

The Apostle Paul counsels husbands and fathers, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

Early in the history of the restored Church, the Lord specifically charged men with the obligation to provide for their wives and family. In January of 1832 He said, "Verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown" (D&C 75:28). Three months later the Lord said again, "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken" (D&C 83:2). This is the divine right of a wife and mother. While she cares for and



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nourishes her children at home, her husband earns the living for the family, which makes this nourishing possible.

In a home where there is an able-bodied husband, he is expected to be the breadwinner. Sometimes we hear of husbands who, because of economic conditions, have lost their jobs and expect the wives to go out of the home and work, even though the husband is still capable of providing for his family. In these cases, we urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting may have to be tighter.

Also, the need for education or material things does not justify the postponing of children in order to keep the wife working as the breadwinner of the family.

## **Counsel of President Kimball**

I remember the counsel of our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball to married students. He said: “I have told tens of thousands of young folks that when they marry they should not wait for children until they have finished their schooling and financial desires. ... They should live together normally and let the children come. ...

“... I know of no scriptures,” President Kimball continued, “where an authorization is given to young wives to withhold their families and go to work to put their husbands through school. There are thousands of husbands who have worked their own way through

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school and have reared families at the same time” (“Marriage Is Honorable,” in *Speeches of the Year, 1973* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974], p. 263).

## A Mother’s Role in the Home

Brethren of the priesthood, I continue to emphasize the importance of mothers staying home to nurture, care for, and train their children in the principles of righteousness.

As I travel throughout the Church, I feel that the great majority of Latter-day Saint mothers earnestly want to follow this counsel. But we know that sometimes the mother works outside of the home at the encouragement, or even insistence, of her husband. It is he who wants the items of convenience that the extra income can buy. Not only will the family suffer in such instances, brethren, but your own spiritual growth and progression will be hampered. I say to all of you, the Lord has charged men with the responsibility to provide for their families in such a way that the wife is allowed to fulfill her role as mother in the home.

## Family Preparedness More Urgent Today

Fathers, another vital aspect of providing for the material needs of your family is the provision you should be making for your family in case of an emergency. Family preparedness has been a long-established welfare principle. It is even more urgent today.

I ask you earnestly, have you provided for your family a year’s sup-

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ply of food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel? The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.

Also, are you living within your income and saving a little?

Are you honest with the Lord in the payment of your tithes? Living this divine law will bring both spiritual and material blessings.

Yes, brethren, as fathers in Israel you have a great responsibility to provide for the material needs of your family and to have the necessary provisions in case of emergency.

## **Provide Spiritual Leadership**

Second, you have a sacred responsibility to provide spiritual leadership in your family.

In a pamphlet published some years ago by the Council of the Twelve, we said the following: “Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home” (Father, Consider Your Ways [pamphlet, 1973], pp. 4–5).

However, along with that presiding position come important obligations. We sometimes hear accounts of men, even in the Church, who think that being head of the home somehow puts them in a superior role and allows them to dictate and make demands upon

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their family.

The Apostle Paul points out that “the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23; italics added). That is the model we are to follow in our role of presiding in the home. We do not find the Savior leading the Church with a harsh or unkind hand. We do not find the Savior treating His Church with disrespect or neglect. We do not find the Savior using force or coercion to accomplish His purposes. Nowhere do we find the Savior doing anything but that which edifies, uplifts, comforts, and exalts the Church. Brethren, I say to you with all soberness, He is the model we must follow as we take the spiritual lead in our families.

Particularly is this true in your relationship with your wife.

## Love Your Wives

Here again the counsel from the Apostle Paul is most beautiful and to the point. He said simply, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church” (Ephesians 5:25).

In latter-day revelation the Lord speaks again of this obligation. He said, “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C 42:22). To my knowledge there is only one other thing in all scripture that we are commanded to love with all our hearts, and that is God Himself. Think what that means!

This kind of love can be shown for your wives in so many ways. First



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and foremost, nothing except God Himself takes priority over your wife in your life—not work, not recreation, not hobbies. Your wife is your precious, eternal helpmate—your companion.

What does it mean to love someone with all your heart? It means to love with all your emotional feelings and with all your devotion. Surely when you love your wife with all your heart, you cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her, or abuse her by words, sullen behavior, or actions.

What does it mean to “cleave unto her”? It means to stay close to her, to be loyal and faithful to her, to communicate with her, and to express your love for her.

Love means being sensitive to her feelings and needs. She wants to be noticed and treasured. She wants to be told that you view her as lovely and attractive and important to you. Love means putting her welfare and self-esteem as a high priority in your life.

You should be grateful that she is the mother of your children and the queen of your home, grateful that she has chosen homemaking and motherhood—to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train your children—as the noblest calling of all.

Husbands, recognize your wife’s intelligence and her ability to counsel with you as a real partner regarding family plans, family activities, and family budgeting. Don’t be stingy with your time or with your means.

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Give her the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially as well as spiritually.

Remember, brethren, love can be nurtured and nourished by little tokens. Flowers on special occasions are wonderful, but so is your willingness to help with the dishes, change diapers, get up with a crying child in the night, and leave the television or the newspaper to help with the dinner. Those are the quiet ways we say “I love you” with our actions. They bring rich dividends for such little effort.

This kind of loving priesthood leadership applies to your children as well as to your wife.

## A Father's Role in the Home

Mothers play an important role as the heart of the home, but this in no way lessens the equally important role fathers should play, as head of the home, in nurturing, training, and loving their children.

As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life. You should take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline.

Your homes should be havens of peace and joy for your family. Surely no child should fear his own father—especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, conten-

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tion, or unrighteous behavior. The powerful effect of righteous fathers in setting an example, disciplining and training, nurturing and loving is vital to the spiritual welfare of his children.

## **Give Spiritual Leadership**

With love in my heart for the fathers in Israel, may I suggest ten specific ways that fathers can give spiritual leadership to their children:

1. Give father's blessings to your children. Baptize and confirm your children. Ordain your sons to the priesthood. These will become spiritual highlights in the lives of your children.
2. Personally direct family prayers, daily scripture reading, and weekly family home evenings. Your personal involvement will show your children how important these activities really are.
3. Whenever possible, attend Church meetings together as a family. Family worship under your leadership is vital to your children's spiritual welfare.
4. Go on daddy-daughter dates and father-and-sons' outings with your children. As a family, go on campouts and picnics, to ball games and recitals, to school programs, and so forth. Having Dad there makes all the difference.
5. Build traditions of family vacations and trips and outings. These memories will never be forgotten by your children.
6. Have regular one-on-one visits with your children. Let them talk about what they would like to. Teach them gospel principles. Teach them true values. Tell them you love them. Personal time with your children tells them where Dad puts his priorities.
7. Teach your children to work, and show them the value of work-

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ing toward a worthy goal. Establishing mission funds and education funds for your children shows them what Dad considers to be important.

8. Encourage good music and art and literature in your homes.

Homes that have a spirit of refinement and beauty will bless the lives of your children forever.

9. As distances allow, regularly attend the temple with your wife.

Your children will then better understand the importance of temple marriage and temple vows and the eternal family unit.

10. Have your children see your joy and satisfaction in service to the Church. This can become contagious to them, so they, too, will want to serve in the Church and will love the kingdom.

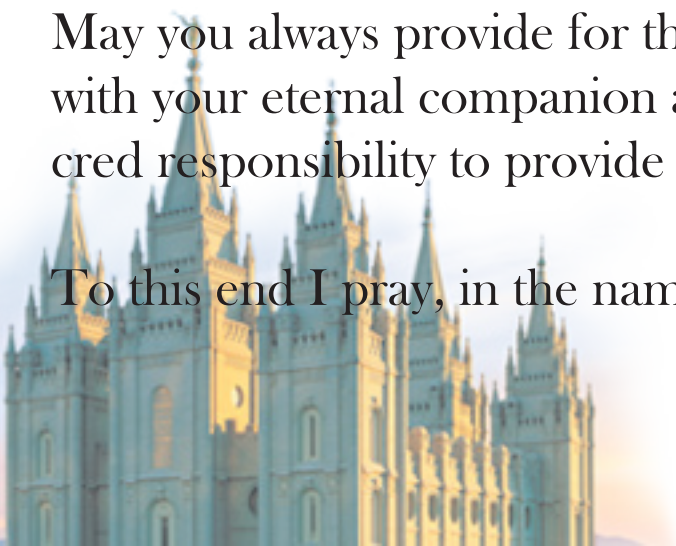
## Your Most Important Calling

Oh, husbands and fathers in Israel, you can do so much for the salvation and exaltation of your families! Your responsibilities are so important.

Remember your sacred calling as a father in Israel—your most important calling in time and eternity—a calling from which you will never be released.

May you always provide for the material needs of your family and, with your eternal companion at your side, may you fulfill your sacred responsibility to provide the spiritual leadership in your home.

To this end I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.





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## **Women's Divine Roles and Responsibilities Selected Teachings**

### The Divine Work of Women

#### The Prophet Joseph Smith

“Let this Society teach women how to behave towards their husbands, to treat them with mildness and affection. When a man is borne down with trouble, when he is perplexed with care and difficulty, if he can meet a smile instead of an argument or a murmur—if he can meet with mildness, it will calm down his soul and soothe his feelings; when the mind is going to despair, it needs a solace of affection and kindness” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 228).

#### President Heber J. Grant

“There seems to be a power which the mother possesses in shaping the life of the child that is far superior, in my judgment, to the power of the father, and this almost without exception. ... After all it is by love, real genuine love of our fellows, that we accomplish the most. A mother's love seems to be the most perfect and the most sincere, the strongest of any love we know anything about. I, for one, rejoice in it because of its wonderful example to me” (Gospel Standards, 152).

#### President George Albert Smith

“Woman has filled a wonderful part in the march of progress, but

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most important of all the duties that have been laid upon the gentler sex, is the duty of bringing into the world and rearing, the children of our Heavenly Father” (Sharing the Gospel with Others, 139).

President David O. McKay

“Motherhood consists of three principal attributes or qualities: namely, (1) the power to bear, (2) the ability to rear, (3) the gift to love. ...

“This ability and willingness properly to rear children, the gift to love, and eagerness, yes, longing to express it in soul development, make motherhood the noblest office or calling in the world” (Gospel Ideals, 453).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Marriage is a partnership. Each is given a part of the work of life to do. The fact that some women and men disregard their work and their opportunities does not change the program.

“When we speak of marriage as a partnership, let us speak of marriage as a full partnership. We do not want our LDS women to be silent partners or limited partners in that eternal assignment! Please be a contributing and full partner” (“Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” Ensign, Nov. 1978, 106).

“The Lord organized the whole program in the beginning with a father who procreates, provides, and loves and directs, and a moth-

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er who conceives and bears and nurtures and feeds and trains. The Lord could have organized it otherwise but chose to have a unit with responsibility and purposeful associations where children train and discipline each other and come to love, honor, and appreciate each other. The family is the great plan of life as conceived and organized by our Father in heaven” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 151; or Ensign, July 1973, 15).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“It is divinely ordained what a woman should do. ... The divine work of women involves companionship, homemaking, and motherhood” (“In His Steps,” 64).

“Brethren of the priesthood, I continue to emphasize the importance of mothers staying home to nurture, care for, and train their children in the principles of righteousness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 60; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, 49; see also To the Fathers in Israel, 3-4).

President Ezra Taft Benson  
President of the Church  
Fireside address, 22 Feb. 1987

There is no theme I would rather speak to than home and family, for they are at the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church, in large part, exists for the salvation and exaltation of the family.

At a recent general priesthood meeting, I spoke directly to the

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young men of the Aaronic Priesthood regarding their duties and responsibilities. Shortly thereafter, at a general women's conference, I spoke to the young women of the Church, discussing their opportunities and their sacred callings.

Tonight, at this fireside for parents, seeking the sweet inspiration of heaven, I would like to speak directly to the mothers assembled here and throughout the Church, for you are, or should be, the very heart and soul of the family.

## No More Noble Work

No more sacred word exists in secular or holy writ than that of mother. There is no more noble work than that of a good and God-fearing mother.

This evening I pay tribute to the mothers in Zion and pray with all my heart that what I have to say to you will be understood by the Spirit and will lift and bless your lives in your sacred callings as mothers.

President David O. McKay declared: "Motherhood is the greatest potential influence either for good or ill in human life. The mother's image is the first that stamps itself on the unwritten page of the young child's mind. It is her caress that first awakens a sense of security; her kiss, the first realization of affection; her sympathy and tenderness, the first assurance that there is love in the world."

President McKay continues: "Motherhood consists of three princi-



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pal attributes or qualities: namely, (1) the power to bear, (2) the ability to rear, (3) the gift to love. ...

“This ability and willingness properly to rear children, the gift to love, and eagerness, yes, longing to express it in soul development, make motherhood the noblest office or calling in the world. She who can paint a masterpiece or write a book that will influence millions deserves the admiration and the plaudits of mankind; but she who rears successfully a family of healthy, beautiful sons and daughters, whose influence will be felt through generations to come, ... deserves the highest honor that man can give, and the choicest blessings of God” (Gospel Ideals, 452–54).

With all my heart I endorse the words of President McKay.

## **A Mother's Role Is God-Ordained**

In the eternal family, God established that fathers are to preside in the home. Fathers are to provide, to love, to teach, and to direct.

But a mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train. So declare the revelations.

In section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states that the opportunity and responsibility of wives is “to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father contin-

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ued, that he may be glorified” (D&C 132:63).

## Husbands and Wives Are Co-Creators

With this divine injunction, husbands and wives, as co-creators, should eagerly and prayerfully invite children into their homes. Then, as each child joins their family circle, they can gratefully exclaim, as did Hannah, “For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:27–28).

Isn’t that beautiful? A mother praying to bear a child and then giving him to the Lord.

I have always loved the words of Solomon: “Children are an heritage of the Lord: and ... happy is the man [and woman] that hath [their] quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3–5).

I know the special blessings of a large and happy family, for my dear parents had a quiver full of children. Being the oldest of eleven children, I saw the principles of unselfishness, mutual consideration, loyalty to each other, and a host of other virtues developed in a large and wonderful family with my noble mother as the queen of that home.

Young mothers and fathers, with all my heart I counsel you not to postpone having your children, being co-creators with our Father in Heaven.

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Do not use the reasoning of the world, such as, “We’ll wait until we can better afford having children, until we are more secure, until John has completed his education, until he has a better-paying job, until we have a larger home, until we’ve obtained a few of the material conveniences,” and on and on.

This is the reasoning of the world, and is not pleasing in the sight of God. Mothers who enjoy good health, have your children and have them early. And, husbands, always be considerate of your wives in the bearing of children.

Do not curtail the number of your children for personal or selfish reasons. Material possessions, social convenience, and so-called professional advantages are nothing compared to a righteous posterity. In the eternal perspective, children—not possessions, not position, not prestige—are our greatest jewels.

Brigham Young emphasized: “There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty?—To prepare tabernacles for them; to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked, where they will be trained in wickedness, debauchery, and every species of crime. It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], p. 197).

Yes, blessed is the husband and wife who have a family of children. The deepest joys and blessings in life are associated with family, par-

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enthood, and sacrifice. To have those sweet spirits come into the home is worth practically any sacrifice.

The deepest joys and blessings in life are associated with family, parenthood, and sacrifice.

## Special Promises of God

We realize that some women, through no fault of their own, are not able to bear children. To these lovely sisters, every prophet of God has promised that they will be blessed with children in the eternities and that posterity will not be denied them.

Through pure faith, pleading prayers, fasting, and special priesthood blessings, many of these same lovely sisters, with their noble companions at their sides, have had miracles take place in their lives and have been blessed with children. Others have prayerfully chosen to adopt children, and to these wonderful couples we salute you for the sacrifices and love you have given to those children you have chosen to be your own.

## Rearing Children the Lord's Way

Now, my dear mothers, knowing of your divine role to bear and rear children and bring them back to Him, how will you accomplish this in the Lord's way? I say the "Lord's way," because it is different from the world's way.

The Lord clearly defined the roles of mothers and fathers in provid-



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ing for and rearing a righteous posterity. In the beginning, Adam—not Eve—was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow. Contrary to conventional wisdom, a mother’s calling is in the home, not in the marketplace.

Again, in the Doctrine and Covenants, we read: “Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken” (D&C 83:2). This is the divine right of a wife and mother. She cares for and nourishes her children at home. Her husband earns the living for the family, which makes this nourishing possible. With that claim on their husbands for their financial support, the counsel of the Church has always been for mothers to spend their full time in the home in rearing and caring for their children.

We realize also that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule.

In a home where there is an able-bodied husband, he is expected to be the breadwinner. Sometimes we hear of husbands who, because of economic conditions, have lost their jobs and expect their wives to go out of the home and work even though the husband is still capable of providing for his family. In these cases, we urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting will have to be tighter.

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## Counsel of President Kimball

Our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball had much to say about the role of mothers in the home and their callings and responsibilities. I am impressed tonight to share with you some of his inspired pronouncements. I fear that much of his counsel has gone unheeded, and families have suffered because of it. But I stand this evening as a second witness to the truthfulness of what President Spencer W. Kimball said. He spoke as a true prophet of God.

President Kimball declared: “Women are to take care of the family—the Lord has so stated—to be an assistant to the husband, to work with him, but not to earn the living, except in unusual circumstances. Men ought to be men indeed and earn the living under normal circumstances” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ... p. 318).

President Kimball continues: “Too many mothers work away from home to furnish sweaters and music lessons and trips and fun for their children. Too many women spend their time in socializing, in politicking, in public services when they should be home to teach and train and receive and love their children into security” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 319).

Remember the counsel of President Kimball to John and Mary: “Mary, you are to become a career woman in the greatest career on earth—that of homemaker, wife, and mother. It was never intended by the Lord that married women should compete with men in employment. They have a far greater and more important service to render” (Faith Precedes the Miracle [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book

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Co., 1975], p. 128).

Again President Kimball speaks: “The husband is expected to support his family and only in an emergency should a wife secure outside employment. Her place is in the home, to build the home into a heaven of delight.

“Numerous divorces can be traced directly to the day when the wife left the home and went out into the world into employment. Two incomes raise the standard of living beyond its norm. Two spouses working prevent the complete and proper home life, break into the family prayers, create an independence which is not cooperative, causes distortion, limits the family, and frustrates the children already born” (fireside address, San Antonio, Texas, 3 Dec. 1977).

Finally, President Kimball counsels: “I beg of you, you who could and should be bearing and rearing a family: wives, come home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the factory, the café. No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother—cooking meals, washing dishes, making beds for one’s precious husband and children. Come home, wives, to your husbands. Make home a heaven for them. Come home, wives, to your children, born and unborn. Wrap the motherly cloak about you and, unembarrassed, help in a major role to create the bodies for the immortal souls who anxiously await.

“When you have fully complemented your husband in home life and borne the children, growing up full of faith, integrity, responsibility, and goodness, then you have achieved your accomplishment

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supreme, without peer, and you will be the envy [of all] through time and eternity” (fireside address, San Antonio, Texas).

President Kimball spoke the truth. His words are prophetic.

No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother.

## Ten Ways to Spend Time with Children

Mothers in Zion, your God-given roles are so vital to your own exaltation and to the salvation and exaltation of your family. A child needs a mother more than all the things money can buy. Spending time with your children is the greatest gift of all.

With love in my heart for the mothers in Zion, I would now like to suggest ten specific ways our mothers may spend effective time with their children.

Be at the Crossroads. First, take time to always be at the crossroads when your children are either coming or going—when they leave and return from school, when they leave and return from dates, when they bring friends home. Be there at the crossroads whether your children are six or sixteen. In Proverbs we read, “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). Among the greatest concerns in our society are the millions of latchkey children who come home daily to empty houses, unsupervised by working parents.



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**Be a Real Friend.** Second, mothers, take time to be a real friend to your children. Listen to your children, really listen. Talk with them, laugh and joke with them, sing with them, play with them, cry with them, hug them, honestly praise them. Yes, regularly spend unrushed one-on-one time with each child. Be a real friend to your children.

**Read to Your Children.** Third, mothers, take time to read to your children. Starting from the cradle, read to your sons and daughters. Remember what the poet said:

You may have tangible wealth untold;  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.  
Richer than I you can never be—  
I had a mother who read to me.  
(Strickland Gillilan, “The Reading Mother.”)

You will plant a love for good literature and a real love for the scriptures if you will read to your children regularly.

**Pray with Your Children.** Fourth, take time to pray with your children. Family prayers, under the direction of the father, should be held morning and night. Have your children feel of your faith as you call down the blessings of heaven upon them. Paraphrasing the words of James, “The ... fervent prayer of a righteous [mother] availeth much” (James 5:16). Have your children participate in family and personal prayers, and rejoice in their sweet utterances to their Father in Heaven.

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**Have Weekly Home Evenings.** Fifth, take time to have a meaningful weekly home evening. With your husband presiding, participate in a spiritual and an uplifting home evening each week. Have your children actively involved. Teach them correct principles. Make this one of your great family traditions. Remember the marvelous promise made by President Joseph F. Smith when home evenings were first introduced to the Church: “If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influence and temptations which beset them” (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 4:339). This wonderful promise is still in effect today.

**Be Together at Mealtimes.** Sixth, take time to be together at mealtimes as often as possible. This is a challenge as the children get older and lives get busier. But happy conversation, sharing of the day’s plans and activities, and special teaching moments occur at mealtime because mothers and fathers and children work at it.

**Read Scriptures Daily.** Seventh, take time daily to read the scriptures together as a family. Individual scripture reading is important, but family scripture reading is vital. Reading the Book of Mormon together as a family will especially bring increased spirituality into your home and will give both parents and children the power to resist temptation and to have the Holy Ghost as their constant companion. I promise you that the Book of Mormon will change the lives of your family.

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**Do Things as a Family.** Eighth, take time to do things together as a family. Make family outings and picnics and birthday celebrations and trips special times and memory builders. Whenever possible, attend, as a family, events where one of the family members is involved, such as a school play, a ball game, a talk, a recital. Attend church meetings together and sit together as a family when you can. Mothers who help families pray and play together will stay together and will bless children's lives forever.

**Teach Your Children.** Ninth, mothers, take time to teach your children. Catch the teaching moments. This can be done anytime during the day—at mealtime, in casual settings, or at special sit-down times together, at the foot of the bed at the end of the day, or during an early morning walk together. Mothers, you are your children's best teacher. Don't shift this precious responsibility to day-care centers or baby-sitters. A mother's love and prayerful concern for the children are her most important ingredients in teaching her own.

Teach children gospel principles. Teach them it pays to be good. Teach them there is no safety in sin. Teach them a love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a testimony of its divinity.

Teach your sons and daughters modesty, and teach them to respect manhood and womanhood. Teach your children sexual purity, proper dating standards, temple marriage, missionary service, and the importance of accepting and magnifying Church callings.

Teach them a love for work and the value of a good education.

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Teach them the importance of the right kind of entertainment, including appropriate movies and videos and music and books and magazines. Discuss the evils of pornography and drugs, and teach them the value of living the clean life.

Yes, mothers, teach your children the gospel in your own home, at your own fireside. This is the most effective teaching that your children will ever receive. This is the Lord's way of teaching. The Church cannot teach like you can. The school cannot. The day-care center cannot. But you can, and the Lord will sustain you. Your children will remember your teachings forever, and when they are old, they will not depart from them. They will call you blessed—their truly angel mother.

Mothers, this kind of heavenly, motherly teaching takes time—lots of time. It cannot be done effectively part-time. It must be done all the time in order to save and exalt your children. This is your divine calling.

Truly Love Your Children. Tenth and finally, mothers, take the time to truly love your children. A mother's unqualified love approaches Christlike love.

Here is a beautiful tribute by a son to his mother: "I don't remember much about her views of voting nor her social prestige; and what her ideas on child training, diet, and eugenics were, I cannot recall. The main thing that sifts back to me now through the thick undergrowth of years is that she loved me. She liked to lie on the grass



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with me and tell stories, or to run and hide with us children. She was always hugging me. And I liked it. She had a sunny face. To me it was like God, and all the beatitudes saints tell of Him. And Sing! Of all the sensations pleasurable to my life nothing can compare with the rapture of crawling up into her lap and going to sleep while she swung to and fro in her rocking chair and sang. Thinking of this, I wonder if the woman of today, with all her tremendous notions and plans, realizes what an almighty factor she is in shaping of her child for weal or woe. I wonder if she realizes how much sheer love and attention count for in a child's life."

Mothers, your teenage children also need that same kind of love and attention. It seems easier for many mothers and fathers to express and show their love to their children when they are young, but more difficult when they are older. Work at this prayerfully. There need be no generation gap. And the key is love. Our young people need love and attention, not indulgence. They need empathy and understanding, not indifference from mothers and fathers. They need the parents' time. A mother's kindly teachings and her love for and confidence in a teenage son or daughter can literally save them from a wicked world.

## Blessings of the Lord upon Parents

In closing, I would be remiss this evening if I did not express my love and eternal gratitude for my sweetheart and companion and the mother of our six children. Her devotion to motherhood has blessed me and our family beyond words of expression. She has been a marvelous mother, completely and happily devoting her life and her

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mission to her family. How grateful I am for Flora!

May I also express my gratitude to you fathers and husbands assembled this evening. We look to you to give righteous leadership in your home and families and, with your companions and the mothers of your children, to lead your families back to our Eternal Father.

Now God bless our wonderful mothers. We pray for you. We sustain you. We honor you as you bear, nourish, train, teach, and love for eternity. I promise you the blessings of heaven and “all that [the] Father hath” (see D&C 84:38) as you magnify the noblest calling of all—a mother in Zion. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

“A mother’s role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train. They are to be helpmates, and are to counsel with their husbands” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 6; or Ensign, May 1984, 6).

“It is divinely ordained what a woman should do, but a man must seek out his work. The divine work of women involves companionship, homemaking, and motherhood. It is well if skills in these three areas can first be learned in the parents’ home and then be supplemented at school if the need or desire presents itself” (“In His Steps,” 64).

“There are voices in our midst which would attempt to convince you that these home-centered truths are not applicable to our present-day conditions. If you listen and heed, you will be lured away

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from your principal obligations.

“Beguiling voices in the world cry out for ‘alternative life-styles’ for women. They maintain that some women are better suited for careers than for marriage and motherhood.

“These individuals spread their discontent by the propaganda that there are more exciting and self-fulfilling roles for women than homemaking. Some even have been bold to suggest that the Church move away from the ‘Mormon woman stereotype’ of homemaking and rearing children. They also say it is wise to limit your family so you can have more time for personal goals and self-fulfillment” (“The Honored Place of Woman,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 105).

President Howard W. Hunter

“Mothers are given a sacred privilege to ‘bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of [the] Father continued, that he may be glorified’ (D&C 132:63).

“The First Presidency has said: ‘Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind’ (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:178). The priesthood cannot work out its destiny, nor can God’s purposes be fulfilled, without our helpmates. Mothers perform a labor the priesthood cannot do. For this gift of life, the priesthood should have love unbounded for the mothers of their children. ...

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“... The Lord has commanded that women and children have claim on their husbands and fathers for their maintenance (see D&C 83; 1 Timothy 5:8). President Ezra Taft Benson has stated that when a husband encourages or insists that his wife work out of the home for their convenience, ‘not only will the family suffer in such instances, ... but [his] own spiritual growth and progression will be hampered’ (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, pp. 60–61; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, p. 49)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 67, 69; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 50–51).

## The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. ...

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalms 127:3). ...

“... By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when



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needed” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

Elder Ezra Taft Benson

“One apparent impact of the women’s movement has been the feelings of discontent it has created among young women who have chosen the role of wife and mother. They are often made to feel that there are more exciting and self-fulfilling roles for women than housework, diaper changing, and children calling for mother. This view loses sight of the eternal perspective that God elected women to the noble role of mother and that exaltation is eternal fatherhood and eternal motherhood (‘To the Elect Women of the Kingdom of God,’ Nauvoo Illinois Relief Society Dedication, 30 June 1978)” (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, 548).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Beware of the subtle ways Satan employs to take you from the plan of God [2 Nephi 9:13] and true happiness. One of Satan’s most effective approaches is to demean the role of wife and mother in the home. This is an attack at the very heart of God’s plan to foster love between husband and wife and to nurture children in an atmosphere of understanding, peace, appreciation, and support. Much of the violence that is rampant in the world today is the harvest of weakened homes. Government and social plans will not effectively correct that, nor can the best efforts of schools and churches fully compensate for the absence of the tender care of a compassionate mother and wife in the home.

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“This morning President Hinckley spoke of the importance of a mother in the home. Study his message. As a mother guided by the Lord, you weave a fabric of character in your children from threads of truth through careful instruction and worthy example. You imbue the traits of honesty, faith in God, duty, respect for others, kindness, self-confidence, and the desire to contribute, to learn, and to give in your trusting children’s minds and hearts. No day-care center can do that. It is your sacred right and privilege.

“Of course, as a woman you can do exceptionally well in the workplace, but is that the best use of your divinely appointed talents and feminine traits? As a husband, don’t encourage your wife to go to work to help in your divinely appointed responsibility of providing resources for the family, if you can possibly avoid it. As the prophets have counseled, to the extent possible with the help of the Lord, as parents, work together to keep Mother in the home. Your presence there will strengthen the self-confidence of your children and decrease the chance of emotional challenges. Moreover, as you teach truth by word and example, those children will come to understand who they are and what they can obtain as divine children of Father in Heaven” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 102; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 74–75).

Sister Patricia T. Holland

“Eve was given the identity of ‘the mother of all living’ ... before she ever bore a child. It would appear that her motherhood preceded her maternity, just as surely as the perfection of the Garden preceded the struggles of mortality. I believe mother is one of those very

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carefully chosen words, one of those rich words—with meaning after meaning after meaning. We must not, at all costs, let that word divide us. I believe with all of my heart that it is first and foremost a statement about nature, not a head count of our children.

“... Some women give birth and raise children but never ‘mother’ them. Others, whom I love with all my heart, ‘mother’ all their lives but have never given birth. And all of us are Eve’s daughters, whether we are married or single, maternal or barren. We are created in the image of the Gods to become gods and goddesses” (“‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 33).

## What Is a Help Meet?

President Howard W. Hunter

“A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. Of necessity there must be in the Church and in the home a presiding officer (see D&C 107:21). By divine appointment, the responsibility to preside in the home rests upon the priesthood holder (see Moses 4:22). The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (meet means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership. Presiding in righteousness necessitates a shared responsibility between husband and wife; together you act with knowledge and participation in all family matters. For a man to operate independently of or without regard to the feelings and counsel of his wife in govern-

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ing the family is to exercise unrighteous dominion” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 50–51).





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## **Women of the Church**

President Gordon B. Hinckley President of the Church

In Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 90-95; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 67-70

### **Women Are Essential to God's Plan**

Half, possibly more than half, of the adult members of the Church are women. It is to them that I wish particularly to speak this morning. I do so with the hope that the men will also hear.

First let me say to you sisters that you do not hold a second place in our Father's plan for the eternal happiness and well-being of His children. You are an absolutely essential part of that plan.

Without you the plan could not function. Without you the entire program would be frustrated. As I have said before from this pulpit, when the process of creation occurred, Jehovah, the Creator, under instruction from His Father, first divided the light from the darkness and then separated the land from the waters. There followed the creation of plant life, followed by the creation of animal life. Then came the creation of man, and culminating that act of divinity came the crowning act, the creation of woman.

Each of you is a daughter of God, endowed with a divine birthright. You need no defense of that position.

Great Strength in Women of the Church

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As I go about from place to place, I am interviewed by representatives of the media. Invariably they ask about the place of women in the Church. They do so in an almost accusatory tone, as if we denigrate and demean women. I invariably reply that I know of no other organization in all the world which affords women so many opportunities for development, for sociality, for the accomplishment of great good, for holding positions of leadership and responsibility.

I wish all of these reporters could have been in the Tabernacle a week ago Saturday when the general Relief Society meeting was held. It was an inspiration to look into the faces of that vast gathering of the daughters of God, women of faith and ability, women who know what life is about and have something of a sense of the divinity of their creation. I wish they could have heard that great chorus of young women from Brigham Young University, who touched our hearts with the beauty of their singing. I wish they could have heard the stirring messages of the Relief Society general presidency, each of whom spoke on a phase of the subject faith, hope, and charity.

What able people these women are. They express themselves with power and conviction and great persuasiveness. President Faust concluded that service with a wonderful talk.

If those reporters who are prone to raise this question could have sat in that vast congregation, they would have known, even without further inquiry, that there is strength and great capacity in the women of this Church. There is leadership and direction, a certain spirit of independence, and yet great satisfaction in being a part of this, the

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Lord's kingdom, and of working hand in hand with the priesthood to move it forward.

## The Real Builders of the Nation

Many of you are here today who were in that meeting. Today you are seated with your husbands, men whom you love and honor and respect, and who in turn love and honor and respect you. You know how fortunate you are to be married to a good man who is your companion in life and who will be your companion throughout eternity. Together, as you have served in many capacities and reared your families and provided for them, you have faced a variety of storms and come through them all with your heads held high. Most of you are mothers, and very many of you are grandmothers and even great-grandmothers. You have walked the sometimes painful, sometimes joyous path of parenthood. You have walked hand in hand with God in the great process of bringing children into the world that they might experience this estate along the road of immortality and eternal life. It has not been easy rearing a family. Most of you have had to sacrifice and skimp and labor night and day. As I think of you and your circumstances, I think of the words of Anne Campbell, who wrote as she looked upon her children:

You are the trip I did not take;  
You are the pearls I cannot buy;  
You are my blue Italian lake;  
You are my piece of foreign sky.

["To My Child," quoted in Charles L. Wallis, ed., *The Treasure Chest* (1965), 54]

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You sisters are the real builders of the nation wherever you live, for you have created homes of strength and peace and security. These become the very sinew of any nation.

## Rebuke to Abusers

Unfortunately a few of you may be married to men who are abusive. Some of them put on a fine face before the world during the day and come home in the evening, set aside their self-discipline, and on the slightest provocation fly into outbursts of anger.

No man who engages in such evil and unbecoming behavior is worthy of the priesthood of God. No man who so conducts himself is worthy of the privileges of the house of the Lord. I regret that there are some men undeserving of the love of their wives and children. There are children who fear their fathers, and wives who fear their husbands. If there be any such men within the hearing of my voice, as a servant of the Lord I rebuke you and call you to repentance. Discipline yourselves. Master your temper. Most of the things that make you angry are of very small consequence. And what a terrible price you are paying for your anger. Ask the Lord to forgive you. Ask your wife to forgive you. Apologize to your children.

## Advice to Single Women

There are many women among us who are single. Generally this is not of their own choice. Some have never had the opportunity to marry one with whom they would wish to spend eternity.



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To you single women who wish to be married, I repeat what I recently said in a meeting for singles in this Tabernacle:

“Do not give up hope. And do not give up trying. But do give up being obsessed with it. The chances are that if you forget about it and become anxiously engaged in other activities, the prospects will brighten immeasurably. ...

“I believe that for most of us the best medicine for loneliness is work, service in behalf of others. I do not minimize your problems, but I do not hesitate to say that there are many others whose problems are more serious than are yours. Reach out to serve them, to help them, to encourage them. There are so many boys and girls who fail in school for want of a little personal attention and encouragement. There are so many elderly people who live in misery and loneliness and fear for whom a simple conversation would bring a measure of hope and happiness” (Salt Lake Valley single adult fire-side, 22 Sept. 1996).

## Assist Women Who Have Lost Husbands

Included among the women of the Church are those who have lost their husbands through abandonment, divorce, and death. Great is our obligation to you. As the scriptures declare, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

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I received a letter from one who counts herself fortunate, and indeed fortunate she is. She writes:

“Although I have been raising our four boys as a single parent, ... I am not alone. I have a wonderful ‘ward family’ that has rallied around us. ...

“My Relief Society president has been there for me through my greatest hardships, encouraging my spiritual growth, personal prayer, and temple attendance.

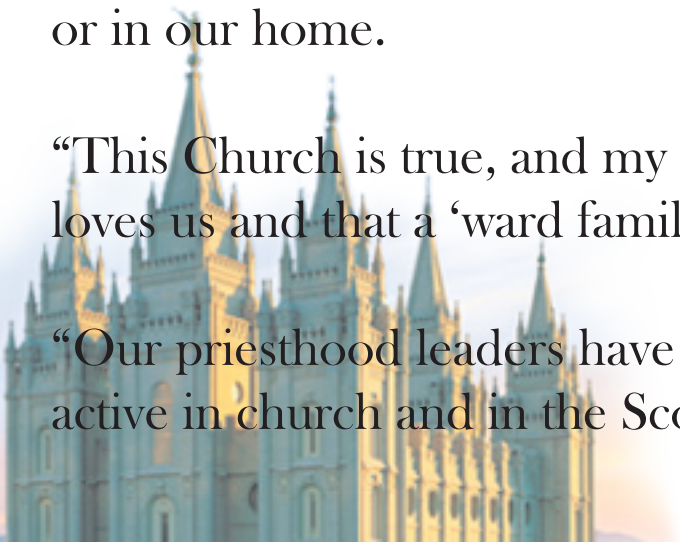
“Our bishop has been generous in providing needed food and clothing and has helped send two of the boys to camp. He has had interviews with all of us and given each of us blessings and needed encouragement. He has helped me to budget and do what I can to help my family.

“Our home teachers have come regularly and even gave the boys blessings as they started the new school year.

“Our stake president and his counselors have checked in on us on a regular basis by taking time to visit with us at church, on the phone, or in our home.

“This Church is true, and my boys and I are living proof that God loves us and that a ‘ward family’ can make all the difference.

“Our priesthood leaders have been instrumental in keeping the boys active in church and in the Scouting program. [One] is an Eagle



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Scout and is receiving his fourth palm this week. [Another] is an Eagle with three palms. And [a third] has just turned in his Eagle papers this week. The youngest is a Webelos and loves Cub Scouts.

“We are always met with loving hearts and warm handshakes. The Christlike attitude of the stake and our ward has helped us through trials we never imagined possible.

“Life has been hard, ... but we put on the whole armor of God as we kneel in family prayer ... , asking for help and guidance and sharing thanks for the blessings we have received. I pray daily for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost to guide me as I raise these boys to be missionaries and encourage them to be true to the gospel and the priesthood they hold.

“I am proud to say I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know this Church is true. I sustain my Church leaders. We are doing well, and I thank everyone for their love and prayers and acceptance.”

What a great letter that is! How much it says about the way this Church functions and should function throughout the world. I hope that every woman who finds herself in the kind of circumstances in which this woman lives is similarly blessed with an understanding and helpful bishop, with a Relief Society president who knows how to assist her, with home teachers who know where their duty lies and how to fulfill it, and with a host of ward members who are helpful without being intrusive.

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I have never met the woman whose letter I have read. Notwithstanding the cheerful attitude she conveys, I am sure there has been much of struggle and loneliness and, at times, fear. I notice that she works to provide for her needs and the needs of her boys, who are in their teens. I assume her income is inadequate, because she indicates that the bishop has helped them with food and clothing.

## *Advice on Employment outside the Home*

Some years ago President Benson delivered a message to the women of the Church. He encouraged them to leave their employment and give their individual time to their children. I sustain the position which he took.

Nevertheless, I recognize, as he recognized, that there are some women (it has become very many, in fact) who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries. The greatest job that any mother will ever do will be in nurturing, teaching, lifting, encouraging, and rearing her children in righteousness and truth. None other can adequately take her place.

It is well-nigh impossible to be a full-time homemaker and a full-time employee. I know how some of you struggle with decisions concerning this matter. I repeat, do the very best you can. You know your circumstances, and I know that you are deeply concerned for the welfare of your children. Each of you has a bishop who will



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counsel with you and assist you. If you feel you need to speak with an understanding woman, do not hesitate to get in touch with your Relief Society president.

To the mothers of this Church, every mother who is here today, I want to say that as the years pass, you will become increasingly grateful for that which you did in molding the lives of your children in the direction of righteousness and goodness, integrity and faith. That is most likely to happen if you can spend adequate time with them.

## *Advice to Single Parents*

For you who are single parents, I say that many hands stand ready to help you. The Lord is not unmindful of you. Neither is His Church.

May He bless you, my beloved sisters who find yourselves in the situation of single parenthood. May you have health, strength, vitality to carry the heavy burden that is yours. May you have loving friends and associates to bear you up in your times of trial. You know the power of prayer as perhaps few others do. Many of you spend much time on your knees speaking with your Father in Heaven, with tears running down your cheeks. Please know that we also pray for you.

With all that you have to do, you are also asked to serve in the Church. Your bishop will not ask you to do anything that is beyond your capacity. And as you so serve, a new dimension will be added to your life. You will find new and stimulating associations. You will find friendship and sociality. You will grow in knowledge and understanding and wisdom and in your capacity to do. You will become

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a better mother because of the service you give in the work of the Lord.

## To Older Women

Now in conclusion I wish to say a word to you older women, many of whom are widows. You are a great treasure. You have passed through the storms of life. You have weathered the challenges now facing your younger sisters. You are mature in wisdom, in understanding, in compassion, in love and service.

There is a certain beauty that shines through your countenances. It is the beauty that comes of peace. There may still be struggle, but there is mature wisdom to meet it. There are health problems, but there is a certain composure concerning them. The bad memories of the past have largely been forgotten, while the good memories return and bring sweet and satisfying enrichment to life.

You have learned to love the scriptures, and you read them. Your prayers for the most part are prayers of thanksgiving. Your greetings are words of kindness. Your friendship is a sturdy staff on which others may lean.

What a resource are the women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You love this Church; you accept its doctrine; you honor your place in its organization; you bring luster and strength and beauty to its congregations. How thankful we are to you. How much you are loved, respected, and honored.

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I salute my own beloved companion. It will soon be 60 years ago that we walked from the Salt Lake Temple as husband and wife, with love for one another. That love has strengthened through all of these years. We have faced many problems during our years of marriage. Somehow, with the blessing of the Lord, we have survived them all.

It is becoming physically harder to stand tall and straight as we did in our younger years. No matter—we still have one another and we still stand together, even though we lean a little. And when the time for separation comes, there will be much of sorrow, but there will also be the comfort that will come from the assurance that she is mine and I am hers for the eternity that lies ahead.

## *Appreciation for Sisters*

And so, my beloved sisters, please know how much we appreciate you. You bring a measure of wholeness to us. You have great strength. With dignity and tremendous ability, you carry forward the remarkable programs of the Relief Society, the Young Women, and the Primary. You teach Sunday School. We walk at your side as your companions and your brethren with respect and love, with honor and great admiration. It was the Lord who designated that men in His Church should hold the priesthood. It was He who has given you your capabilities to round out this great and marvelous organization, which is the Church and kingdom of God. I bear testimony before the entire world of your worth, of your grace and goodness, of your remarkable abilities and tremendous contributions, and I invoke the blessings of heaven upon you, in the name of the

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Lord Jesus Christ, amen.





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## **To the Mothers in Zion**

President Ezra Taft Benson President of the Church  
Fireside address, 22 Feb. 1987

There is no theme I would rather speak to than home and family, for they are at the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church, in large part, exists for the salvation and exaltation of the family.

At a recent general priesthood meeting, I spoke directly to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood regarding their duties and responsibilities. Shortly thereafter, at a general women's conference, I spoke to the young women of the Church, discussing their opportunities and their sacred callings.

Tonight, at this fireside for parents, seeking the sweet inspiration of heaven, I would like to speak directly to the mothers assembled here and throughout the Church, for you are, or should be, the very heart and soul of the family.

### **No More Noble Work**

No more sacred word exists in secular or holy writ than that of mother. There is no more noble work than that of a good and God-fearing mother.

This evening I pay tribute to the mothers in Zion and pray with all my heart that what I have to say to you will be understood by

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the Spirit and will lift and bless your lives in your sacred callings as mothers.

President David O. McKay declared: “Motherhood is the greatest potential influence either for good or ill in human life. The mother’s image is the first that stamps itself on the unwritten page of the young child’s mind. It is her caress that first awakens a sense of security; her kiss, the first realization of affection; her sympathy and tenderness, the first assurance that there is love in the world.”

President McKay continues: “Motherhood consists of three principal attributes or qualities: namely, (1) the power to bear, (2) the ability to rear, (3) the gift to love. ...

“This ability and willingness properly to rear children, the gift to love, and eagerness, yes, longing to express it in soul development, make motherhood the noblest office or calling in the world. She who can paint a masterpiece or write a book that will influence millions deserves the admiration and the plaudits of mankind; but she who rears successfully a family of healthy, beautiful sons and daughters, whose influence will be felt through generations to come, ... deserves the highest honor that man can give, and the choicest blessings of God” (Gospel Ideals, 452–54).

With all my heart I endorse the words of President McKay.

A Mother’s Role Is God-Ordained

In the eternal family, God established that fathers are to preside in

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the home. Fathers are to provide, to love, to teach, and to direct.

But a mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train. So declare the revelations.

In section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states that the opportunity and responsibility of wives is “to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified” (D&C 132:63).

## Husbands and Wives Are Co-Creators

With this divine injunction, husbands and wives, as co-creators, should eagerly and prayerfully invite children into their homes. Then, as each child joins their family circle, they can gratefully exclaim, as did Hannah, “For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:27-28).

Isn't that beautiful? A mother praying to bear a child and then giving him to the Lord.

I have always loved the words of Solomon: “Children are an heritage of the Lord: and ... happy is the man [and woman] that hath [their] quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3-5).

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I know the special blessings of a large and happy family, for my dear parents had a quiver full of children. Being the oldest of eleven children, I saw the principles of unselfishness, mutual consideration, loyalty to each other, and a host of other virtues developed in a large and wonderful family with my noble mother as the queen of that home.

Young mothers and fathers, with all my heart I counsel you not to postpone having your children, being co-creators with our Father in Heaven.

Do not use the reasoning of the world, such as, “We’ll wait until we can better afford having children, until we are more secure, until John has completed his education, until he has a better-paying job, until we have a larger home, until we’ve obtained a few of the material conveniences,” and on and on.

This is the reasoning of the world, and is not pleasing in the sight of God. Mothers who enjoy good health, have your children and have them early. And, husbands, always be considerate of your wives in the bearing of children.

Do not curtail the number of your children for personal or selfish reasons. Material possessions, social convenience, and so-called professional advantages are nothing compared to a righteous posterity. In the eternal perspective, children—not possessions, not position, not prestige—are our greatest jewels.



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Brigham Young emphasized: “There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty?—To prepare tabernacles for them; to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked, where they will be trained in wickedness, debauchery, and every species of crime. It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], p. 197).

Yes, blessed is the husband and wife who have a family of children. The deepest joys and blessings in life are associated with family, parenthood, and sacrifice. To have those sweet spirits come into the home is worth practically any sacrifice.

The deepest joys and blessings in life are associated with family, parenthood, and sacrifice.

## Special Promises of God

We realize that some women, through no fault of their own, are not able to bear children. To these lovely sisters, every prophet of God has promised that they will be blessed with children in the eternities and that posterity will not be denied them.

Through pure faith, pleading prayers, fasting, and special priesthood blessings, many of these same lovely sisters, with their noble companions at their sides, have had miracles take place in their lives and have been blessed with children. Others have prayerfully chosen to adopt children, and to these wonderful couples we salute you for the

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sacrifices and love you have given to those children you have chosen to be your own.

## **Rearing Children the Lord's Way**

Now, my dear mothers, knowing of your divine role to bear and rear children and bring them back to Him, how will you accomplish this in the Lord's way? I say the "Lord's way," because it is different from the world's way.

The Lord clearly defined the roles of mothers and fathers in providing for and rearing a righteous posterity. In the beginning, Adam—not Eve—was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow. Contrary to conventional wisdom, a mother's calling is in the home, not in the marketplace.

Again, in the Doctrine and Covenants, we read: "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken" (D&C 83:2). This is the divine right of a wife and mother. She cares for and nourishes her children at home. Her husband earns the living for the family, which makes this nourishing possible. With that claim on their husbands for their financial support, the counsel of the Church has always been for mothers to spend their full time in the home in rearing and caring for their children.

We realize also that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule.

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In a home where there is an able-bodied husband, he is expected to be the breadwinner. Sometimes we hear of husbands who, because of economic conditions, have lost their jobs and expect their wives to go out of the home and work even though the husband is still capable of providing for his family. In these cases, we urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting will have to be tighter.

## Counsel of President Kimball

Our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball had much to say about the role of mothers in the home and their callings and responsibilities. I am impressed tonight to share with you some of his inspired pronouncements. I fear that much of his counsel has gone unheeded, and families have suffered because of it. But I stand this evening as a second witness to the truthfulness of what President Spencer W. Kimball said. He spoke as a true prophet of God.

President Kimball declared: “Women are to take care of the family—the Lord has so stated—to be an assistant to the husband, to work with him, but not to earn the living, except in unusual circumstances. Men ought to be men indeed and earn the living under normal circumstances” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ... p. 318).

President Kimball continues: “Too many mothers work away from home to furnish sweaters and music lessons and trips and fun for

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their children. Too many women spend their time in socializing, in politicking, in public services when they should be home to teach and train and receive and love their children into security” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p. 319).

Remember the counsel of President Kimball to John and Mary: “Mary, you are to become a career woman in the greatest career on earth—that of homemaker, wife, and mother. It was never intended by the Lord that married women should compete with men in employment. They have a far greater and more important service to render” (Faith Precedes the Miracle [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975], p. 128).

Again President Kimball speaks: “The husband is expected to support his family and only in an emergency should a wife secure outside employment. Her place is in the home, to build the home into a heaven of delight.

“Numerous divorces can be traced directly to the day when the wife left the home and went out into the world into employment. Two incomes raise the standard of living beyond its norm. Two spouses working prevent the complete and proper home life, break into the family prayers, create an independence which is not cooperative, causes distortion, limits the family, and frustrates the children already born” (fireside address, San Antonio, Texas, 3 Dec. 1977).

Finally, President Kimball counsels: “I beg of you, you who could and should be bearing and rearing a family: wives, come home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the



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factory, the café. No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother—cooking meals, washing dishes, making beds for one’s precious husband and children. Come home, wives, to your husbands. Make home a heaven for them. Come home, wives, to your children, born and unborn. Wrap the motherly cloak about you and, unembarrassed, help in a major role to create the bodies for the immortal souls who anxiously await.

“When you have fully complemented your husband in home life and borne the children, growing up full of faith, integrity, responsibility, and goodness, then you have achieved your accomplishment supreme, without peer, and you will be the envy [of all] through time and eternity” (fireside address, San Antonio, Texas).

President Kimball spoke the truth. His words are prophetic.

No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother.

## Ten Ways to Spend Time with Children

Mothers in Zion, your God-given roles are so vital to your own exaltation and to the salvation and exaltation of your family. A child needs a mother more than all the things money can buy. Spending time with your children is the greatest gift of all.

With love in my heart for the mothers in Zion, I would now like to suggest ten specific ways our mothers may spend effective time with their children.

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Be at the Crossroads. First, take time to always be at the crossroads when your children are either coming or going—when they leave and return from school, when they leave and return from dates, when they bring friends home. Be there at the crossroads whether your children are six or sixteen. In Proverbs we read, “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). Among the greatest concerns in our society are the millions of latchkey children who come home daily to empty houses, unsupervised by working parents.

Be a Real Friend. Second, mothers, take time to be a real friend to your children. Listen to your children, really listen. Talk with them, laugh and joke with them, sing with them, play with them, cry with them, hug them, honestly praise them. Yes, regularly spend unrushed one-on-one time with each child. Be a real friend to your children.

Read to Your Children. Third, mothers, take time to read to your children. Starting from the cradle, read to your sons and daughters. Remember what the poet said:

You may have tangible wealth untold;  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.  
Richer than I you can never be—  
I had a mother who read to me.  
(Strickland Gillilan, “The Reading Mother.”)

You will plant a love for good literature and a real love for the scrip-

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tures if you will read to your children regularly.

**Pray with Your Children.** Fourth, take time to pray with your children. Family prayers, under the direction of the father, should be held morning and night. Have your children feel of your faith as you call down the blessings of heaven upon them. Paraphrasing the words of James, “The ... fervent prayer of a righteous [mother] availeth much” (James 5:16). Have your children participate in family and personal prayers, and rejoice in their sweet utterances to their Father in Heaven.

**Have Weekly Home Evenings.** Fifth, take time to have a meaningful weekly home evening. With your husband presiding, participate in a spiritual and an uplifting home evening each week. Have your children actively involved. Teach them correct principles. Make this one of your great family traditions. Remember the marvelous promise made by President Joseph F. Smith when home evenings were first introduced to the Church: “If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influence and temptations which beset them” (James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 4:339). This wonderful promise is still in effect today.

**Be Together at Mealtimes.** Sixth, take time to be together at mealtimes as often as possible. This is a challenge as the children get older and lives get busier. But happy conversation, sharing of the day's

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plans and activities, and special teaching moments occur at mealtime because mothers and fathers and children work at it.

**Read Scriptures Daily.** Seventh, take time daily to read the scriptures together as a family. Individual scripture reading is important, but family scripture reading is vital. Reading the Book of Mormon together as a family will especially bring increased spirituality into your home and will give both parents and children the power to resist temptation and to have the Holy Ghost as their constant companion. I promise you that the Book of Mormon will change the lives of your family.

**Do Things as a Family.** Eighth, take time to do things together as a family. Make family outings and picnics and birthday celebrations and trips special times and memory builders. Whenever possible, attend, as a family, events where one of the family members is involved, such as a school play, a ball game, a talk, a recital. Attend church meetings together and sit together as a family when you can. Mothers who help families pray and play together will stay together and will bless children's lives forever.

**Teach Your Children.** Ninth, mothers, take time to teach your children. Catch the teaching moments. This can be done anytime during the day—at mealtime, in casual settings, or at special sit-down times together, at the foot of the bed at the end of the day, or during an early morning walk together. Mothers, you are your children's best teacher. Don't shift this precious responsibility to day-care centers or baby-sitters. A mother's love and prayerful concern for the children are her most important ingredients in teaching her own.



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Teach children gospel principles. Teach them it pays to be good. Teach them there is no safety in sin. Teach them a love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a testimony of its divinity.

Teach your sons and daughters modesty, and teach them to respect manhood and womanhood. Teach your children sexual purity, proper dating standards, temple marriage, missionary service, and the importance of accepting and magnifying Church callings.

Teach them a love for work and the value of a good education.

Teach them the importance of the right kind of entertainment, including appropriate movies and videos and music and books and magazines. Discuss the evils of pornography and drugs, and teach them the value of living the clean life.

Yes, mothers, teach your children the gospel in your own home, at your own fireside. This is the most effective teaching that your children will ever receive. This is the Lord's way of teaching. The Church cannot teach like you can. The school cannot. The day-care center cannot. But you can, and the Lord will sustain you. Your children will remember your teachings forever, and when they are old, they will not depart from them. They will call you blessed—their truly angel mother.

Mothers, this kind of heavenly, motherly teaching takes time—lots of time. It cannot be done effectively part-time. It must be done all the time in order to save and exalt your children. This is your divine

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calling.

**Truly Love Your Children.** Tenth and finally, mothers, take the time to truly love your children. A mother's unqualified love approaches Christlike love.

Here is a beautiful tribute by a son to his mother: "I don't remember much about her views of voting nor her social prestige; and what her ideas on child training, diet, and eugenics were, I cannot recall. The main thing that sifts back to me now through the thick undergrowth of years is that she loved me. She liked to lie on the grass with me and tell stories, or to run and hide with us children. She was always hugging me. And I liked it. She had a sunny face. To me it was like God, and all the beatitudes saints tell of Him. And Sing! Of all the sensations pleasurable to my life nothing can compare with the rapture of crawling up into her lap and going to sleep while she swung to and fro in her rocking chair and sang. Thinking of this, I wonder if the woman of today, with all her tremendous notions and plans, realizes what an almighty factor she is in shaping of her child for weal or woe. I wonder if she realizes how much sheer love and attention count for in a child's life."

Mothers, your teenage children also need that same kind of love and attention. It seems easier for many mothers and fathers to express and show their love to their children when they are young, but more difficult when they are older. Work at this prayerfully. There need be no generation gap. And the key is love. Our young people need love and attention, not indulgence. They need empathy and understanding, not indifference from mothers and fathers. They

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need the parents' time. A mother's kindly teachings and her love for and confidence in a teenage son or daughter can literally save them from a wicked world.

## Blessings of the Lord upon Parents

In closing, I would be remiss this evening if I did not express my love and eternal gratitude for my sweetheart and companion and the mother of our six children. Her devotion to motherhood has blessed me and our family beyond words of expression. She has been a marvelous mother, completely and happily devoting her life and her mission to her family. How grateful I am for Flora!

May I also express my gratitude to you fathers and husbands assembled this evening. We look to you to give righteous leadership in your home and families and, with your companions and the mothers of your children, to lead your families back to our Eternal Father.

Now God bless our wonderful mothers. We pray for you. We sustain you. We honor you as you bear, nourish, train, teach, and love for eternity. I promise you the blessings of heaven and “all that [the] Father hath” (see D&C 84:38) as you magnify the noblest calling of all—a mother in Zion. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **Equality of Men and Women Selected Teachings**

President George Albert Smith

“When the Prophet Joseph Smith turned the key for the emancipation of womankind, it was turned for all the world, and from generation to generation the number of women who can enjoy the blessings of religious liberty and civil liberty has been increasing” (“Address to the Members of the Relief Society,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1945, 717).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Our roles and assignments differ. These are eternal differences—with women being given many tremendous responsibilities of motherhood and sisterhood and men being given the tremendous responsibilities of fatherhood and the priesthood—but the man is not without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord (see 1 Cor. 11:11). ...

“Even though the eternal roles of men and women differ, ... this leaves much to be done by way of parallel personal development—for both men and women” (“The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 102).

“We do not want our LDS women to be silent partners or limited partners in that eternal assignment! Please be a contributing and full partner” (“Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 106).



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President Howard W. Hunter

“A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto. ... The Lord intended that the wife be a helpmeet for man (meet means equal)—that is, a companion equal and necessary in full partnership” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 50–51).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I see my own companion of fifty-two years. Is her contribution less acceptable before the Lord than is mine? I am satisfied it is not. She has walked quietly at my side, sustained me in my responsibilities, reared and blessed our children, served in many capacities in the Church, and spread an unmitigated measure of cheer and goodness wherever she has gone. The older I grow the more I appreciate—yes, the more I love—this little woman with whom I knelt at the altar in the house of the Lord more than half a century ago” (“Rise to the Stature of the Divine within You,” Ensign, Nov. 1989, 97).

President Boyd K. Packer

“In the Church there is a distinct line of authority. We serve where called by those who preside over us.

“In the home it is a partnership with husband and wife equally yoked together, sharing in decisions, always working together. While

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the husband, the father, has responsibility to provide worthy and inspired leadership, his wife is neither behind him nor ahead of him but at his side” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 96; or Ensign, May 1998, 73).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

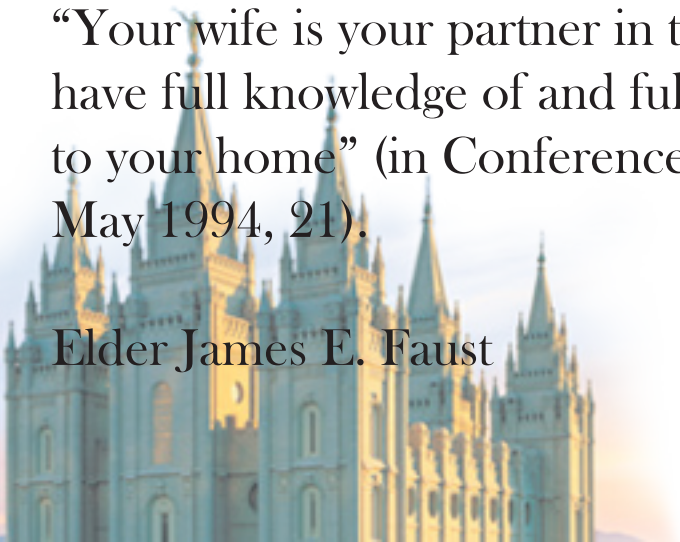
“Where spiritual things are concerned, as pertaining to all of the gifts of the Spirit, with reference to the receipt of revelation, the gaining of testimonies, and the seeing of visions, in all matters that pertain to godliness and holiness and which are brought to pass as a result of personal righteousness—in all these things men and women stand in a position of absolute equality before the Lord” (“Our Sisters from the Beginning,” Ensign, Jan. 1979, 61).

“The Lord never sends apostles and prophets and righteous men to minister to his people without placing women of like spiritual stature at their sides. ... The exaltation of the one is dependent upon that of the other” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3:302).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“Your wife is your partner in the leadership of the family and should have full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating to your home” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 26; or Ensign, May 1994, 21).

Elder James E. Faust



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“How should those who bear the priesthood treat their wives and the other women in their family? Our wives need to be cherished. They need to hear their husbands call them blessed, and the children need to hear their fathers generously praise their mothers (see Proverbs 31:28). The Lord values his daughters just as much as he does his sons. In marriage, neither is superior; each has a different primary and divine responsibility. Chief among these different responsibilities for wives is the calling of motherhood. I firmly believe that our dear faithful sisters enjoy a special spiritual enrichment which is inherent in their natures” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 54; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 38–39).

“Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both mothers and fathers are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families, present and future. Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to function in the environment outside the family” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 44–45; or Ensign, May 1993, 35).

In marriage, neither is superior.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

“We live in a day when there are many political, legal, and social pressures for changes that confuse gender and homogenize the differences between men and women. Our eternal perspective sets us against changes that alter those separate duties and privileges of men and women that are essential to accomplish the great plan of hap-

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piness. We do not oppose all changes in the treatment of men and women, since some changes in laws or customs simply correct old wrongs that were never grounded in eternal principles” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 99; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 73–74).

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Sisters “want to be heard and valued and want to make meaningful contributions to the stake or ward and its members that will serve the Lord and help accomplish the mission of the Church. ...

“Brethren, please be sure you are seeking the vital input of the sisters in your council meetings” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 103; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 76).

Sister Eliza R. Snow

“The status of women is one of the questions of the day. Socially and politically it forces itself upon the attention of the world. Some ... refuse to concede that woman is entitled to the enjoyment of any rights other than those which the whims, fancies or justice, as the case may be, of men may choose to grant her. The reasons which they cannot meet with argument they decry and ridicule; an old refuge for those opposed to correct principles which they are unable to controvert. Others, again, not only recognize that woman’s status should be improved, but are so radical in their extreme theories that they would set her in antagonism to man, assume for her a separate and opposing existence; and to show how entirely independent she should be would make her adopt the more reprehensible phases of



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character which men present, and which should be shunned or improved by them instead of being copied by women. These are two extremes, and between them is the ‘golden mean.’” (“Woman’s Status,” *Woman’s Exponent*, 15 July 1872, 29).



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## **Principle of Mutual Respect**

Elder Merrill J. Bateman

“The proclamation teaches that ‘successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.’ In other words, the Lord measures the success of a family by the quality of its relationships. In a home where faith, love, and forgiveness are dominant, members find joy and satisfaction in being together. Ideally the father presides in love and righteousness, provides the necessities of life, and protects the family while the mother is primarily responsible for the nurturing of the children. In contrast, the world often measures family success by the accumulation of worldly things and the size of the estate that is passed on to the children” (“The Eternal Family,” 115).



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## **Differences Inherent between Men and Women**

President Boyd K. Packer

“The tender hand of the sister gives a gentle touch of healing and encouragement which the hand of a man, however well intentioned, can never quite duplicate” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 94; or Ensign, May 1998, 72).

“In the home and in the Church, sisters should be esteemed for their very nature. Be careful lest you unknowingly foster influences and activities which tend to erase the masculine and feminine differences nature has established. A man, a father, can do much of what is usually assumed to be a woman’s work. In turn, a wife and a mother can do much—and in time of need, most things—usually considered the responsibility of the man, without jeopardizing their distinct roles. Even so, leaders, and especially parents, should recognize that there is a distinct masculine nature and a distinct feminine nature essential to the foundation of the home and the family. Whatever disturbs or weakens or tends to erase that difference erodes the family and reduces the probability of happiness for all concerned” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 96; or Ensign, May 1998, 73).

There is a distinct masculine nature and a distinct feminine nature essential to the foundation of the home and the family.



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## **The Family: A Proclamation to the World**

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102

We, The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All Human Beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In The Premortal Realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.



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The First Commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We Declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband And Wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The Family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance,

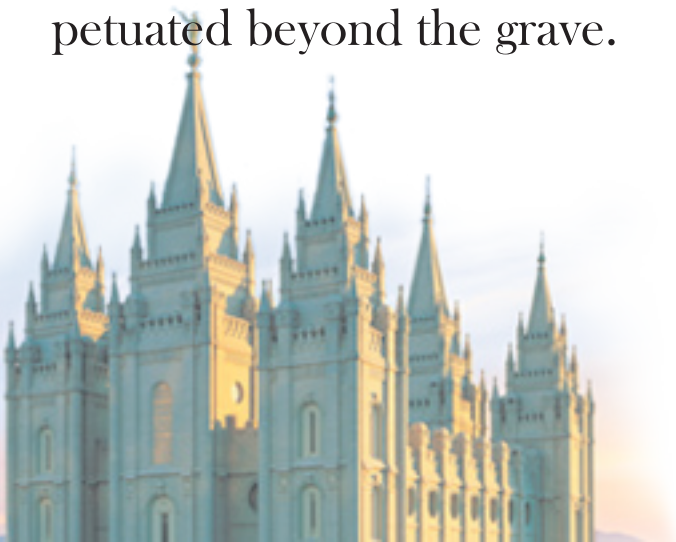
# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We Warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We Call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave.



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## **Differences Inherent between Men and Women**

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“We know so little, brothers and sisters, about the reasons for the division of duties between womanhood and manhood as well as between motherhood and priesthood. These were divinely determined in another time and another place. ...

“We men know the women of God as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, associates, and friends. You seem to tame us and to gentle us, and, yes, to teach us and to inspire us. For you, we have admiration as well as affection, because righteousness is not a matter of role, nor goodness a matter of gender. In the work of the Kingdom, men and women are not without each other, but do not envy each other, lest by reversals and renunciations of role we make a wasteland of both womanhood and manhood” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 13; or Ensign, May 1978, 10).



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## **Differences Inherent between Men and Women**

Elder Merrill J. Bateman

“When a man understands how glorious a woman is, he treats her differently. When a woman understands that a man has the seeds of divinity within him, she honors him not only for who he is but for what he may become. An understanding of the divine nature allows each person to have respect for the other. The eternal view engenders a desire in men and women to learn from and share with each other.

“Men and women are created as complements. They complete one another. Paul told the Corinthians: ‘Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 11:11). Men and women complement each other not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. The apostle Paul taught that ‘the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband’ and through them both the children are made holy (1 Corinthians 7:14). Men and women have different strengths and weaknesses, and marriage is a synergistic relationship in which spiritual growth is enhanced because of the differences” (“The Eternal Family,” 113).





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## **Mothers' Employment outside the Home Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“The husband is expected to support his family and only in an emergency should a wife secure outside employment. Her place is in the home, to build the home into a heaven of delight.

“Numerous divorces can be traced directly to the day when the wife left the home and went out into the world into employment. Two incomes raise the standard of living beyond its norm. Two spouses working prevent the complete and proper home life, break into the family prayers, create an independence which is not cooperative, causes distortion, limits the family and frustrates the children already born. ...

“... I beg of you, you who could and should be bearing and rearing a family: Wives, come home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the factory, the café.

“No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother—cooking meals, washing dishes, making beds for one’s precious husband and children.

“Come home, wives, to your husbands. Make home a heaven for them. Come home wives, to your children, born and unborn. Wrap the motherly cloak about you and unembarrassed help in a major role to create the bodies for the immortal souls who anxiously wait.

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“When you have fully complemented your husband in home life and borne the children, growing up full of faith, integrity, responsibility and goodness, then you have achieved your accomplishments supreme, without peer, and you will be the envy through time and eternity” (fireside address in San Antonio, Texas, 27, 32–33).

“How do you feel the Lord looks upon those who would trade flesh-and-blood children for pianos or television or furniture or an automobile, and is this not actually the case when people will buy these luxuries and yet cannot afford to have their children?” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 329).

“We have often said, This divine service of motherhood can be rendered only by mothers. It may not be passed to others. Nurses cannot do it; public nurseries cannot do it. Hired help cannot do it; kind relatives cannot do it. Only by mother, aided as much as may be by a loving father, brothers and sisters, and other relatives, can the full needed measure of watchful care be given” (“The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 73).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“Take time to always be at the crossroads when your children are either coming or going—when they leave and return from school, when they leave and return from dates, when they bring friends home. Be there at the crossroads whether your children are six or sixteen. In Proverbs we read, ‘A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame’ (Proverbs 29:15). Among the greatest concerns

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in our society are the millions of latchkey children who come home daily to empty houses, unsupervised by working parents” (To the Mothers in Zion, 8).

“In a home where there is an able-bodied husband, he is expected to be the breadwinner. Sometimes we hear of husbands who, because of economic conditions, have lost their jobs and expect the wives to go out of the home and work, even though the husband is capable of providing for his family. In these cases, we urge the husband to do all in his power to allow his wife to remain in the home caring for the children while he continues to provide for his family the best he can, even though the job he is able to secure may not be ideal and family budgeting may have to be tighter. ...

“Sometimes the mother works outside of the home at the encouragement, or even insistence, of her husband. It is he who wants the items or conveniences that the extra income can buy. Not only will the family suffer in such instances, brethren, but your own spiritual growth and progression will be hampered. I say to all of you, the Lord has charged men with the responsibility to provide for their families in such a way that the wife is allowed to fulfill her role as mother in the home. ...

“One apparent impact of the women’s movement has been the feelings of discontent it has created among young women who have chosen the role of wife and mother. They are often made to feel that there are more exciting and self-fulfilling roles for women than housework, diaper changing, and children calling for mother. This view loses sight of the eternal perspective that God elected women

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to the noble role of mother and that exaltation is eternal fatherhood and eternal motherhood. [‘To the Elect Women of the Kingdom of God,’ Nauvoo Illinois Relief Society Dedication, 30 June 1978.]” (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, 506–7, 548–49).

“There are voices in our midst which would attempt to convince you that these home-centered truths are not applicable to our present-day conditions. If you listen and heed, you will be lured away from your principal obligations.

“Beguiling voices in the world cry out for ‘alternative life-styles’ for women. They maintain that some women are better suited for careers than for marriage and motherhood.

“These individuals spread their discontent by the propaganda that there are more exciting and self-fulfilling roles for women than homemaking. Some even have been bold to suggest that the Church move away from the ‘Mormon woman stereotype’ of homemaking and rearing children. They also say it is wise to limit your family so you can have more time for personal goals and self-fulfillment” (“The Honored Place of Woman,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 105).

“The first priority for a woman is to prepare herself for her divine and eternal mission, whether she is married soon or late. It is folly to neglect that preparation for education in unrelated fields just to prepare temporarily to earn money. Women, when you are married it is the husband’s role to provide, not yours. Do not sacrifice your preparation for an eternally ordained mission for the temporary expediency of money-making skills which you may or may not use”



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(“In His Steps,” 64).

“It is time that the hearts of us fathers be turned to our children and the hearts of the children be turned to us fathers, or we shall both be cursed. The seeds of divorce are often sown and the blessings of children delayed by wives working outside the home. Working mothers should remember that their children usually need more of mother than of money” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 24).

President Howard W. Hunter

“Together with your wife, you determine the spiritual climate of your home” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 69; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 51).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“Sisters, guard your children. They live in a world of evil. The forces are all about them. I am proud of so many of your sons and daughters who are living good lives. But I am deeply concerned about many others who are gradually taking on the ways of the world. Nothing is more precious to you as mothers, absolutely nothing. Your children are the most valuable thing you will have in time or all eternity. You will be fortunate indeed if, as you grow old and look at those you brought into the world, you find in them uprightness of life, virtue in living, and integrity in their behavior.

“I think the nurture and upbringing of children is more than a part-time responsibility. I recognize that some women must work, but I

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fear that there are far too many who do so only to get the means for a little more luxury and a few fancier toys.

“If you must work, you have an increased load to bear. You cannot afford to neglect your children. They need your supervision in studying, in working inside and outside the home, in the nurturing that only you can adequately give—the love, the blessing, the encouragement, and the closeness of a mother.

“Families are being torn asunder everywhere. Family relationships are strained as women try to keep up with the rigors of two full-time jobs.

“I have many opportunities to speak with leaders who decry what is going on—gangs on the streets of our cities, children killing children, spending their time in practices that can lead only to prison or to death. We face a great overwhelming tide of children born to mothers without husbands. The futures of such children are almost inevitably blighted from the day they are born. Every home needs a good father and a good mother.

“We cannot build prisons fast enough in this country to accommodate the need.

“I do not hesitate to say that you who are mothers can do more than any other group to change this situation. All of these problems find their root in the homes of the people. It is broken homes that lead to a breakup in society.

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“And so tonight, my beloved sisters, my message to you, my challenge to you, my prayer is that you will rededicate yourselves to the strengthening of your homes” (“Walking in the Light of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 99–100).

“Some years ago President Benson delivered a message to the women of the Church. He encouraged them to leave their employment and give their individual time to their children. I sustain the position which he took.

“Nevertheless, I recognize, as he recognized, that there are some women (it has become very many, in fact) who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries. The greatest job that any mother will ever do will be in nurturing, teaching, lifting, encouraging, and rearing her children in righteousness and truth. None other can adequately take her place.

“It is well-nigh impossible to be a full-time homemaker and a full-time employee. I know how some of you struggle with decisions concerning this matter. I repeat, do the very best you can. You know your circumstances, and I know that you are deeply concerned for the welfare of your children. Each of you has a bishop who will counsel with you and assist you. If you feel you need to speak with an understanding woman, do not hesitate to get in touch with your Relief Society president.

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“To the mothers of this Church, every mother who is here today, I want to say that as the years pass, you will become increasingly grateful for that which you did in molding the lives of your children in the direction of righteousness and goodness, integrity and faith. That is most likely to happen if you can spend adequate time with them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 93-94; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 69).

“To you women who find it necessary to work when you would rather be at home, may I speak briefly. I know that there are many of you who find yourselves in this situation. Some of you have been abandoned and are divorced, with children to care for. Some of you are widows with dependent families. I honor you and respect you for your integrity and spirit of self-reliance. I pray that the Lord will bless you with strength and great capacity, for you need both. You have the responsibilities of both breadwinner and homemaker. I know that it is difficult. I know that it is discouraging. I pray that the Lord will bless you with a special wisdom and the remarkable talent needed to provide your children with time and companionship and love and with that special direction which only a mother can give. I pray also that he will bless you with help, unstintingly given, from family, friends, and the Church, which will lift some of the burden from your shoulders and help you in your times of extremity.

“We sense, at least in some small degree, the loneliness you must occasionally feel and the frustrations you must experience as you try to cope with problems that sometimes seem beyond your capacity to handle. Sometimes you need food for your tables, and we trust that bishops will be there to supply food and other goods and services under the great program which the Lord has provided in his



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Church. But we know that more often your greater need is for understanding and appreciation and companionship. We shall try a little harder to cultivate these virtues, and I urge you sisters who are in a position to do so to reach out with greater concern to those who find themselves in these less fortunate circumstances.

“Now to others who work when it is not necessary and who, while doing so, leave children to the care of those who often are only poor substitutes, I offer a word of caution. Do not follow a practice which will bring you later regret. If the purpose of your daily employment is simply to get money for a boat or a fancy automobile or some other desirable but unnecessary thing, and in the process you lose the companionship of your children and the opportunity to rear them, you may find that you have lost the substance while grasping at the shadow” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 114; or Ensign, Nov. 1983, 83).

## The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

Elder Howard W. Hunter

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

“In a personal way, I recall the experiences my dear wife and I went through after deciding the course I should take for my life’s work. I had taken some courses in pharmacy with the plan in mind of converting to a career in medicine. As many of us do, I changed my mind and engaged in another business, banking. We were blessed with steady employment, but I felt attracted toward the profession of law. This was a serious decision because I was married and had a family to support but after fasting and prayer and obtaining the facts as to the best way to proceed, I completed my undergraduate work and entered law school. I took classes at night because it was necessary to be employed during the daytime. These were not easy years for us, but desires are usually accomplished if we are willing to make a determined effort. Needless to say, I had the help and support of my wife. She remained a homemaker and cared for our children. What she gave in love, encouragement, frugality, and companionship was far in excess of any material contribution she might have made by taking employment.

“Our wives deserve great credit for the heavy work load they carry day in and day out within our homes. No one expends more energy than a devoted mother and wife. In the usual arrangement of things, however, it is the man to whom the Lord has assigned the breadwinner’s role.

“There are impelling reasons for our sisters to plan toward employment also. We want them to obtain all the education and vocational training possible before marriage. If they become widowed or divorced and need to work, we want them to have dignified and re-

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warding employment. If a sister does not marry, she has every right to engage in a profession that allows her to magnify her talents and gifts.

“Brothers and Sisters, we need to do everything necessary to adequately prepare ourselves for employment or careers. We owe it to ourselves to do our best, and we owe our best in providing for our families” (“Prepare for Honorable Employment,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 123–24).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The First Presidency counseled that ‘the mother who entrusts her child to the care of others, that she may do non-motherly work, whether for gold, for fame, or for civic service, should remember that “a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” (Prov. 29:15) In our day the Lord has said that unless parents teach their children the doctrines of the Church “the sin be upon the heads of the parents.” (D&C 68:25) ...’ [in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 12].

“That message and warning from the First Presidency is needed more, not less, today than when it was given [in 1942]. And no voice from any organization of the Church on any level of administration equals that of the First Presidency” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 30; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 23).

Elder Richard G. Scott

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“President Benson has taught that a mother with children should be in the home. He also said, ‘We realize ... that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule’ (Ezra Taft Benson, *To the Mothers in Zion* [pamphlet, 1987], pp. 5–6). You in these unusual circumstances qualify for additional inspiration and strength from the Lord. Those who leave the home for lesser reasons will not” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1993, 42–43; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34).





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## **‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ**

Sister Patricia T. Holland

“Eve was given the identity of ‘the mother of all living’ ... before she ever bore a child. It would appear that her motherhood preceded her maternity, just as surely as the perfection of the Garden preceded the struggles of mortality. I believe mother is one of those very carefully chosen words, one of those rich words—with meaning after meaning after meaning. We must not, at all costs, let that word divide us. I believe with all of my heart that it is first and foremost a statement about nature, not a head count of our children.

“... Some women give birth and raise children but never ‘mother’ them. Others, whom I love with all my heart, ‘mother’ all their lives but have never given birth. And all of us are Eve’s daughters, whether we are married or single, maternal or barren. We are created in the image of the Gods to become gods and goddesses” (“‘One Thing Needful’: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 33).



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## **Love Selected Teachings**

### Related Scriptures

Matthew 6:24

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Romans 8:35, 39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?  
...

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 13:10

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Ephesians 5:2, 25, 33

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ...

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“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ...

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

Doctrine and Covenants 42:22-23

“Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.

“And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out.”

What Is True Love?

President David O. McKay

“‘Well,’ you may ask, ‘how may I know when I am in love?’

“... George Q. Morris [who later became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave this reply]: ‘My mother once said that if you meet a girl in whose presence you feel a desire to achieve, who inspires you to do your best, and to make the most of yourself, such a young woman is worthy of your love and is awakening love in your heart.’

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“I submit that ... as a true guide. In the presence of the girl you truly love you do not feel to grovel; in her presence you do not attempt to take advantage of her; in her presence you feel that you would like to be everything that a Master Man should become, for she will inspire you to that ideal. And I ask you young women to cherish that same guide” (“As Youth Contemplates an Eternal Partnership,” *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1938, 139).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“If we would truly seek to be more like our Savior and Master, learning to love as He loves should be our highest goal” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 275).

Elder John A. Widtsoe

“Love is the foundation of marriage, but love itself is a product of law and lives by law. True love is law-abiding, for the highest satisfactions come to a law-abiding life. ...

“... Marriage that lasts only during earth life is a sad one, for the love established between man and woman, as they live together and rear their family, should not die, but live and grow richer with the eternal years. True love hopes and prays for an endless continuation of association with the loved one. To those who are sealed to each other for all existence, love is ever warm, more hopeful, believing, courageous, and fearless. Such people live the richer, more joyful life. To them happiness and the making of it have no end. ...



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“Above physical charm, love is begotten by qualities, often subtle, of mind and spirit. The beautiful face may hide an empty mind; the sweet voice may utter coarse words; the lovely form may be ill-mannered; the woman of radiant beauty and the man of kingly form may be intolerable bores on nearer acquaintanceship; or, the person who looks attractive may really have no faults, may excel us in knowledge and courtesy, yet he is not of our kind, his ways are not ours. Under either condition, love wilts in its first stage. ‘Falling in love’ is always from within, rather than from without. That is, physical attractiveness must be reinforced with mental and spiritual harmony if true love is to be born and have long life—from the Latter-day Saint point of view, to last throughout the eternities” (Evidences and Reconciliations, 297, 299, 302).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“What is love? Many people think of it as mere physical attraction and they casually speak of ‘falling in love’ and ‘love at first sight.’ This may be Hollywood’s version and the interpretation of those who write love songs and love fiction. True love is not wrapped in such flimsy material. One might become immediately attracted to another individual, but love is far more than physical attraction. It is deep, inclusive and comprehensive. Physical attraction is only one of the many elements, but there must be faith and confidence and understanding and partnership. There must be common ideals and standards. There must be a great devotion and companionship. Love is cleanliness and progress and sacrifice and selflessness. This kind of love never tires nor wanes, but lives through sickness and sorrow, poverty and privation, accomplishment and disappointment,

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time and eternity” (Love versus Lust, 18).

“If one really loves another, one would rather die for that person than to injure him” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 279).

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

“May I quickly suggest four cornerstones upon which to build that house? There are others, but I choose to emphasize these. ...

“The first of these I call Respect for One Another, the kind of respect that regards one’s companion as the most precious friend on earth and not as a possession or a chattel to be forced or compelled to suit one’s selfish whims.

“Pearl Buck has observed, ‘Love cannot be forced. ... It comes out of heaven, unmasked and unsought.’ (The Treasure Chest, p. 165.)

“This respect comes of recognition that each of us is a son or daughter of God, endowed with something of his divine nature, that each is an individual entitled to expression and cultivation of individual talents and deserving of forbearance, of patience, of understanding, of courtesy, of thoughtful consideration. True love is not so much a matter of romance as it is a matter of anxious concern for the well being of one’s companion” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 81–82; or Ensign, June 1971, 71).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

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## Mature Love

And if you suppose that the full-blown rapture of young romantic love is the sum of the possibilities which spring from the fountains of life, you have not yet lived to see the devotion and the comfort of longtime married love. Married couples are tried by temptation, misunderstandings, separation, financial problems, family crises, illness; and all the while love grows stronger, the mature love enjoys a bliss not even imagined by newlyweds.

True love requires a mutual respect and that the couple reserve until after the marriage the sharing of that affection which unlocks those sacred powers in that fountain of life. It means avoiding pre-marriage situations in which physical desire might take control. Courtship is a time to measure integrity, moral strength, and worthiness. The invitation, “If you love me, you will let me,” exposes a major flaw in character. It deserves the reply: “If you really loved me, you would never ask me to transgress. If you understood the gospel, you couldn’t!”

Pure love presupposes that only after a pledge of eternal fidelity, a legal and a lawful ceremony, and ideally after the sealing ordinance in the temple are those procreative powers released for the full expression of love. They are to be shared only and solely with that one who is our companion in marriage.

Participation in the mating process offers an experience like nothing else in life. When entered into worthily, it combines the most exquisite and exalted physical, emotional, and spiritual feelings associat-

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ed with the word love. Those feelings and the lifelong need for one another bind a husband and wife together in a marriage wherein all of the attributes of adult masculinity are complemented by the priceless feminine virtues of womanhood.

That part of life has no equal, no counterpart, in all human experience. It will, when covenants are made and kept, last eternally, “For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory” (D&C 124:34), “which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19).

But romantic love is incomplete; it is a prelude. Love is nourished by the coming of children, who spring from that fountain of life entrusted to couples in marriage. Conception takes place in a wedded embrace between husband and wife. A tiny body begins to form after a pattern of magnificent complexity. A child emerges in the miracle of birth, created in the image of its earthly father and mother, able to see and hear and feel and to perceive through physical senses. Within its mortal body is a spirit, able to feel and perceive spiritual things. Dormant in the mortal body of the child is the power to beget offspring in its own image.

“The spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15); hence there are spiritual and physical laws to obey if we are to be happy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

“The world is filled with too many of us who are inclined to indicate



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our love with an announcement or declaration.

“True love is a process. True love requires personal action. Love must be continuing to be real. Love takes time. Too often expediency, infatuation, stimulation, persuasion, or lust are mistaken for love. How hollow, how empty if our love is no deeper than the arousal of momentary feeling or the expression in words of what is no more lasting than the time it takes to speak them. ...

“We must at regular and appropriate intervals speak and reassure others of our love and the long time it takes to prove it by our actions. Real love does take time. The Great Shepherd had the same thoughts in mind when he taught, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments’ (John 14:15; italics added) and ‘If ye love me feed my sheep’ (John 21:16; italics added). Love demands action if it is to be continuing. Love is a process. Love is not a declaration. Love is not an announcement. Love is not a passing fancy. Love is not an expediency. Love is not a convenience. ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments’ and ‘If ye love me feed my sheep’ are God-given proclamations that should remind us we can often best show our love through the processes of feeding and keeping.

“Love of God takes time. Love of family takes time. Love of country takes time. Love of neighbor takes time. Love of companion takes time. Love in courtship takes time. Love of self takes time” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 160, 163; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, 108, 110).

“One who loves has and feels responsibility. Paul in 1 Corinthians

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says love thinketh no evil, is not self-seeking, is long-suffering, and is kind. (see 1 Cor. 13:4–5.) If we look at love between two who are preparing for temple marriage, we see the elements of sacrifice and of serving each other's best interests, not a shortsighted 'me' interest. True love and happiness in courtship and marriage are based upon honesty, self-respect, sacrifice, consideration, courtesy, kindness, and placing 'we' ahead of 'me.'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 30; or Ensign, May 1981, 23).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Perfect love is perfectly patient" (All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience, 69).

"Unlike our love, Jesus' love consists of active restraint as well as pressing encouragement. His perfect love of each and all spares Him the need to accept us as we now are, for He knows perfectly what we have the possibility to become" (Even As I Am, 18).

Elder Richard G. Scott

"Love, as defined by the Lord, elevates, protects, respects, and enriches another. It motivates one to make sacrifices for another" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 43; or Ensign, May 1991, 35).

Elder Joe J. Christensen

"Be quick to say, 'I'm sorry.' As hard as it is to form the words, be swift to say, 'I apologize, and please forgive me,' even though you

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are not the one who is totally at fault. True love is developed by those who are willing to readily admit personal mistakes and offenses” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 86; or Ensign, May 1995, 65).

## What Are Some of the Counterfeits of True Love?

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“At the hour of sin, pure love is pushed out of one door while lust sneaks in the other. Affection has then been replaced with desire of the flesh and uncontrolled passion. Accepted has been the doctrine which the devil is so eager to establish, that illicit sex relations are justified” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 279).

“If anyone feels that petting or other deviations are demonstrations of love, let him ask himself: ‘If this beautiful body which I have misused suddenly became deformed, or paralyzed, would my reactions be the same? If this lovely face were scarred by flames, or this body which I have used suddenly became rigid, or this keen mind which I have enjoyed were suddenly to become blank, would I be such an ardent lover? If senility or any of its approaches suddenly fell upon my sweetheart, what would my attitudes be?’ Answers to these questions might test one to see if he really is in love or if it is only physical attraction which encouraged the improper physical contacts.

The young man who protects his sweetheart against all use or abuse, against insult and infamy from himself or others, could be expressing true love.

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“But the young man who uses his companion as a biological toy to give himself temporary satisfaction—that is lust, and is at the other end of the spectrum from love. A young woman conducts herself to be attractive spiritually, mentally and physically but will not by word nor dress nor act stir nor stimulate to physical reactions the companion beside her. That could be true love. That young woman who must touch and stir and fondle and tempt and use knows not love. That is lust and exploitation” (Love versus Lust, 18–19).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The greatest deception foisted upon the human race in our day is that overemphasis of physical gratification as it is related to romantic love. It is merely a repetition of the same delusion that has been impressed on every generation in ages past. When we learn that physical gratification is only incident to, and not the compelling force of love itself, we have made a supreme discovery. If only physical gratification should interest you, you need not be selective at all. This power is possessed by almost everyone. Alone, without attendant love, this relationship becomes nothing—indeed, less and worse than nothing” (Eternal Love, 15).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Satan promotes counterfeit love, which is lust. It is driven by a hunger to appease personal appetite. One who practices this deception cares little for the pain and destruction caused another. While often camouflaged by flattering words, its motivation is self-gratification. You know how to be clean and live a righteous life. We trust you to



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do it. The Lord will bless you richly and will help you keep clean and pure” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 43–44; or Ensign, May 1991, 35).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

“May I suggest that human intimacy, that sacred, physical union ordained of God for a married couple, deals with a symbol that demands special sanctity. Such an act of love between a man and a woman is—or certainly was ordained to be—a symbol of total union: union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything. It is a symbol that we try to suggest in the temple with a word like seal. The Prophet Joseph Smith once said we perhaps ought to render such a sacred bond as ‘welding’—that those united in matrimony and eternal families are ‘welded’ together, inseparable, if you will, to withstand the temptations of the adversary and the afflictions of mortality (see D&C 128:18).

“But such a total, virtually unbreakable union, such an unyielding commitment between a man and a woman, can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with the union of all that they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams. ...

“Can you see then the moral schizophrenia that comes from pretending we are one, sharing the physical symbols and physical intimacy of our union, but then fleeing, retreating, severing all such other aspects—and symbols—of what was meant to be a total obligation, only to unite again furtively some other night or, worse yet,

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furtively unite (and you can tell how cynically I use that word) with some other partner who is no more bound to us, no more one with us than the last was or than the one that will come next week or next month or next year or anytime before the binding commitments of marriage?” (Speaking Out on Moral Issues, 158–59; see also Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 100).

How Does Our Love for God Influence Our Ability to Love Others?

Elder Orson Pratt

“The more righteous a people become the more they are qualified for loving others and rendering them happy. A wicked man can have but little love for his wife; while a righteous man, being filled with the love of God, is sure to manifest this heavenly attribute in every thought and feeling of his heart, and in every word and deed. Love, joy, and innocence will radiate from his very countenance, and be expressed in every look. This will beget confidence in the wife of his bosom, and she will love him in return; for love begets love; happiness imparts happiness; and these heaven born emotions will continue to increase more and more, until they are perfected and glorified in all the fulness of eternal love itself” (“Celestial Marriage,” *The Seer*, Oct. 1853, 156).

Elder John A. Widtsoe

“True love of man for woman always includes love of God from whom all good things issue” (Evidences and Reconciliations, 297).

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Elder Russell M. Nelson

“Without a strong commitment to the Lord, an individual is more prone to have a low level of commitment to a spouse. Weak commitments to eternal covenants lead to losses of eternal consequence” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 98; or Ensign, May 1997, 72).

**What Types of Conduct Help Develop True Love in Relationships?**

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“If a man and his wife were earnestly and faithfully observing all the ordinances and principles of the gospel, there could not arise any cause for divorce. The joy and happiness pertaining to the marriage relationship would grow sweeter, and husband and wife would become more and more attached to each other as the days go by. Not only would the husband love the wife and the wife the husband, but children born to them would live in an atmosphere of love and harmony. The love of each for the others would not be impaired, and moreover the love of all towards our Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ would be more firmly rooted in their souls” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1965, 11).

President Ezra Taft Benson

The Lord “said, ‘Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else’ (D&C 42:22). ...

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“This kind of love can be shown for your wives in so many ways. First and foremost, nothing except God Himself takes priority over your wife in your life—not work, not recreation, not hobbies. ...

“What does it mean to love someone with all your heart? It means to love with all your emotional feelings and with all your devotion. ... You cannot demean her, criticize her, find fault with her. ...

“What does it mean to ‘cleave unto her’? It means to stay close to her, to be loyal and faithful to her, to communicate with her, and to express your love for her.

“Love means being sensitive to her feelings and needs. ...

“Husbands, recognize your wife’s intelligence and her ability to counsel with you. ...

“Give her the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially as well as spiritually.

“Remember, brethren, love can be nurtured and nourished by little tokens. Flowers on special occasions are wonderful, but so is your willingness to help with the dishes, change diapers, get up with a crying child in the night, and leave the television or the newspaper to help with the dinner. Those are the quiet ways we say ‘I love you’ with our actions. They bring rich dividends for such little effort” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 61–62; or Ensign, Nov. 1987, 50).



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Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“If two people love the Lord more than their own lives and then love each other more than their own lives, working together in total harmony with the gospel program as their basic structure, they are sure to have this great happiness. When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, go hand in hand to their religious meetings, keep their lives wholly chaste—mentally and physically—so that their whole thoughts and desires and loves are all centered in the one being, their companion, and both work together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, then happiness is at its pinnacle” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 5).



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## **Mate Selection Selected Teachings**

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I salute fathers and mothers who are loyal to one another and who nurture their children in faith and love. There has been a wonderful response to the proclamation on the family, which we issued last October. ... We hope you will read it and reread it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 90; or Ensign, May 1996, 66).

Elder M. Russell Ballard

“The recent proclamation to the world on the family, issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, makes very clear that the family is ordained of God. The proclamation warns that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 112; or Ensign, May 1996, 81).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Learn the doctrinal foundation of the great plan of happiness by studying the scriptures, pondering their content, and praying to understand them. Carefully study and use the proclamation of the First Presidency and the Twelve on the family. ... It was inspired of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 103; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 75).

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Elder Merrill J. Bateman

“The proclamation teaches that ‘successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.’ In other words, the Lord measures the success of a family by the quality of its relationships. In a home where faith, love, and forgiveness are dominant, members find joy and satisfaction in being together. Ideally the father presides in love and righteousness, provides the necessities of life, and protects the family while the mother is primarily responsible for the nurturing of the children. In contrast, the world often measures family success by the accumulation of worldly things and the size of the estate that is passed on to the children” (“The Eternal Family,” 115).

## Principle of Faith

Matthew 9:29

“Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.”

2 Corinthians 5:7

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

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1 Nephi 3:7

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”

Doctrine and Covenants 76:53

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“When a man and a woman, in all sincerity, enter into a covenant of marriage for time and all eternity (and after they have ‘overcome by faith,’ and are ‘just and true’ [D&C 76:53]), the Holy Ghost—who is the Spirit of promise—bears record of or ratifies that sealing. In other words, he seals the promises appertaining to the marriage covenant upon them” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:98).

President Harold B. Lee

“Faith, not doubt, is the beginning of all learning, whether in science or religion. ... It is faith that seeks for spiritual knowledge and power by studying out in your own mind the matter in question, by applying all possible human wisdom to the solution of your problem and



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then asking God if your conclusion is right. If it is right, your bosom shall burn within you and you shall ‘feel’ that it is right, but if your conclusion is not right, you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing that is wrong. (Doc. and Cov. 9:8–9.)” (Decisions for Successful Living, 194).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but also faith, confidence, understanding, and partnership. It is devotion and companionship, parenthood, common ideals and standards. It is cleanliness of life and sacrifice and unselfishness” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 248).

“Mary and John, I congratulate you for your vision and faith and your willingness to forgo the fanfare and glamour of a worldly wedding for a simple, quiet, but beautiful marriage in the temple, a sweet eternal ceremony that will be unostentatious and sacred like your birth, blessing, baptism, or ordination” (Faith Precedes the Miracle, 127).

Elder LeGrand Richards

“Anderson M. Baten dedicated a poem to his beloved wife, Beulah, entitled, *The Philosophy of Life*, which expresses his faith that his marriage tie would extend beyond the grave:

“I wed thee forever, not for now;  
Nor for the sham of earth’s brief years.

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I wed thee for the life beyond the tears,  
Beyond the heart pain and the clouded brow.  
Love knows no grave, and it will guide us, dear,  
When life's spent candles flutter and burn low."  
(Marvelous Work and a Wonder, 203).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Commenting on 2 Corinthians 1:24. "After the grace of God as manifest through the sacrifice of his Son, after baptism, after temple marriage, after the Lord offers any blessing to men—still the promised rewards come by individual faith, by personal righteousness, by one man standing alone before his Maker and doing those things which enable him to work out his salvation" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 2:410).

Elder David B. Haight

"Marriage is sustained by faith and knowledge of its divine establishment, and is sustained daily by the energy of love. ...

"A strong, shared conviction that there is something eternally precious about a marriage relationship builds faith to resist evil. Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our fondest dreams, for 'neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord' (1 Corinthians 11:11)" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 16–17; or Ensign, May 1984, 14).

Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our

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fondest dreams.

## Principle of Prayer

President Spencer W. Kimball

“When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, ... then happiness is at its pinnacle” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 309).

President Ezra Taft Benson

“Prayer in the home and prayer with each other will strengthen your union. Gradually thoughts, aspirations, and ideas will merge into a oneness until you are seeking the same purposes and goals.

“Rely on the Lord, the teachings of the prophets, and the scriptures for guidance and help, particularly when there may be disagreements and problems” (“Salvation—A Family Affair,” Ensign, July 1992, 2, 4; or Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 85–86; Ensign, Nov. 1982, 60).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I know of no other practice that will have so salutary an effect upon your lives as will the practice of kneeling together in prayer. The very words, Our Father in Heaven, have a tremendous effect. You cannot speak them with sincerity and with recognition without

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having some feeling of accountability to God. The little storms that seem to afflict every marriage become of small consequence while kneeling before the Lord and addressing him as a suppliant son and daughter.

“Your daily conversations with him will bring peace into your hearts and a joy into your lives that can come from no other source. Your companionship will sweeten through the years. Your love will strengthen. Your appreciation one for another will grow.

“Your children will be blessed with a sense of security that comes of living in a home where dwells the Spirit of God. They will know and love parents who respect one another, and a spirit of respect will grow in their own hearts. They will experience the security of kind words quietly spoken. They will be sheltered by a father and mother who, living honestly with God, live honestly with one another and with their fellowmen. They will mature with a sense of appreciation, having heard their parents in prayer express gratitude for blessings great and small. They will grow with faith in the living God” (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 216).

“Your companionship will be one that will sweeten and strengthen through the years and that will endure through eternity. Your love and appreciation for one another will increase” (Cornerstones of a Happy Home, 11).

Elder Joe J. Christensen

“Many Church leaders as well as professional counselors have in-



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dedicated that they have never seen a marriage in serious difficulty in which the couple was still praying together daily. When you invite the Lord to be a partner in your union, there is a softening of feelings, a moderation of tension that occurs through the power of the Spirit. See what happens when, as you kneel together, you hear your companion express gratitude and love for you. Pray that you, working together, may overcome whatever difficulties you may have so that your love can increase. ...

“Sometimes, when Barbara has not been feeling well or has been discouraged for whatever reason, it has seemed to me to be helpful and meaningful during our joint companion prayer to shift into the first person and genuinely express my feelings, ‘Father, I am so grateful to have a companion such as Barbara. Help her to know how much I love and appreciate her as one of Thy chosen daughters. Assist her to be healed completely and given the health and strength she needs to continue on with her life’s important mission as wife and mother.’ ...

“I would invite you to candidly analyze your situation. Are you and your companion praying together daily that your marriage may be strengthened? If not, now is an excellent time to start!” (One Step at a Time, 15–16).

## Principle of Repentance

President Spencer W. Kimball

“One day in the temple in Salt Lake City, as I walked down the long

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hall preparing to go into one of the rooms to perform a marriage for a young couple, a woman followed me ... and with great agitation she said, ‘Elder Kimball, do you remember me?’ Her eyes were searching and her ears were seeking to hear if I remembered her. I was abashed. For the life of me I could not make the connection. I was much embarrassed. I finally said, ‘I am sorry, but I cannot remember you.’ Instead of disappointment, there was great joy that came to her face. She was relieved. She said, ‘Oh, I am so grateful you can’t remember me. With my husband I spent all night with you one time, while you were trying to change our lives. We had committed sin, and we were struggling to get rid of it. You labored all night to help me to clear it. We have repented, and we have changed our lives totally. I am glad you don’t remember me, because if you, one of the apostles, cannot remember me, maybe the Savior cannot remember my sins’” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 108).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“There is a remedy for all of this. It is not found in divorce. It is found in the gospel of the Son of God. He it was who said, ‘What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder’ (Matthew 19:6). The remedy for most marriage stress is not in divorce. It is in repentance. It is not in separation. It is in simple integrity that leads a man to square up his shoulders and meet his obligations. It is found in the Golden Rule” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97; or Ensign, May 1991, 73–74).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

“It is well to remember that, awful, horrible and serious as adultery and other sexual sins are, the Lord has kindly provided forgiveness on condition of repentance commensurate with the sin. But where these sins are concerned, even more than with less grievous ones, prevention is so much better than cure” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 74).

“Another young couple showed a similar unawareness of the gravity of sin, and especially of sexual sin. They came to me in June, having become formally engaged with a ring the previous December, and in the six months’ interval their sexual sin had been repeated frequently. In June they went to their respective bishops seeking recommends to the temple. The girl’s bishop, knowing that she had always been active, did not searchingly question her as to cleanliness, and a recommend was soon tucked away in her purse for use in the planned June marriage. The bishop of the other ward questioned the young man carefully and learned of the six months of transgression.

“In my office the couple frankly admitted their sin and shocked me when they said: ‘That isn’t so very wrong, is it, when we were formally engaged and expected to marry soon?’ They had no comprehension of the magnitude of the sin. They were ready to go into the holy temple for their marriage without a thought that they were defiling the Lord’s house. How lacking was their training! How insincere was their approach! They were very disturbed when their marriage had to be postponed to allow time for repentance. They had rationalized the sin nearly out of existence. They pressed for a date, the first possible one they could set up and on which they could plan their tem-

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ple marriage. They did not understand that forgiveness is not a thing of days or months or even years but is a matter of intensity of feeling and transformation of self. Again, this showed a distortion of attitude, a lack of conviction of the seriousness of their deep transgression. They had not confessed their serious sin. They had but admitted it when it had been dug out. There is a wide difference between the two situations.

“This couple seemed to have no conception of satisfying the Lord, of paying the total penalties and obtaining a release and adjustment which could be considered final and which might be accepted of the Lord. I asked them the question: ‘As you weigh this transgression, do you feel that you should be excommunicated from the Church?’ They were surprised at such a question. They had thought of their heinous sin as nothing more than an indiscretion. They had been born and reared in the Church and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost at eight years of age. But in the successive nights of their perfidy they had driven the Holy Spirit away. They had made him unwelcome. They were not listening to his promptings. It is inconceivable that they did not know how wrong their sin was but they had convinced themselves against the truth. They had seared their consciences as with a hot iron” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 155–56).

“In my office one day sat a sober couple who had a large family of little children. Early in their married life they had both committed adultery, and for many years had been suffering untold agonies of remorse. They had forgiven each other but were still suffering tortures.



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“The couple came to get some questions answered. They could stand it no longer. The husband broke the silence. ‘I told my wife that because of our adultery years ago we could never hope for salvation in the celestial kingdom, much less exaltation and eternal life, but that we could receive great satisfactions as we bore children and reared them to be so righteous that we could be sure they would all receive all the blessings of the gospel and the Church and eventually reach their exaltation.’

“When I quoted a long list of scriptures showing that forgiveness was possible eventually, when the heavy price had been paid, I could see hope stir within them and a peace settle over them. They left my office radiant with a new-found ecstasy” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 343).

Elder Boyd K. Packer

“The single purpose of Lucifer is to oppose the great plan of happiness, to corrupt the purest, most beautiful and appealing experiences of life: romance, love, marriage, and parenthood [see 2 Nephi 2:18; 28:20]. The specters of heartbreak and guilt [see Alma 39:5; Moroni 9:9] follow him about. Only repentance can heal what he hurts” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 27–28; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 21).

“In the battle of life, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners, and many who know of no way to escape and are pressed into his service. Every soul confined to a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The adversary cannot hold them if

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

they know how to use it. The key is labeled Repentance. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

“I know of no sins connected with the moral standard for which we cannot be forgiven. I do not exempt abortion. The formula is stated in forty words:

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them’ (D&C 58:42–43).

“However long and painful the process of repentance, the Lord has said:

“This is the covenant ... I will make with them. ... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more’ (Hebrews 10:16–17; italics added)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 95; or Ensign, May 1992, 68).

The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the adversary.

Principle of Forgiveness in Marriage

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President Spencer W. Kimball

“If the faults of two people are more nearly equal, if both of them have a beam-impaired vision, that still gives no justification for a selfish, unforgiving attitude. With this in mind, I once wrote to a woman with whom I had had previous occasion to discuss at length her family problems. I had given counsel in my desire to prevent further misunderstandings and avoid a separation or divorce. After some weeks, she wrote that she would accept my decision. I responded in part as follows:

“It is not my decision—it is up to you to make the decisions. You have your free agency. If you are determined to get a divorce it is your responsibility and your suffering if you are not willing to make adjustments. When I talked with you, I understood that you had forgiven each other and would start from there to build a beautiful life. Apparently, I was mistaken. All my warnings and pleadings seem to have fallen on deaf ears. I want you to know that I do not justify in your husband anything that was wrong, but I recognized all the way through that his was not the whole fault. I have never been able to feel that you had wholly purged the selfishness from your own soul. I do know that two people as seemingly intelligent and apparently mature as you two, could have a gloriously happy life, if both of you would begin to let your concerns run in favor of the other, instead of in favor of your selfish selves.

“The escapist never escapes. If two people, selfish and self-centered, and without the spirit of forgiveness, escape from each other, they cannot escape from themselves. The disease is not cured by the

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separation or the divorce, and it will most assuredly follow along in the wake of future marriages” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 270–71).

President Howard W. Hunter

“First, I invite all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the love and hope and compassion he displayed. I pray that we will treat each other with more kindness, more patience, more courtesy and forgiveness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 7; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“There must be recognition on the part of both husband and wife of the solemnity and sanctity of marriage and of the God-given design behind it.

“There must be a willingness to overlook small faults, to forgive, and then to forget” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 97; or Ensign, May 1991, 74).

“Eternal vigilance is the price of eternal development. Occasionally we may stumble. I thank the Lord for the great principle of repentance and forgiveness. When we drop the ball, when we make a mistake, there is held out to us the word of the Lord that he will forgive our sins and remember them no more against us. But somehow we are prone to remember them against ourselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 64–65; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 48).



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President Thomas S. Monson

“Recently I read where an elderly man disclosed at the funeral of his brother, with whom he had shared, from early manhood, a small one-room cabin near Canisteo, New York, that following a quarrel they had divided the room in half with a chalk line and neither had crossed the line nor spoken a word to the other since that day—sixty-two years before! What a human tragedy—all for the want of mercy and forgiveness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 77; or Ensign, May 1995, 59).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“If we will sue for peace, taking the initiative in settling differences—if we can forgive and forget with all our hearts—if we can cleanse our own souls of sin, accusations, bitterness, and guilt before we cast a stone at others—if we forgive all real or fancied offenses before we ask forgiveness for our own sins—if we pay our own debts, large or small, before we press our debtors—if we manage to clear our own eyes of the blinding beams before we magnify the motes in the eyes of others—what a glorious world this would be! Divorce would be reduced to a minimum; courts would be freed from disgusting routines; family life would be heavenly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 133).

Elder James E. Faust

“What is the central characteristic of those having only five loaves

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

and two fishes? What makes it possible, under the Master's touch, for them to serve, lift, and bless so that they touch for good the lives of hundreds, even thousands? After a lifetime of dealing in the affairs of men and women, I believe it is the ability to overcome personal ego and pride—both are enemies to the full enjoyment of the Spirit of God and to walking humbly before him. The ego interferes with husbands and wives asking each other for forgiveness. It prevents the enjoyment of the full sweetness of a higher love. The ego often prevents parents and children from fully understanding each other. The ego enlarges our feelings of self-importance and worth. It blinds us to reality. Pride keeps us from confessing our sins and shortcomings to the Lord and working out our repentance” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 4–5; or Ensign, May 1994, 6).

Elder Robert D. Hales

“I must ask for forgiveness from Heavenly Father for those things which I have done which are less than perfect and ask forgiveness of anyone I might have offended knowingly or unknowingly because of my personality or style” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 105; or Ensign, May 1994, 78).

Elder Robert L. Simpson

“Every couple, whether in the first or the twenty-first year of marriage, should discover the value of pillow-talk time at the end of the day—the perfect time to take inventory, to talk about tomorrow. And best of all, it's a time when love and appreciation for one another can be reconfirmed. The end of another day is also the perfect

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriage*

setting to say, ‘Sweetheart, I am sorry about what happened today. Please forgive me’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 30; or Ensign, May 1982, 21).



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **Agency or Inspiration?**

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

“The most important things that any member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ever does in this world are: 1. To marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority; and 2. To keep the covenant made in connection with this holy and perfect order of matrimony” (Mormon Doctrine, 118).





# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

## Summary Checklist

### Summary Checklist in Arrangements for a Temple Marriage

Unknown list type in Mark when completed: ☐ Contact temple to be married in and request necessary information. Date ☐ Reserve date and time for your marriage with the temple. Date Time ☐ Make sure the number of invited guests is not larger than the reserved temple room. ☐ Indicate in your temple reservation the language you wish the ceremony to be conducted in. ☐ Inform invited guests of the temple's clothing requirements. ☐ If not already endowed, reserve a date and time for own endowment. Date Time ☐ Invite those you wish to accompany you to be endowed, and inform them of the date and time. ☐ Obtain blood tests, if necessary. ☐ Date N/A ☐ Marriage license ☐ Residency required? Yes No ☐ Consent required? Yes No ☐ Waiting period required? Yes No ☐ Civil ceremony required to precede temple sealing? Yes No If yes, date, time, by whom? Arranged ☐ Arrange for witnesses for the temple ceremony. ☐ Have temple recommend with recommend for endowment and/or marriage. Date ☐ If married civilly, by our own choice, we have waited one year. N/A ☐ Temple garments. If not previously endowed, we have talked with our bishops about the purpose of garments. Date Garments purchased ☐ Wedding dress: white long sleeves modest high neckline sheer materials lined ☐ If desired, I will rent a white dress at the temple. Checked with temple for availability. N/A

☐

Contact temple to be married in and request necessary information.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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☐

Reserve date and time for your marriage with the temple. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Make sure the number of invited guests is not larger than the reserved temple room.

☐

Indicate in your temple reservation the language you wish the ceremony to be conducted in.

☐

Inform invited guests of the temple's clothing requirements.

☐

If not already endowed, reserve a date and time for own endowment. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Invite those you wish to accompany you to be endowed, and inform them of the date and time.

☐

Obtain blood tests, if necessary.

Unknown list type in ☐ Date N/A ☐ Marriage license ☐ Residency required? Yes No ☐ Consent required? Yes No ☐ Waiting period required? Yes No

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

☐

Date \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Marriage license

☐

Residency required? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

☐

Consent required? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

☐

Waiting period required? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

☐

Civil ceremony required to precede temple sealing? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, date, time, by whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
Arranged \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Arrange for witnesses for the temple ceremony.

☐

Have temple recommend with recommend for endowment and/or marriage. Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐

If married civilly, by our own choice, we have waited one year. N/A

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

\_\_\_\_\_

□

Temple garments. If not previously endowed, we have talked with our bishops about the purpose of garments. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Garments purchased \_\_\_\_\_

□

Wedding dress: white \_\_\_ long sleeves \_\_\_ modest high neckline \_\_\_ sheer materials lined \_\_\_

□

If desired, I will rent a white dress at the temple. Checked with temple for availability. N/A \_\_\_\_\_





# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## **The Holy Temple**

President Boyd K. Packer Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Ensign, Feb. 1995, 32-36

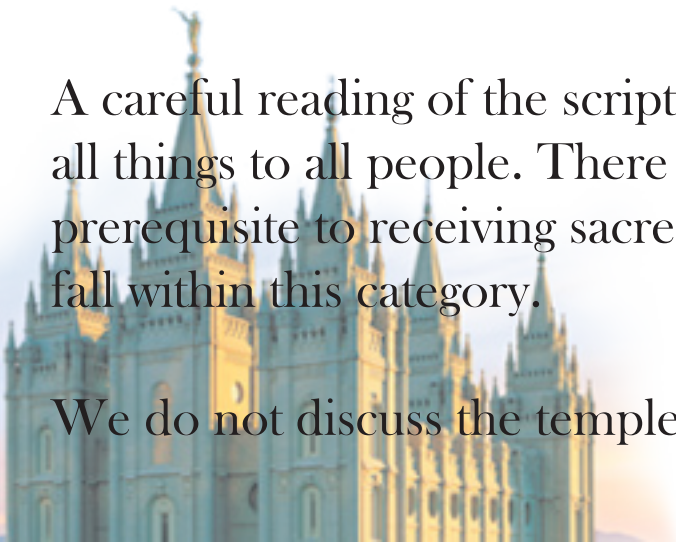
There are many reasons one should want to come to the temple. Even its external appearance seems to hint of its deeply spiritual purposes. This is much more evident within its walls. Over the door to the temple appears the tribute. “Holiness to the Lord.” When you enter any dedicated temple, you are in the house of the Lord.

In the temples, members of the Church who make themselves eligible can participate in the most exalted of the redeeming ordinances that have been revealed to mankind. There, in a sacred ceremony, an individual may be washed and anointed and instructed and endowed and sealed. And when we have received these blessings for ourselves, we may officiate for those who have died without having had the same opportunity. In the temples sacred ordinances are performed for the living and for the dead alike.

### **These Things Are Sacred**

A careful reading of the scriptures reveals that the Lord did not tell all things to all people. There were some qualifications set that were prerequisite to receiving sacred information. Temple ceremonies fall within this category.

We do not discuss the temple ordinances outside the temples. It



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

was never intended that knowledge of these temple ceremonies would be limited to a select few who would be obliged to ensure that others never learn of them. It is quite the opposite, in fact. With great effort we urge every soul to qualify and prepare for the temple experience. Those who have been to the temple have been taught an ideal: Someday every living soul and every soul who has ever lived shall have the opportunity to hear the gospel and to accept or reject what the temple offers. If this opportunity is rejected, the rejection must be on the part of the individual himself.

The ordinances and ceremonies of the temple are simple. They are beautiful. They are sacred. They are kept confidential lest they be given to those who are unprepared. Curiosity is not a preparation. Deep interest itself is not a preparation. Preparation for the ordinances includes preliminary steps: faith, repentance, baptism, confirmation, worthiness, a maturity and dignity worthy of one who comes invited as a guest into the house of the Lord.

All who are worthy and qualify in every way may enter the temple, there to be introduced to the sacred rites and ordinances.

## Worthy to Enter

Once you have some feeling for the value of temple blessings and for the sacredness of the ordinances performed in the temple, you would be hesitant to question the high standards set by the Lord for entrance into the holy temple.

You must possess a current recommend to be admitted to the tem-

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

ple. This recommend must be signed by the proper officers of the Church. Only those who are worthy should go to the temple. Your local bishop or branch president has the responsibility of making inquiries into your personal worthiness. This interview is of great importance, for it is an occasion to explore with an ordained servant of the Lord the pattern of your life. If anything is amiss in your life, the bishop will be able to help you resolve it. Through this procedure, as you counsel with the common judge in Israel, you can declare or can be helped to establish your worthiness to enter the temple with the Lord's approval.

The interview for a temple recommend is conducted privately between the bishop and the Church member concerned. Here the member is asked searching questions about his personal conduct and worthiness and about his loyalty to the Church and its officers. The person must certify that he is morally clean and is keeping the Word of Wisdom, paying a full tithe, living in harmony with the teachings of the Church, and not maintaining any affiliation or sympathy with apostate groups. The bishop is instructed that confidentiality in handling these matters with each interviewee is of the utmost importance.

Acceptable answers to the bishop's questions will ordinarily establish the worthiness of an individual to receive a temple recommend. If an applicant is not keeping the commandments or there is something unsettled about his life that needs putting in order, it will be necessary for him to demonstrate true repentance before a temple recommend is issued.

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

After the bishop has conducted such an interview, a member of the stake presidency likewise interviews each of us before we go to the temple.

## Taught from on High

Before going to the temple for the first time, or even after many times, it may help you to realize that the teaching in the temples is done in symbolic fashion. The Lord, the Master Teacher, gave much of His instruction in this way.

The temple is a great school. It is a house of learning. In the temples the atmosphere is maintained so that it is ideal for instruction on matters that are deeply spiritual. The late Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Quorum of the Twelve was a distinguished university president and a world renowned scholar. He had great reverence for temple work and said on one occasion:

“The temple ordinances encompass the whole plan of salvation, as taught from time to time by the leaders of the Church, and elucidate matters difficult of understanding. There is no warping or twisting in fitting the temple teachings into the great scheme of salvation. The philosophical completeness of the endowment is one of the great arguments for the veracity of the temple ordinances. Moreover, this completeness of survey and expounding of the Gospel plan, makes temple worship one of the most effective methods in refreshing the memory concerning the whole structure of the Gospel” (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Apr. 1921, p. 58).



# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

If you will go to the temple and remember that the teaching is symbolic, you will never go in the proper spirit without coming away with your vision extended, feeling a little more exalted, with your knowledge increased as to things that are spiritual. The teaching plan is superb. It is inspired. The Lord Himself, the Master Teacher, taught His disciples constantly in parables—a verbal way to represent symbolically things that might otherwise be difficult to understand.

The temple itself becomes a symbol. If you have seen one of the temples at night, fully lighted, you know what an impressive sight that can be. The house of the Lord, bathed in light, standing out in the darkness, becomes symbolic of the power and the inspiration of the gospel of Jesus Christ standing as a beacon in a world that sinks ever further into spiritual darkness.

Upon entering the temple you exchange your street clothing for the white clothing of the temple. This change of clothing takes place in the locker room, where each individual is provided with a locker and dressing space that is completely private. In the temple the ideal of modesty is carefully maintained. As you put your clothing in the locker you leave your cares and concerns and distractions there with them. You step out of this private little dressing area dressed in white and you feel a oneness and a sense of equality, for all around you are similarly dressed.

The temple is a great school. It is a house of learning.

The Power to Seal



# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

For those of you who look forward to a temple marriage, you may want to know what will occur. We do not quote the words of the sealing (marriage) ordinance outside of the temple, but we may describe the sealing room as being beautiful in its appointment, quiet and serene in spirit, and hallowed by the sacred work that is performed there.

Before the couple comes to the altar for the sealing ordinance it is the privilege of the officiator to extend, and of the young couple to receive, some counsel. These are among the thoughts that a young couple might hear on this occasion.

“Today is your wedding day. You are caught up in the emotion of your marriage. Temples were built as a sanctuary for such ordinances as this. We are not in the world. The things of the world do not apply here and should have no influence upon what we do here. We have come out of the world into the temple of the Lord. This becomes the most important day of your lives.

“You were born, invited to earth, by parents who prepared a mortal tabernacle for your spirit to inhabit. Each of you has been baptized. Baptism, a sacred ordinance, is symbolic of a cleansing, symbolic of death and resurrection, symbolic of coming forward in a newness of life. It contemplates repentance and a remission of sins. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a renewal of the covenant of baptism, and we can, if we live for it, retain a remission of our sins.

“You, the groom, were ordained to the priesthood. You had first

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

conferred upon you the Aaronic Priesthood and probably have progressed through all the offices thereof—deacon, teacher, and priest. Then the day came when you were found worthy to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. That priesthood, the higher priesthood, is defined as the priesthood after the holiest order of God, or the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God (see Alma 13:18; Hel. 8:18; D&C 107:2–4). You were given an office in the priesthood. You are now an elder.

“Each of you has received your endowment. In that endowment you received an investment of eternal potential. But all of these things, in one sense, were preliminary and preparatory to your coming to the altar to be sealed as husband and wife for time and for all eternity. You now become a family, free to act in the creation of life, to have the opportunity through devotion and sacrifice to bring children into the world and to raise them and foster them safely through their mortal existence; to see them come one day, as you have come, to participate in these sacred temple ordinances.

“You come willingly and have been judged to be worthy. To accept one another in the marriage covenant is a great responsibility, one that carries with it blessings without measure.”

If we would understand both the history and the doctrine of temple work, we must understand what the sealing power is. We must envision, at least to a degree, why the keys of authority to employ the sealing power are crucial—crucial not just to the ordinance work of the temples but to all ordinance work in all the Church throughout the world.

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

The sealing power represents the transcendent delegation of spiritual authority from God to man. The keeper of that sealing power is the Lord's chief representative here upon the earth, the President of the Church. That is the position of consummate trust and authority.

As has been said, much of the teaching relating to the deeper spiritual things in the Church, particularly in the temple, is symbolic. We use the word keys in a symbolic way. Here the keys of priesthood authority represent the limits of the power extended from beyond the veil to mortal man to act in the name of God upon the earth. The words seal and keys and priesthood are closely linked together.

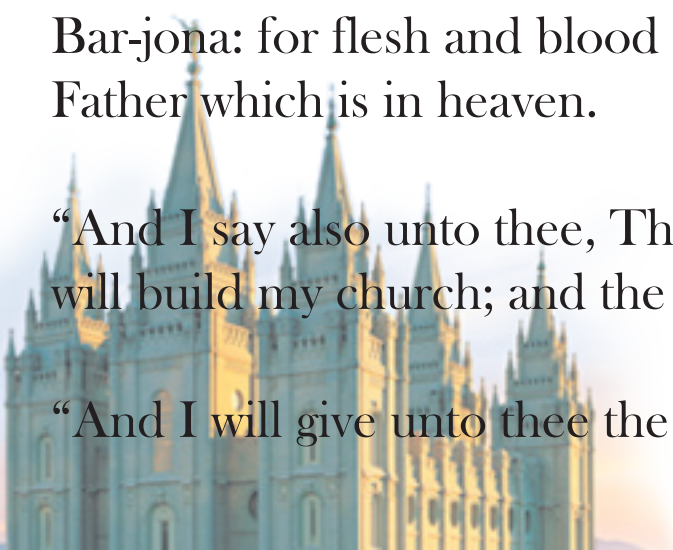
The keys of the sealing power are synonymous with the keys of the everlasting priesthood. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ...

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and





# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:13-19).

Peter was to hold the keys. Peter was to hold the sealing power, that authority which carried the power to bind or seal on earth or to loose on earth and it would be so in the heavens. Those keys belong to the President of the Church—to the prophet, seer, and revelator. That sacred sealing power is with the Church now. Nothing is regarded with more sacred contemplation by those who know the significance of this authority. Nothing is more closely held. There are relatively few men who have been delegated this sealing power upon the earth at any given time—in each temple are brethren who have been given the sealing power. No one can get it except from the prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A clear statement follows regarding the sealing power as binding on all that we do for the living and the dead.

“Whenever the fulness of the gospel is on earth, the Lord has agents to whom he gives power to bind on earth and seal eternally in the heavens (Matt. 16:19; 18:18; Hel. 10:3-10; D&C 132:46-49.) ...

“All things that are not sealed by this power have an end when men are dead. Unless a baptism has this enduring seal, it will not admit a person to the celestial kingdom; unless an eternal marriage covenant is sealed by this authority, it will not take the participating parties to an exaltation in the highest heaven within the celestial world.

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

“All things gain enduring force and validity because of the sealing power. So comprehensive is this power that it embraces ordinances performed for the living and the dead, seals the children on earth up to their fathers who went before, and forms the enduring patriarchal chain that will exist eternally among exalted beings” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 683).

In the Church we hold sufficient authority to perform all of the ordinances necessary to redeem and to exalt the whole human family. And, because we have the keys to the sealing power, what we bind in proper order here will be bound in heaven. Those keys—the keys to seal and bind on earth, and have it bound in heaven—represent the consummate gift from our God. With that authority we can baptize and bless, we can endow and seal, and the Lord will honor our commitments.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said he was frequently asked the question, “Can we not be saved without going through with all those ordinances, etc?’ I would answer, No, not the fullness of salvation. Jesus said, ‘There are many mansions in my Father’s house, and I will go and prepare a place for you.’ House here named should have been translated kingdom; and any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a celestial law, and the whole law too” (*History of the Church*, 6:184).

Not without Opposition

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Temples are the very center of the spiritual strength of the Church. We should expect that the adversary will try to interfere with us as a church and with us individually as we seek to participate in this sacred and inspired work. Temple work brings so much resistance because it is the source of so much spiritual power to the Latter-day Saints and to the entire Church.

At the Logan Temple cornerstone dedication, President George Q. Cannon made this statement:

“Every foundation stone that is laid for a Temple, and every Temple completed according to the order the Lord has revealed for his holy Priesthood, lessens the power of Satan on the earth, and increases the power of God and Godliness, moves the heavens in mighty power in our behalf, invokes and calls down upon us the blessings of the Eternal Gods, and those who reside in their presence” (Millennial Star, 12 Nov. 1877, p. 743).

When members of the Church are troubled or when crucial decisions weigh heavily upon their minds, it is a common thing for them to go to the temple. It is a good place to take our cares. In the temple we can receive spiritual perspective. There, during the time of the temple service, we are “out of the world.”

Sometimes our minds are so beset with problems, and there are so many things clamoring for attention at once that we just cannot think clearly and see clearly. At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can “see” things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our trou-

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bles that we had not previously known.

The Lord will bless us as we attend to the sacred ordinance work of the temples. Blessings there will not be limited to our temple service. We will be blessed in all of our affairs.

The Lord will bless us as we attend to the sacred ordinance work of the temples.

Come to the Temple

No work is more of a protection to this church than temple work and the genealogical research that supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness.

Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection, both individually and as a people.

So come to the temple—come and claim your blessings. It is a sacred work.





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## **Temple Preparation Selected Teachings**

### Temple Worthiness

President Howard W. Hunter

“I also invite the Latter-day Saints to look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your membership. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 8).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“These unique and wonderful buildings, and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship. These ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology. I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein. I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman. There is need for constant improvement in all of our lives. There is need occasionally to leave the noise and the tumult of the world and step within the walls of a

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sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 72; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 53).

## Covenants and Obligations

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“If a person violates a covenant, whether it be of baptism, ordination, marriage or anything else, the Spirit withdraws the stamp of approval, and the blessings will not be received” (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:45).

Elder James E. Talmage

“The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King,—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions” (House of the Lord, 84).

Symbolism of the Temple

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President Hugh B. Brown

“Here we will not only lay aside the clothing of the street, but the thoughts of the street, and will try not only to clothe our bodies in clean white linen but our minds in purity of thought” (Continuing the Quest, 38).

Elder John A. Widtsoe

“We live in a world of symbols. No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand” (“Temple Worship,” 62).

Purpose of the Endowment

The Prophet Joseph Smith

“You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things” (History of the Church, 2:309).

President Brigham Young

“Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, ... and gain your eternal exaltation” (Discourses of

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Brigham Young, 416).

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“It is a wonderful thing to come into the Church, but you cannot receive an exaltation until you have made covenants in the house of the Lord and received the keys and authorities that are there bestowed and which cannot be given in any other place on the earth today” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:253).

Elder John A. Widtsoe

“The temple endowment relates the story of man’s eternal journey; sets forth the conditions upon which progress in the eternal journey depends; requires covenants or agreements of those participating, to accept and use the laws of progress; gives tests by which our willingness and fitness for righteousness may be known, and finally points out the ultimate destiny of those who love truth and live by it” (Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 178).

Understanding the Endowment

Elder John A. Widtsoe

“The endowment which was given by revelation can best be understood by revelation; and to those who seek most vigorously, with pure hearts, will the revelation be greatest” (“Temple Worship,” 63).



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Elder Harold B. Lee

“When you enter a holy temple, you are by that course gaining fellowship with the Saints in God’s eternal kingdom, where time is no more. In the temples of your God you are endowed not with a rich legacy of worldly treasure, but with a wealth of eternal riches that are above price.

“The temple ceremonies are designed by a wise Heavenly Father who has revealed them to us in these last days as a guide and a protection throughout our lives, that you and I might not fail to merit exaltation in the celestial kingdom where God and Christ dwell” (“Enter a Holy Temple,” *Improvement Era*, June 1967, 144).

Elder Carlos E. Asay

“A few years ago, in a seminar for new temple presidents and matrons, Elder James E. Faust, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told about his being called to serve as a General Authority. He was asked only one question by President Harold B. Lee: ‘Do you wear the garments properly?’ to which he answered in the affirmative. He then asked if President Lee wasn’t going to ask him about his worthiness. President Lee replied that he didn’t need to, for he had learned from experience that how one wears the garment is the expression of how the individual feels about the Church and everything that relates to it. It is a measure of one’s worthiness and devotion to the gospel.

“There are some who would welcome a detailed dress code answer-

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ing every conceivable question about the wearing of the temple garment. They would have priesthood leaders legislate lengths, specify conditions of when and how it should and should not be worn, and impose penalties upon those who missed the mark by a fraction of an inch. Such individuals would have Church members strain at a thread and omit the weightier matters of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Matt. 23:23–26).

“Most Latter-day Saints, however, rejoice over the moral agency extended them by a loving Father in Heaven. They prize highly the trust placed in them by the Lord and Church leaders—a trust implied in this statement made by the Prophet Joseph Smith: ‘I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.’ [As quoted by John Taylor, *Millennial Star*, 15 Nov. 1851, 339.]” (“The Temple Garment: ‘An Outward Expression of an Inward Commitment,’” *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 19).

## Arrangements for a Temple Marriage

Latter-day Saints are taught the importance of being married in the temple. There, the marriage of a bride and groom is sealed for eternity.

There are several details that must be attended to before you can be married in the temple. Some have to do with the laws of the Church and some with civil laws of the land. Since temples are located in many different countries, legal requirements differ.

If you are considering marriage in a certain temple, you should contact that temple and request the necessary information. For temple

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addresses, please ask your bishop. He should have a copy of the “All Temple Schedule” for the current year.

Listed below are some of the arrangements you should consider.

## Laws of the Land

## Serological Tests

Some areas require you to get blood tests to obtain a marriage license.

## Marriage License

If civil law recognizes a temple marriage, you will need a marriage license valid in the civil jurisdiction in which the temple is located.

In the United States and Canada you must take to the temple a legal license that permits you to marry. This license can be obtained in the country or state/province in which the temple is located. In some locations you might have to establish residency before a license can be granted.

## Consent

Depending on your age, you may need to have your parents with you to give written consent in order to obtain a marriage license.

## Waiting Period



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Some governmental entities require a waiting period between the date you apply for your license and the date that you may receive it.

## Civil Ceremony Preceding Temple Sealing

Temple marriages in some countries are recognized by the law of the land. Laws in many other countries, however, require persons desiring to be sealed in these temples to be married civilly first.

## Church Procedures

### Witnesses

Two male members of the Church who have current temple recommends will serve as witnesses to your marriage. You may select your own witnesses, who will sign your marriage papers at the temple, or the temple will provide witnesses.

### Temple Marriage Recommend

When going to the temple to receive your endowment or to be sealed in marriage, you must have two recommends: the temple recommend and the recommend for living ordinances. The first part you will use to return to the temple to do work for the dead. The latter part is the recommend for your endowment, marriage, or sealing. It includes information from your membership record, such as your parents' names, your baptismal date, and your endowment date if you have been endowed previously. It must also indicate that



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you have come to the temple to be married.

## Announcements and Invitations

Do not mail announcements or invitations until your temple marriage recommend is obtained to avoid possible embarrassment if the recommend is denied for any reason. Be aware that follow-up interviews may be scheduled as you near the date of your marriage.

## Less than a Year

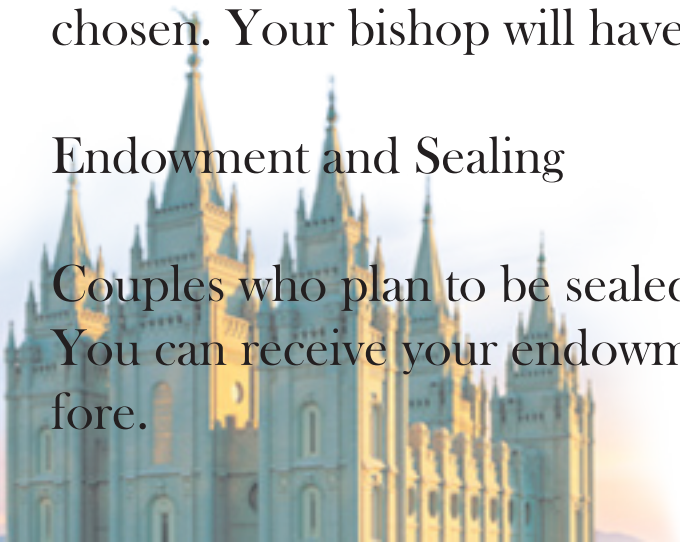
A person may not receive a temple recommend until one full year has passed following baptism and confirmation. If a couple is civilly married and then decides that they wish to be sealed in the temple, they must wait one year from the date of their civil marriage to be sealed. This restriction applies only to those people who could have been married in the temple initially but chose not to do so.

## Time and Date

Couples should coordinate their wedding plans with the temple to make certain it will be open on the day and at the time they have chosen. Your bishop will have a schedule.

## Endowment and Sealing

Couples who plan to be sealed must first receive their endowments. You can receive your endowment on the day of the sealing or before.



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You should plan to spend three to four hours for your own endowment. The sealing, including the counsel given by the person who officiates, will take another forty-five minutes. When you are being endowed or sealed, you should be at the temple one hour before the session or sealing is scheduled.

## Temple Clothing

Special white clothing is worn in the temple. You may rent it at the temple or take your own with you.

## Wedding Dresses

Brides may wear their wedding dresses in the temple to be sealed. Dresses must be white, without heavy ornamentation, have long sleeves and a modest neckline, have all sheer material lined, and the train must be removable or be able to be pinned or hooked up out of the way. If there is any question about appropriateness, take the dress or fabric and pattern to the temple for approval. Brides may wear their wedding dresses during the endowment session but must remove the trains for the session. They may not wear gowns with long dress pants in the temple. Many temples have beautiful white dresses for those who might need one for their special occasion. Check with individual temples for availability.

## Storage of Wedding Dress

Wedding gowns may be delivered to most temples before the seal-

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ing. The gowns will be taken to a bride's dressing room and held for you.

## Number of Guests

Because the sealing rooms vary in size, you should inform the temple (when you make reservations) how many guests you expect to attend your sealing. Only persons who have received their own endowment and have current temple recommends may attend the sealing. Most temples are not able to accommodate large groups. Therefore, invitations should be limited to family members and close friends.

## Inform Guests of Time and Clothing Requirements

If you are receiving your endowment on your wedding day, you may want some guests to participate in an endowment session with you. Other guests may have time only to attend your sealing. In either case, you must inform these guests when they should arrive at the temple. Double-check this information with the temple.

Guests should be counseled to dress as they would to attend a sacrament meeting. Tuxedos or other formal wear is not appropriate. All guests must have current temple recommends.

## Officiator

The temple presidency and other temple sealers are officially set apart to perform temple marriages. Because the General Authorities



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have heavy schedules, the Church members have been asked not to request them to perform marriages.

## Language

Most temples have sessions in multiple languages. Check with the temple president to verify that your endowment and marriage will be in the language of your choice.

## Taking Pictures on Temple Grounds

Cameras are not permitted inside the temple. After the sealing, pictures of the bride and groom can be taken on the temple grounds. Therefore, your photographer is not required to have a temple recommendation.

## Other Information

Each temple will supply you or your bishop with all the necessary information to plan your temple marriage. You can always telephone the temple (ask for the marriage clerk) or write to the temple president if you have questions.





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## **Cultivating Divine Attributes**

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 31–34; or Ensign, Nov. 1998,  
25–28

As Latter-day Saints, “we believe all things, we hope all things. ... If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”<sup>6</sup> What do we believe that will motivate us to move forward? What do we hope for? What are the virtuous, lovely, or praiseworthy things we should seek after? I believe we should strive to develop within ourselves the traits of the character of the Savior.

### Faith, Hope, and Charity

The words of the Apostle Paul come to mind: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”<sup>7</sup> These divine attributes should become fixed in our hearts and minds to guide us in all of our actions. We read in Moroni: “Cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all. ... Whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.”<sup>8</sup> Charity can be the outward expression of faith and hope. If sought and obtained, these three foundation elements of celestial character will abide with us in this life and beyond the veil into the next life. Remember that the “same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that [you] go out of this life ... will have power to possess your body in [the] eternal world.”<sup>9</sup> We should not wait a single day to intensify our personal efforts to strengthen these virtuous, lovely, and praise-

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worthy attributes.

When we keep the Lord's commandments, faith, hope, and charity abide with us. These virtues "distil upon [our] soul as the dews from heaven,"<sup>10</sup> and we prepare ourselves to stand with confidence before our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, "without blemish and without spot."<sup>11</sup>

As I read and ponder the scriptures, I see that developing faith, hope, and charity within ourselves is a step-by-step process. Faith begets hope, and together they foster charity. We read in Moroni, "Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity."<sup>12</sup> These three virtues may be sequential initially, but once obtained, they become interdependent. Each one is incomplete without the others. They support and reinforce each other. Moroni explained, "And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope."<sup>13</sup>

These are the virtuous, lovely, praiseworthy characteristics we seek. We all are familiar with Paul's teaching that "charity never faileth."<sup>14</sup> Certainly we need unfailing spiritual strength in our lives. Moroni recorded the revelation "that faith, hope and charity bringeth [us] unto [the Lord]—the fountain of all righteousness."<sup>15</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the restored Church of the Lord on the earth today, guides us to the Savior and helps us develop, nurture, and strengthen these divine attributes. In

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fact, He revealed the qualifications required to labor in His service in these words: “No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity.”<sup>16</sup>

Mormon taught that “charity is the pure love of Christ” and exhorted us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ.”<sup>17</sup> Note that charity is given only to those who seek it, only to those who earnestly pray for it, only to those who are disciples of Christ. Before we can be filled with this pure love, we must start at the beginning with the first principle of the gospel. We must have “first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>18</sup>

## Faith

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”<sup>19</sup> “Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if [we] have faith [we] hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”<sup>20</sup> Latter-day Saints can rejoice in the strength of our faith because we have the fulness of the gospel. If we study, ponder, and pray, our faith in the unseen but true things of God will grow. Even if we start with only “a particle of faith, ... even if [we] can no more than desire to believe,”<sup>21</sup> with nurturing attention a tiny seed of faith can grow into a vibrant, strong, fruitful tree of testimony.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ motivates us to repent. Through repentance, made possible by the Lord’s Atonement, we can feel the

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calming peace of forgiveness for our sins, weaknesses, and mistakes. With faith in a spiritual rebirth, we are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We strive to keep the commandments of God with faith that obedience will help us become like Him. By virtue of the Resurrection of our Savior, we have faith that death is not the end of life. We have faith that we once again will know the pleasant company and warm embrace of loved ones who have departed from mortality.

## Hope

Mormon asked the Saints of his day, “And what is it that ye shall hope for?” He gave them this answer: “Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.”<sup>22</sup> In Ether we learn that “whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, [and] maketh an anchor to the souls of men.”<sup>23</sup>

Even when the winds of adversity blow, our Father keeps us anchored to our hope. The Lord has promised, “I will not leave you comfortless,”<sup>24</sup> and He will “consecrate [our] afflictions for [our] gain.”<sup>25</sup> Even when our trials seem overwhelming, we can draw strength and hope from the sure promise of the Lord: “Be not afraid nor dismayed ... ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”<sup>26</sup>

## Charity



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Once faith grows into a firm, abiding testimony, giving us hope in our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness; once we see through the eye of faith that we are children of a loving Father, who has given us the gift of His Son to redeem us, we experience a mighty change in our hearts.<sup>27</sup> We feel "to sing the song of redeeming love,"<sup>28</sup> and our hearts overflow with charity. Knowing that the love of God "is the most desirable [of] all things ... and the most joyous to the soul,"<sup>29</sup> we want to share our joy with others. We want to serve them and bless them.

## Family

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" states clearly the sacredness of the family and that a "husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children."<sup>30</sup> Children should be taught at an early age of the sacredness of temples, and that their ultimate goal should be to go to the temple to enjoy the blessings that our Heavenly Father has in store for them. Even the tapestry of this sacred goal is given to children that will, in due time, realize this is the greatest blessing that could come to them in this life. ...

I testify to you as a special witness that Jesus is the Christ and that through His prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, the Savior presides over His Church. May we cultivate, in preparation of His returning to this earth, His divine attributes is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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## **How Does Our Love for God Influence Our Ability to Love Others?**

Elder Russell M. Nelson

“Without a strong commitment to the Lord, an individual is more prone to have a low level of commitment to a spouse. Weak commitments to eternal covenants lead to losses of eternal consequence” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 98; or Ensign, May 1997, 72).



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## **Adjustments in Marriage Selected Teachings**

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Two people coming from different backgrounds learn soon after the ceremony is performed that stark reality must be faced. There is no longer a life of fantasy or of make-believe; we must come out of the clouds and put our feet firmly on the earth. Responsibility must be assumed and new duties must be accepted. Some personal freedoms must be relinquished, and many adjustments, unselfish adjustments, must be made.

“One comes to realize very soon after marriage that the spouse has weaknesses not previously revealed or discovered. The virtues which were constantly magnified during courtship now grow relatively smaller, and the weaknesses which seemed so small and insignificant during courtship now grow to sizable proportions. The hour has come for understanding hearts, for self-appraisal, and for good common sense, reasoning, and planning. The habits of years now show themselves; the spouse may be stingy or prodigal, lazy or industrious, devout or irreligious; he may be kind and cooperative or petulant and cross, demanding or giving, egotistical or self-effacing. The in-law problem comes closer into focus, and the relationships of the spouse to them is again magnified” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 3).

Elder Harold B. Lee

If young people “would resolve from the moment of their marriage,

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that from that time forth they would resolve and do everything in their power to please each other in things that are right, even to the sacrifice of their own pleasures, their own appetites, their own desires, the problem of adjustment in married life would take care of itself, and their home would indeed be a happy home. Great love is built on great sacrifice, and that home where the principle of sacrifice for the welfare of each other is daily expressed is that home where there abides a great love” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 49).

## Adjusting to In-Laws

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Couples do well to immediately find their own home, separate and apart from that of the in-laws on either side. The home may be very modest and unpretentious, but still it is an independent domicile. Your married life should become independent of her folks and his folks. You love them more than ever; you cherish their counsel; you appreciate their association; but you live your own lives, being governed by your decisions, by your own prayerful considerations after you have received the counsel from those who should give it. To cleave does not mean merely to occupy the same home; it means to adhere closely, to stick together:

“Wherefore, it is lawful that ... they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation;

“And that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to



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his creation before the world was made.’ (D&C 49:16–17.)” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 5).

## Financial Adjustments

President Joseph F. Smith

“We are engaged in a temporal as well as in a spiritual labor. You must continue to bear in mind that the temporal and the spiritual are blended. They are not separate. One cannot be carried on without the other, so long as we are here in mortality” (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1900, 46).

## Adjusting to an Intimate Relationship

President Joseph F. Smith

“The lawful association of the sexes is ordained of God, not only as the sole means of race perpetuation, but for the development of the higher faculties and nobler traits of human nature, which the love-inspired companionship of man and woman alone can insure” (“Unchastity the Dominant Evil of the Age,” *Improvement Era*, June 1917, 739).

## Related Scriptures

Marriage requires adjustment, as do all relationships. Skills and attitudes that can aid adjustment include a loving relationship, communication, common goals, sacrifice, repentance, forgiveness, reconcili-

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ation, and confidentiality.

1. Areas of Concern

2. Reasons Adjustment May Be Needed

3. Scriptural Counsel

Finances

-Improper management, selfishness, debt, inflation, laziness, love of money, greed, envy, failure to communicate about financial goals

Matthew 16:26

D&C 75:28-29

D&C 104:78

Reality and new responsibilities

-Physical separation due to school, work, and church

-Psychological separation due to the return to reality

-Demands on time

Ephesians 5:25



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D&C 42:22

Sexual adjustment, or intimacy

-New experience, ignorance, selfishness, lust, lack of self-control, perversions, pregnancy

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Hebrews 13:4

Extended family

-Overdependence, being too close to parents, competition for time, different traditions and lifestyles, demands of grandparents

Mark 10:6-9

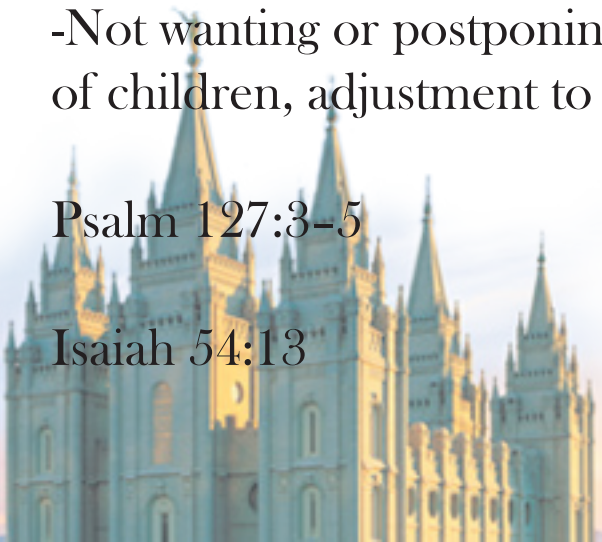
3 Nephi 13:24

Children

-Not wanting or postponing children, neglecting children, demands of children, adjustment to parenthood

Psalm 127:3-5

Isaiah 54:13



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D&C 68:25–28

Moses 2:27–28





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## **Overcoming Those Differences of Opinion: A Formula for Finding Unity in Marriage**

Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy  
Ensign, Jan. 1987, 60–62

Whenever two people live together, they are bound to have differences of opinion. Misunderstandings can easily arise over almost every aspect of their lives—important or unimportant—such as child discipline, housekeeping, meals, money management, decorating, which radio station to play, which movie to go to, and on and on.

Since to some extent each of us is a product of our past environments and experiences, it's only natural that we have occasional differences. People who grew up in the city do some things differently from those who grew up in the country. People from one part of the world do things differently from those in another part. Different ethnic, educational, financial, and religious backgrounds also produce differences in the ways we go about the daily details of living. There is also a natural difference between male and female points of view.

But being different doesn't necessarily mean that one person is right and the other is wrong—or that one way is better than another. Unity in marriage requires a willingness to compromise, a commitment to make the relationship work, and a dependence on the Lord. Even though there may be differences of opinion, habit, or background, husbands and wives can have “their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.” (Mosiah 18:21.)

# Preparation for Eternal Marriages

The Church has more than thirty thousand missionaries in the field today; yet serious problems between companions are relatively few. Part of the reason is an excellent formula found in the *Missionary Handbook* given to all full-time missionaries. Here's what it says:

“Being able to communicate with your companion is a fundamental step in becoming a successful missionary. Hold an inventory session with your companion.

“This is a meeting in which you discuss and set goals for your work, your companion relationship, and your personal life. ...

“Use this time to resolve any companion conflicts by bringing them out and solving them together.” (pp. 25–26; stock no. PBMI4201.)

Of course, missionary companions are often either perfect strangers or only passing acquaintances when they are assigned to work together. Roommates, too, are often strangers—or friends who think they know each other well. But hopefully, a marriage begins on much stronger footing, with two people who have had sufficient time to come to know each other well.

Whatever the situation, the basic ideas behind the missionary inventory session are outlined in *Doctrine and Covenants* 6:19: “Admonish [your companion] in his faults, and also receive admonition of him. Be patient; be sober; be temperate; have patience, faith, hope and charity.” Following are some of my observations on how to apply these ideas specifically to marriage.

# *Preparation for Eternal Marriages*

## Criticism

One of the hardest things to live with in any relationship is criticism, real or implied. Yet some husbands and wives demand sharply, “Why in the world did you do that?” or “I wouldn’t have done it that way!” or “We don’t do it that way where I come from!” or “That was a dumb thing to say.” Repeated criticisms of this negative and acid nature can wear away the bonds of love until the marital fabric is weakened and ruined—with sad results for both parties.

Too often, criticism attacks tender, unprotected feelings. When we criticize, we are implying blame, censure, condemnation, reprobation, and denunciation—and we’re setting ourselves up as judges, as if we were qualified to point out someone else’s faults and weaknesses.

For some people, sharp questions or quick rejoinders are habits. Criticism is a form of humor for them, and they enjoy feeling superior when they see someone else’s discomfort. This is a tragic, sinful attitude that must be changed.

## Talking It Out

The structure of any husband/wife discussion is, of course, flexible. It could be spontaneous, occurring whenever you or your partner sees a need. Or you could plan to hold a session regularly just to touch base—maybe weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Some prefer to keep it very informal; they discuss these items while driving in the car, while taking a walk, or while on a date together. Others prefer

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a more structured approach with an opening and closing prayer, a review of how things went last week (or last month), a look at the calendar for upcoming activities, and a discussion of personal and husband/wife goals.

However and whenever it is held, the discussion should focus on listening and understanding each other, solving problems, and giving loving support for the good things that are happening in the relationship.

I'd suggest that you start with the good things. Begin by expressing gratitude for each other and for your blessings. Tell your spouse the things you're most grateful for—things you most like about him or her. Be specific. Mention detailed instances and events that clearly illustrate good things your partner has done. And express your honest feelings of gratitude and love. Relationships thrive on positive thoughts, positive words, positive actions.

After sharing sincere feelings of gratitude and appreciation, you may feel that this is an appropriate time to discuss frustrations or problems in your relationship. As you do, remember Paul's words: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband." (I Cor. 7:3.) Warmth, sensitivity, and consideration should be dominant feelings during the discussion.

One of you might begin by asking, "What can I do to be a better husband (or wife)?" Then the other responds kindly with ideas and suggestions.



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As you share your feelings and give your partner suggestions, be humble and nonthreatening. Don't assume that you're always the offended one and that your spouse is the guilty one. Remember, too, that in many situations, it's not a matter of who is right and who is wrong—it's simply a matter of understanding each other.

I'd suggest that you avoid a written list of faults. This is a time when relying on memory is more considerate than reading a host of complaints. Another rule you might establish is for each of you to limit the number of suggestions you bring at one time—no more than two or three at most. That way the experience isn't as likely to be so overwhelming.

As you're the one receiving the suggestions, don't become defensive. Avoid the urge to say: "Don't nitpick! That doesn't happen very often!" Avoid the urge to ask for evidence that you're guilty: "When did I ever say that?" Recognize that if it's important enough for your companion to mention, it's something that is bothering him or her. And avoid the martyr's response: "You expect too much."

When your spouse suggests a way you can improve, you might respond by saying: "You're right. I should pick up my dirty clothes and keep the bedroom cleaner. Please forgive me—and please remind me when I forget. I appreciate your patience and help."

Then ask what else you can do to be a better partner, giving your companion a chance to bring up the other things he or she wants to talk about during the session.

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After you've discussed those additional items, the tables are turned. It's time for the other partner to take the initiative and ask for suggestions for improvement.

The objective is to understand each other's feelings, to see things from the other person's point of view, and to discuss ways to resolve problems. Again, in many cases, it's not a matter of who is right or wrong; it's often just a matter of different habits and customs. But your willingness to talk about these matters and look for solutions shows a great deal of love and consideration.

Compromises are often necessary. As we compromise, we protect feelings and respect the other's right to be different. But items that are important are mentioned and resolved.

So, let's review this procedure proposed for your consideration and adaptation. After you have begun by expressing your love and appreciation for each other, your discussion might go something like this:

A husband asks: "Honey, what can I do to be a better husband? Be honest with me. I really want to know how I can improve."

His wife's response, given with kindness, might be: "There are a few little things that might help out. For example, you haven't seemed to notice, but lately you've contradicted me or disagreed with me several times in front of the children. That doesn't create a good atmosphere in our home, and it really confuses the children. I think it would be better for us and for them if we were more united."

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The husband may not think he has really been guilty of this. But it does no good at all to be defensive and ask for specific illustrations of the last three times he has done this. If his wife thinks it's important enough to mention, he should realize that it's important enough for him to change his behavior.

He could say, "I'm sorry, dear, and I'll try to watch it. If you see this kind of situation developing, please help me by giving me a signal—such as saying that we haven't had a chance to discuss that subject alone yet."

Next, the wife might make the observation that her husband has been teasing a sensitive daughter too much about her boyfriends. Or she may remind him that the weekly date he promised as a New Year's resolution hasn't materialized.

Then it's her turn to ask, "Honey, what can I do to be a better wife?"

Her husband might then suggest with love that he has noticed several unbudgeted purchases lately, and encourage her to control impulse buying. Or he might mention that he prefers fried eggs to hard boiled, even if an article she read recently did caution against fried foods.

In such discussions between husband and wife, it is normal to point out many such details about living together. Some are of great consequence; others may seem trivial. But all are important for husband/

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wife harmony.

## Turning to the Lord

Wisdom suggests that prayer is an important part of marriage. We must seek the Lord's help in understanding each other, resolving challenges, and reaching appropriate decisions—all without becoming defensive. Even more important, we must seek his help in changing our behavior and our hearts. As we invite the Lord to soften our hearts toward one another and as we sincerely repent of our weaknesses, he will change our hearts. He will turn us from our selfish, petty, worldly attitudes and fill us with pure, Christlike love. No amount of talking and communicating will really resolve our differences unless our marriages are based upon true gospel principles, such as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, and obedience.

As we draw near to the Lord, he can help us grow closer to one another. Only through his grace can we be blessed with Christlike love—the ability to “love thy wife [or husband] with all thy heart, and ... cleave unto her [or him] and none else” (D&C 42:22).

Wisdom suggests that prayer is an important part of marriage.





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## **Intimacy in Marriage Selected Teachings**

### Related Scripture

1 Corinthians 7:2–5

“Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”

### Physical Intimacy Ordained of God

President John Taylor

“We have a great many principles innate in our natures that are correct, but they want sanctifying. God said to man, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.’ (Genesis 1:28.) Well, he

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has planted, in accordance with this, a natural desire in woman towards man, and in man towards woman and a feeling of affection, regard, and sympathy exists between the sexes. We bring it into the world with us, but that, like everything else, has to be sanctified. An unlawful gratification of these feelings and sympathies is wrong in the sight of God, and leads down to death, while a proper exercise of our functions leads to life, happiness, and exaltation in this world and the world to come. And so it is in regard to a thousand other things” (Gospel Kingdom, 61).

President Joseph F. Smith

“The lawful association of the sexes is ordained of God, not only as the sole means of race perpetuation, but for the development of the higher faculties and nobler traits of human nature, which the love-inspired companionship of man and woman alone can insure” (“Unchastity the Dominant Evil of the Age,” Improvement Era, June 1917, 739).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“It is the destiny of men and women to join together to make eternal family units. In the context of lawful marriage, the intimacy of sexual relations is right and divinely approved. There is nothing unholy or degrading about sexuality in itself, for by that means men and women join in a process of creation and in an expression of love” (President Kimball Speaks Out, 2).

“The union of the sexes, husband and wife (and only husband and

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wife), was for the principal purpose of bringing children into the world. Sexual experiences were never intended by the Lord to be a mere plaything or merely to satisfy passions and lusts. We know of no directive from the Lord that proper sexual experience between husbands and wives need be limited totally to the procreation of children, but we find much evidence from Adam until now that no provision was ever made by the Lord for indiscriminate sex” (“The Lord’s Plan for Men and Women,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1975, 4).

Elder Parley P. Pratt

“Our natural affections are planted in us by the Spirit of God, for a wise purpose; and they are the very main-springs of life and happiness—they are the cement of all virtuous and heavenly society—they are the essence of charity, or love; ...

“There is not a more pure and holy principle in existence than the affection which glows in the bosom of a virtuous man for his companion; ...

“The fact is, God made man, male and female; he planted in their bosoms those affections which are calculated to promote their happiness and union” (*Writings of Parley Parker Pratt*, 52–53).

Physical Intimacy Only in Marriage

Elder Boyd K. Packer

See quotation on *The Fountain of Life* Elder Boyd K. Packer of the

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Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.  
Things of the Soul, 105–17.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

“The expression of our procreative powers is pleasing to God, but he has commanded that this be confined within the relationship of marriage” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 99; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 74).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—I mean any intentional contact with the sacred, private parts of another’s body, with or without clothing—is a sin and is forbidden by God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 51; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 38).

Purposes of Intimacy

President Lorenzo Snow

“Think of the promises that are made to you in the beautiful and glorious ceremony that is used in the marriage covenant in the temple. When two Latter-day Saints are united together in marriage, promises are made to them concerning their offspring, that reach from eternity to eternity. They are promised that they shall have the power and the right to govern and control and administer salvation and exaltation and glory to their offspring worlds without end. And what offspring they do not have here, undoubtedly there will be op-



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portunities to have them hereafter. What else could man wish? A man and a woman in the other life, having celestial bodies, free from sickness and disease, glorified and beautified beyond description, standing in the midst of their posterity, governing and controlling them, administering life, exaltation, and glory, worlds without end” (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, 138).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Your love, like a flower, must be nourished. There will come a great love and interdependence between you, for your love is a divine one. It is deep, inclusive, comprehensive. It is not like that association of the world which is misnamed love, but which is mostly physical attraction. When marriage is based on this only, the parties soon tire of each other. There is a break and a divorce, and a new, fresher physical attraction comes with another marriage which in turn may last only until it, too, becomes stale. The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but spiritual attraction as well. It is faith and confidence in, and understanding of, one another. It is a total partnership. It is companionship with common ideals and standards. It is unselfishness toward and sacrifice for one another. It is cleanliness of thought and action and faith in God and his program. It is parenthood in mortality ever looking toward godhood and creationship, and parenthood of spirits. It is vast, all-inclusive, and limitless. This kind of love never tires or wanes. It lives on through sickness and sorrow, through prosperity and privation, through accomplishment and disappointment, through time and eternity” (Faith Precedes the Miracle, 130–31).

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## Misused Physical Intimacy

President David O. McKay

“Let us instruct young people who come to us, first, young men throughout the Church, to know that a woman should be queen of her own body. The marriage covenant does not give the man the right to enslave her, or to abuse her, or to use her merely for the gratification of his passion. Your marriage ceremony does not give you that right” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1952, 86).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“If it is unnatural, you just don’t do it. That is all, and all the family life should be kept clean and worthy and on a very high plane. There are some people who have said that behind the bedroom doors anything goes. That is not true and the Lord would not condone it” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 312).

“We urge, with Peter, ‘... Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.’ (1 Pet. 2:11.) No indecent exposure or pornography or other aberrations to defile the mind and spirit. No fondling of bodies, one’s own or that of others, and no sex between persons except in proper marriage relationships. This is positively prohibited by our Creator in all places, at all times, and we reaffirm it. Even in marriage there can be some excesses and distortions. No amount of rationalization to the contrary can satisfy a disappointed Father in heaven” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 8–9; or Ensign, May 1974, 7).

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President Howard W. Hunter

“Keep yourselves above any domineering or unworthy behavior in the tender, intimate relationship between husband and wife. Because marriage is ordained of God, the intimate relationship between husbands and wives is good and honorable in the eyes of God. He has commanded that they be one flesh and that they multiply and replenish the earth (see Moses 2:28; 3:24). You are to love your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it (see Ephesians 5:25–31).

“Tenderness and respect—never selfishness—must be the guiding principles in the intimate relationship between husband and wife. Each partner must be considerate and sensitive to the other’s needs and desires. Any domineering, indecent, or uncontrolled behavior in the intimate relationship between husband and wife is condemned by the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 51).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball

“Even though sex can be an important and satisfactory part of married life, we must remember that life is not designed just for sex. Even marriage does not make proper certain extremes in sexual indulgence. To the Ephesian saints Paul begged for propriety in marriage: ‘So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.’ (Eph. 5:28.) And perhaps the Lord’s condemnation included secret sexual sins in marriage, when he said:

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‘... And those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.’ (D&C 132:52.)” (Miracle of Forgiveness, 73).





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## **Costs of Infidelity**

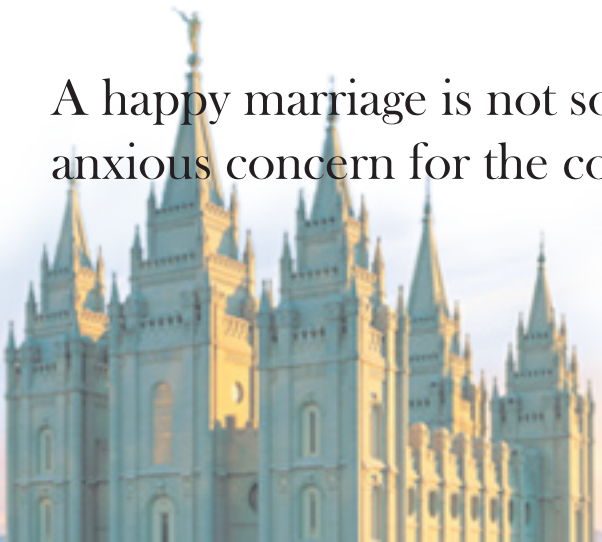
President Thomas S. Monson

“I am satisfied that a happy marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion.

“Selfishness so often is the basis of money problems, which are a very serious and real factor affecting the stability of family life. Selfishness is at the root of adultery, the breaking of solemn and sacred covenants to satisfy selfish lust. Selfishness is the antithesis of love. It is a cankering expression of greed. It destroys self-discipline. It obliterates loyalty. It tears up sacred covenants. It afflicts both men and women.

“Too many who come to marriage have been coddled and spoiled and somehow led to feel that everything must be precisely right at all times, that life is a series of entertainments, that appetites are to be satisfied without regard to principle. How tragic the consequences of such hollow and unreasonable thinking!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 96; or Ensign, May 1991, 73).

A happy marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion.



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## **Birth Control**

The ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity.

—Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Selected Teachings

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children. ...

“The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

“We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God’s eternal plan” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

First Presidency—Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., David O. McKay

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“By virtue of the authority in us vested as the First Presidency of the Church, we warn our people. ...

“Amongst His earliest commands to Adam and Eve, the Lord said: ‘Multiply and replenish the earth.’ He has repeated that command in our day. He has again revealed in this, the last dispensation, the principle of the eternity of the marriage covenant. ...

“The Lord has told us that it is the duty of every husband and wife to obey the command given to Adam to multiply and replenish the earth, so that the legions of choice spirits waiting for their tabernacles of flesh may come here and move forward under God’s great design to become perfect souls, for without these fleshly tabernacles they cannot progress to their God-planned destiny. Thus, every husband and wife should become a father and a mother in Israel to children born under the holy, eternal covenant” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 11–12).

President Joseph F. Smith

“Motherhood lies at the foundation of happiness in the home, and of prosperity in the nation. God has laid upon men and women very sacred obligations with respect to motherhood, and they are obligations that cannot be disregarded without invoking divine displeasure. In 1 Timothy 2:13–15, we are told that ‘Adam was first formed, then Eve. ...’ Can she be saved without child-bearing? She indeed takes an awful risk if she wilfully disregards what is a pronounced requirement of God” (Gospel Doctrine, 288–89).

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President David O. McKay

“Love realizes his sweetest happiness and his most divine consummation in the home where the coming of children is not restricted, where they are made most welcome, and where the duties of parenthood are accepted as a co-partnership with the eternal Creator.

“In all this, however, the mother’s health should be guarded. In the realm of wifhood, the woman should reign supreme” (Gospel Ideals, 469).

President Joseph Fielding Smith

“The family is the most important organization in time or in eternity. Our purpose in life is to create for ourselves eternal family units. There is nothing that will ever come into your family life that is as important as the sealing blessings of the temple and then keeping the covenants made in connection with this order of celestial marriage” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, 13; or Ensign, July 1972, 27).

President Spencer W. Kimball

“Tomorrow when I repeat the phrases that will bind you for eternity, I shall say the same impressive words that the Lord said to that handsome youth and his lovely bride in the Garden of Eden: ‘Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.’ ...



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“... You came to get for yourself a mortal body that could become perfected, immortalized, and you understood that you were to act in partnership with God in providing bodies for other spirits. ... And so you will not postpone parenthood. There will be rationalists who will name to you numerous reasons for postponement. Of course, it will be harder to get your college degrees or your financial start with a family, but strength like yours will be undaunted in the face of difficult obstacles. Have your family as the Lord intended. Of course it is expensive, but you will find a way, and besides, it is often those children who grow up with responsibility and hardships who carry on the world’s work” (“John and Mary, Beginning Life Together,” *New Era*, June 1975, 8).

“Supreme happiness in marriage is governed considerably by a primary factor—that of the bearing and rearing of children. Too many young people set their minds, determining they will not marry or have children until they are more secure, until the military service period is over; until the college degree is secured; until the occupation is more well-defined; until the debts are paid; or until it is more convenient. They have forgotten that the first commandment is to ‘be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.’ (Genesis 1:28.) And so brides continue their employment and husbands encourage it, and contraceptives are used to prevent conception. Relatives and friends and even mothers sometimes encourage birth control for their young newlyweds. But the excuses are many, mostly weak. The wife is not robust; the family budget will not feed extra mouths; or the expense of the doctor, hospital, and other incidentals is too great; it will disturb social life; it would prevent two salaries; and so abnormal living prevents the birth of children. The

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Church cannot approve nor condone the measures which so greatly limit the family” (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 328–29).

President Howard W. Hunter

“Honor your wife’s unique and divinely appointed role as a mother in Israel and her special capacity to bear and nurture children. We are under divine commandment to multiply and replenish the earth and to bring up our children and grandchildren in light and truth (see Moses 2:28; D&C 93:40). You share, as a loving partner, the care of the children. Help her to manage and keep up your home. Help teach, train, and discipline your children” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 67; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 50).

President Gordon B. Hinckley

“I am offended by the sophistry that the only lot of the Latter-day Saint woman is to be barefoot and pregnant. It’s a clever phrase, but it’s false. Of course we believe in children. The Lord has told us to multiply and replenish the earth that we might have joy in our posterity, and there is no greater joy than the joy that comes of happy children in good families. But he did not designate the number, nor has the Church. That is a sacred matter left to the couple and the Lord. The official statement of the Church includes this language: ‘Husbands must be considerate of their wives, who have the greater responsibility not only of bearing children but of caring for them through childhood, and should help them conserve their health and strength. Married couples should exercise self-control in all of their relationships. They should seek inspiration from the Lord in

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meeting their marital challenges and rearing their children according to the teachings of the gospel' (General Handbook of Instructions [1983], p. 77)" (Cornerstones of a Happy Home, 6).

Elder Melvin J. Ballard

"There is a passage in our Scriptures which the Latter-day Saints accept as divine: 'This is the glory of God—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' [see Moses 1:39]. Likewise we could say that this is the glory of men and women—to bring to pass the mortality of the sons and daughters of God, to give earth-life to the waiting children of our Father. ... The greatest mission of woman is to give life, earth-life, through honorable marriage, to the waiting spirits, our Father's spirit children who anxiously desire to come to dwell here in this mortal state. All the honor and glory that can come to men or women by the development of their talents, the homage and the praise they may receive from an applauding world, worshipping at their shrine of genius, is but a dim thing whose luster shall fade in comparison to the high honor, the eternal glory, the ever-enduring happiness that shall come to the woman who fulfils the first great duty and mission that devolves upon her to become the mother of the sons and daughters of God" (Hinckley, Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard, 203-4).

Elder Ezra Taft Benson

"The first commandment given to man was to multiply and replenish the earth with children. That commandment has never been altered, modified, or cancelled. The Lord did not say to multiply and

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replenish the earth if it is convenient, or if you are wealthy, or after you have gotten your schooling, or when there is peace on earth, or until you have four children. The Bible says, ‘Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: ... Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. ...’ (Ps. 127:3, 5.) We believe God is glorified by having numerous children and a program of perfection for them. So also will God glorify that husband and wife who have a large posterity and who have tried to raise them up in righteousness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 12).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

“To the first man and woman on earth, the Lord said, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply’ (Moses 2:28; Genesis 1:28; see also Abraham 4:28). This commandment was first in sequence and first in importance. It was essential that God’s spirit children have mortal birth and an opportunity to progress toward eternal life. Consequently, all things related to procreation are prime targets for the adversary’s efforts to thwart the plan of God. ...

“Knowledge of the great plan of happiness also gives Latter-day Saints a distinctive attitude toward the bearing and nurturing of children.

“In some times and places, children have been regarded as no more than laborers in a family economic enterprise or as insurers of support for their parents. Though repelled by these repressions, some persons in our day have no compunctions against similar attitudes that subordinate the welfare of a spirit child of God to the comfort



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or convenience of parents.

“The Savior taught that we should not lay up treasures on earth but should lay up treasures in heaven (see Matthew 6:19–21). In light of the ultimate purpose of the great plan of happiness, I believe that the ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 97, 100–101; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 72, 75).

I Have A Question

Dr. Homer Ellsworth

Ensign, Aug. 1979, 23–24

Is it our understanding that we are to propagate children as long and as frequently as the human body will permit? Is there not any kind of “gospel family-planning,” for lack of a better way to say it?

I hear this type of question frequently from active and committed Latter-day Saint women who often ask questions that are outside my professional responsibilities. Here are some of the principles and attitudes I believe apply to this fundamental question, a question most couples ask themselves many times during their child-bearing years.

I rejoice in our basic understanding of the plan of salvation, which teaches us that we come to earth for growth and maturity, and for testing. In that process we may marry and provide temporal bodies for our Heavenly Father’s spirit children. That’s basic, it seems to me. In contemplating this truth, I also take great delight in the

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Church's affirmative position that it is our blessing and joy, and our spiritual obligation, to bear children and to have a family. It impresses me that the positive is stressed as our goal.

I rejoice in our understanding that one of the most fundamental principles in the plan of salvation is free agency. The opportunity to make free agency choices is so important that our Heavenly Father was willing to withhold additional opportunities from a third of his children rather than deprive them of their right of choice. This principle of free agency is vital to the success of our probation. Many of the decisions we make involve the application of principles where precise yes-and-no answers are just not available in Church handbooks, meetings, or even the scriptures.

Our growth process, then, results from weighing the alternatives, studying the matter carefully, and seeking inspiration from the Lord. This, it seems to me, is at the heart of the gospel plan. It has always given me great joy and confidence to observe that in their administration of God's teachings, our inspired prophets do not seek to violate this general plan of individual agency, but operate within broad guidelines that provide considerable individual flexibility.

I recall a President of the Church, now deceased, who visited his daughter in the hospital following a miscarriage.

She was the mother of eight children and was in her early forties. She asked, "Father, may I quit now?" His response was, "Don't ask me. That decision is between you, your husband, and your Father in Heaven. If you two can face him with a good conscience and can

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say you have done the best you could, that you have really tried, then you may quit. But, that is between you and him. I have enough problems of my own to talk over with him when we meet!” So it is clear to me that the decisions regarding our children, when to have them, their number, and all related matters and questions can only be made after real discussion between the marriage partners and after prayer.

In this process of learning what is right for you at any particular time, I have always found it helpful to use a basic measuring stick: Is it selfish? I have concluded that most of our sins are really sins of selfishness. If you don’t pay your tithing, selfishness is at the heart of it. If you commit adultery, selfishness is at the heart of it. If you are dishonest, selfishness is at the heart of it. I have noted that many times in the scriptures we observe the Lord chastising people because of their selfishness.

Thus, on the family questions, if we limit our families because we are self-centered or materialistic, we will surely develop a character based on selfishness. As the scriptures make clear, that is not a description of a celestial character. I have found that we really have to analyze ourselves to discover our motives. Sometimes superficial motivations and excuses show up when we do that.

But, on the other hand, we need not be afraid of studying the question from important angles—the physical or mental health of the mother and father, the parents’ capacity to provide basic necessities, and so on. If for certain personal reasons a couple prayerfully decides that having another child immediately is unwise, the method

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of spacing children—discounting possible medical or physical effects—makes little difference. Abstinence, of course, is also a form of contraception, and like any other method it has side effects, some of which are harmful to the marriage relationship.

As a physician I am often required to treat social-emotional symptoms related to various aspects of living. In doing so I have always been impressed that our prophets past and present have never stipulated that bearing children was the sole function of the marriage relationship. Prophets have taught that physical intimacy is a strong force in strengthening the love bond in marriage, enhancing and reinforcing marital unity. Indeed, it is the rightful gift of God to the married. As the Apostle Paul says,

“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.” Paul continues, “Depart ye not one from the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” (1 Cor. 7:4–5, Joseph Smith Translation). Abstinence in marriage, Paul says, can cause unnecessary temptations and tensions, which are certainly harmful side effects.

So, as to the number and spacing of children, and other related questions on this subject, such decisions are to be made by husband and wife righteously and empathetically communicating together and seeking the inspiration of the Lord. I believe that the prophets have given wise counsel when they advise couples to be considerate and plan carefully so that the mother’s health will not be impaired.



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When this recommendation of the First Presidency is ignored or unknown or misinterpreted, heartache can result.

I know a couple who had seven children. The wife, who was afflicted with high blood pressure, had been advised by her physician that additional pregnancy was fraught with grave danger and should not be attempted. But the couple interpreted the teachings of their local priesthood leaders to mean that they should consider no contraceptive measures under any circumstances. She died from a stroke during the delivery of her eighth child.

As I meet other people and learn of their circumstances, I am continually inspired by the counsel of the First Presidency in the General Handbook of Instructions that the health of the mother and the well-being of the family should be considered. Thirty-four years as a practicing gynecologist and as an observer of Latter-day Saint families have taught me that not only the physical well-being but the emotional well-being must also be considered. Some parents are less subject to mood swings and depression and can more easily cope with the pressures of many children. Some parents have more help from their families and friends. Some are more effective parents than others, even when their desire and motivation are the same. In addition, parents do owe their children the necessities of life. The desire for luxuries, of course, would not be an appropriate determinant of family size; luxuries are just not a legitimate consideration. I think every inspired human heart can quickly determine what is luxury and what is not.

In summary, it is clear to me that couples should not let the things

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that matter most be at the mercy of those that matter least. In searching for what is most important, I believe that we are accountable not only for what we do but for why we do it. Thus, regarding family size, spacing of children, and attendant questions, we should desire to multiply and replenish the earth as the Lord commands us. In that process, Heavenly Father intends that we use the free agency he has given in charting a wise course for ourselves and our families. We gain the wisdom to chart that wise course through study, prayer, and listening to the still small voice within us.



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## **Personal Purity**

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 98-102; or Ensign, Nov. 1998,  
75-78

### Personal Purity

As modern winds of immorality swirl luridly around them, I am concerned for any of our youth or young adults who may be confused about principles of personal purity, about obligations of total chastity before marriage and complete fidelity after it. Against what is happening in the world they see and hear, and hoping to fortify parents as they teach their children a higher standard, I wish to speak today about moral cleanliness. Because this subject is as sacred as any I know, I earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit to guide me in remarks that are more candid than I would wish to make. Today I know how Jacob in the Book of Mormon felt when he said on the same topic, “It grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech.”<sup>1</sup>

In approaching this subject, I do not document a host of social ills for which the statistics are as grim as the examples are offensive. Nor will I present here a checklist of do’s and don’ts about dating and boy-girl relationships. What I wish to do is more personal—I wish to try to answer questions some of you may have been asking: Why should we be morally clean? Why is it such an important issue to God? Does the Church have to be so strict about it? How could anything society exploits and glamorizes so openly be very sacred or

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serious?

## A River of Fire

May I begin with a lesson from civilization's long, instructive story. Will and Ariel Durant have written: "No man [or woman], however brilliant or well-informed, can ... safely ... dismiss ... the wisdom of [lessons learned] in the laboratory of history. A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires; [but] if he is unchecked by custom, morals, or laws, he may ruin his life before he ... understand[s] that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume in chaos both the individual and the group."<sup>2</sup>

A more important scriptural observation is offered by the writer of Proverbs: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? ... Whoso committeth adultery ... destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."<sup>3</sup>

## Why Is Sexual Purity So Important?

Why is this matter of sexual relationships so severe that fire is almost always the metaphor, with passion pictured vividly in flames? What is there in the potentially hurtful heat of this that leaves one's soul—or the whole world, for that matter—destroyed if that flame is left unchecked and those passions unrestrained? What is there in all of this that prompts Alma to warn his son Corianton that sexual



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transgression is “an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?”<sup>4</sup>

By assigning such seriousness to a physical appetite so universally bestowed, what is God trying to tell us about its place in His plan for all men and women? I submit to you He is doing precisely that—commenting about the very plan of life itself. Clearly among His greatest concerns regarding mortality are how one gets into this world and how one gets out of it. He has set very strict limits in these matters.

Fortunately, in the case of how life is terminated, most seem to be quite responsible. But in the significance of giving life, we sometimes find near-criminal irresponsibility. May I offer three reasons why this is an issue of such magnitude and consequence in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## The Doctrine of the Human Soul

First is the revealed, restored doctrine of the human soul.

One of the “plain and precious” truths restored in this dispensation is that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man”<sup>5</sup> and that when the spirit and body are separated, men and women “cannot receive a fulness of joy.”<sup>6</sup> That is the reason why obtaining a body is so fundamentally important in the first place, why sin of any kind is such a serious matter (namely because it is sin that ultimately brings both physical and spiritual death), and why the resurrection of the body is

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so central to the great triumph of Christ's Atonement.

The body is an essential part of the soul. This distinctive and very important Latter-day Saint doctrine underscores why sexual sin is so serious. We declare that one who uses the God-given body of another without divine sanction abuses the very soul of that individual, abuses the central purpose and processes of life—"the very key"<sup>7</sup> to life, as President Boyd K. Packer once called it. In exploiting the body of another—which means exploiting his or her soul—one desecrates the Atonement of Christ, which saved that soul and which makes possible the gift of eternal life. And when one mocks the Son of Righteousness, one steps into a realm of heat hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned.

Please, never say: "Who does it hurt? Why not a little freedom? I can transgress now and repent later." Please don't be so foolish and so cruel. You cannot with impunity "crucify Christ afresh."<sup>8</sup> "Flee fornication," Paul cries,<sup>9</sup> and flee "anything like unto it,"<sup>10</sup> the Doctrine and Covenants adds. Why? Well, for one reason because of the incalculable suffering in both body and spirit endured by the Savior of the world so that we could flee.<sup>11</sup> We owe Him something for that. Indeed, we owe Him everything for that. "Ye are not your own," Paul says. "Ye [have been] bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."<sup>12</sup> In sexual transgression the soul is at stake—the body and the spirit.

## The Ultimate Symbol of Total Union

Secondly, may I stress that human intimacy is reserved for a married

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couple because it is the ultimate symbol of total union, a totality and a union ordained and defined by God. From the Garden of Eden onward, marriage was intended to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything. Adam said of Eve that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and that they were to be “one flesh” in their life together.<sup>13</sup> This is a union of such completeness that we use the word seal to convey its eternal promise. The Prophet Joseph Smith once said we perhaps could render such a sacred bond as being “welded”<sup>14</sup> one to another.

But such a total union, such an unyielding commitment between a man and a woman, can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with solemn promises and the pledge of all they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams.

Can you see the moral schizophrenia that comes from pretending you are one, pretending you have made solemn promises before God, sharing the physical symbols and the physical intimacy of your counterfeit union but then fleeing, retreating, severing all such other aspects of what was meant to be a total obligation?

In matters of human intimacy, you must wait! You must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are legally and lawfully married. To give illicitly that which is not yours to give (remember, “you are not your own”) and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole self is emotional Russian roulette. If you persist in pursuing physical satisfac-

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tion without the sanction of heaven, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, psychic damage that you may undermine both your longing for physical intimacy and your ability to give wholehearted devotion to a later, truer love. You may come to that truer moment of ordained love, of real union, only to discover to your horror that what you should have saved you have spent, and that only God's grace can recover the piecemeal dissipation of the virtue you so casually gave away. On your wedding day the very best gift you can give your eternal companion is your very best self—clean and pure and worthy of such purity in return.

## A Symbol of the Relationship with God

Thirdly, may I say that physical intimacy is not only a symbolic union between a husband and a wife—the very uniting of their souls—but it is also symbolic of a shared relationship between them and their Father in Heaven. He is immortal and perfect. We are mortal and imperfect. Nevertheless we seek ways even in mortality whereby we can unite with Him spiritually. In so doing we gain some access to both the grace and the majesty of His power. Those special moments include kneeling at a marriage altar in the house of the Lord, blessing a newborn baby, baptizing and confirming a new member of the Church, partaking of the emblems of the Lord's Supper, and so forth.

These are moments when we quite literally unite our will with God's will, our spirit with His spirit, where communion through the veil becomes very real. At such moments we not only acknowledge His divinity but we quite literally take something of that divinity to



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ourselves. One aspect of that divinity given to virtually all men and women is the use of His power to create a human body, that wonder of all wonders, a genetically and spiritually unique being never before seen in the history of the world and never to be duplicated again in all the ages of eternity. A child, your child—with eyes and ears and fingers and toes and a future of unspeakable grandeur.

Probably only a parent who has held that newborn infant in his or her arms understands the wonder of which I speak. Suffice it to say that of all the titles God has chosen for Himself, Father is the one He favors most, and creation is His watchword—especially human creation, creation in His image. You and I have been given something of that godliness, but under the most serious and sacred of restrictions. The only control placed on us is self-control—self-control born of respect for the divine sacramental power this gift represents.

## Control Sacred Procreative Powers

My beloved friends, especially my young friends, can you see why personal purity is such a serious matter? Can you understand why the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles would issue a proclamation declaring that “the means by which mortal life is created [is] divinely appointed” and that “the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife”?<sup>15</sup> Don’t be deceived and don’t be destroyed. Unless such powers are controlled and commandments kept, your future may be burned; your world could go up in flames. Penalty may not come on the precise day of transgression, but it comes surely and certainly enough. And unless there is true repen-

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tance and obedience to a merciful God, then someday, somewhere, the morally cavalier and unclean will pray like the rich man who wished Lazarus to “dip ... his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”<sup>16</sup>

## **The Peace and Renewal of Repentance**

I have declared here the solemn word of revelation that the spirit and the body constitute the soul of man, and that through the Atonement of Christ the body shall rise from the grave to unite with the spirit in an eternal existence. That body is therefore something to be kept pure and holy. Do not be afraid of soiling its hands in honest labor. Do not be afraid of scars that may come in defending the truth or fighting for the right, but beware scars that spiritually disfigure, that come to you in activities you should not have undertaken, that befall you in places where you should not have gone. Beware the wounds of any battle in which you have been fighting on the wrong side.<sup>17</sup>

If some of you are carrying such wounds—and I know that you are—to you is extended the peace and renewal of repentance available through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. In such serious matters the path of repentance is not easily begun nor painlessly traveled. But the Savior of the world will walk that essential journey with you. He will strengthen you when you waver. He will be your light when it seems most dark. He will take your hand and be your hope when hope seems all you have left. His compassion and mercy, with all their cleansing and healing power, are freely given to all who truly wish complete forgiveness and will take the steps that lead

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to it.

## Glorify God in Body and Spirit

I bear witness of the great plan of life, of the powers of godliness, of mercy and forgiveness and the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ—all of which have profound meaning in matters of moral cleanliness. I testify that we are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit. I thank heaven for legions of the young who are doing just that and helping others do the same. I thank heaven for homes where this is taught. That lives of personal purity may be revered by all, I pray in the name of purity Himself, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.



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## **The Fountain of Life**

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
Things of the Soul, 105-17

We shall start at the very beginning. “The Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them. And the Gods said: We will bless them. And the Gods said: We will cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” (Abraham 4:27-28.)

And so the cycle of human life began on this earth as “Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth. And ... the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters.” (Moses 5:2-3.)

### **Commandment Never Rescinded**

The commandment to multiply and replenish the earth has never been rescinded. It is essential to the plan of redemption and is the source of human happiness. Through the righteous exercise of this power, as through nothing else, we may come close to our Father in Heaven and experience a fulness of joy, even godhood! The power of procreation is not an incidental part of the plan of happiness; it is the key—the very key.



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The power to generate life emerges in the body of the male and the female as each grows to maturity, empowering a man to become a father and a woman to become a mother.

## Constant in Mankind

The desire to mate in humankind is constant and very strong. Our happiness in mortal life, our joy and exaltation, are dependent upon how we respond to these persistent, compelling physical desires.

As the procreative power matures in early manhood and womanhood there occurs, in a natural way, very personal feelings unlike any other physical experience. It is not without meaning that the process through which life is conceived should be accompanied by feelings of such depth and attraction that they draw the individual to seek a repetition of them.

Ideally, mating begins with romance. Though customs may vary, romance flourishes with all the storybook feelings of excitement and anticipation, and sometimes rejection. There are moonlight and roses, love letters, love songs, poetry, the holding of hands, and other worthy expressions of affection between a young man and a young woman. The world disappears around a couple, and they experience feelings of joy. Every couple in love is positive that no couple since Adam and Eve has felt quite the same as they do.

There are other patterns of romance which appear to be too sensible, too quiet, even dull. Nevertheless, they embody a depth of affection and romantic love that the deadly serious, silly senseless, or

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head-in-the-clouds ones will experience only as they mature.

## Mature Love

And if you suppose that the full-blown rapture of young romantic love is the sum of the possibilities which spring from the fountains of life, you have not yet lived to see the devotion and the comfort of longtime married love. Married couples are tried by temptation, misunderstandings, separation, financial problems, family crises, illness; and all the while love grows stronger, the mature love enjoys a bliss not even imagined by newlyweds.

True love requires a mutual respect and that the couple reserve until after the marriage the sharing of that affection which unlocks those sacred powers in that fountain of life. It means avoiding pre-marriage situations in which physical desire might take control. Courtship is a time to measure integrity, moral strength, and worthiness. The invitation, “If you love me, you will let me,” exposes a major flaw in character. It deserves the reply: “If you really loved me, you would never ask me to transgress. If you understood the gospel, you couldn’t!”

Pure love presupposes that only after a pledge of eternal fidelity, a legal and a lawful ceremony, and ideally after the sealing ordinance in the temple are those procreative powers released for the full expression of love. They are to be shared only and solely with that one who is our companion in marriage.

Participation in the mating process offers an experience like nothing

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else in life. When entered into worthily, it combines the most exquisite and exalted physical, emotional, and spiritual feelings associated with the word love. Those feelings and the lifelong need for one another bind a husband and wife together in a marriage wherein all of the attributes of adult masculinity are complemented by the priceless feminine virtues of womanhood.

That part of life has no equal, no counterpart, in all human experience. It will, when covenants are made and kept, last eternally, “For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory” (D&C 124:34), “which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19).

But romantic love is incomplete; it is a prelude. Love is nourished by the coming of children, who spring from that fountain of life entrusted to couples in marriage. Conception takes place in a wedded embrace between husband and wife. A tiny body begins to form after a pattern of magnificent complexity. A child emerges in the miracle of birth, created in the image of its earthly father and mother, able to see and hear and feel and to perceive through physical senses. Within its mortal body is a spirit, able to feel and perceive spiritual things. Dormant in the mortal body of the child is the power to beget offspring in its own image.

“The spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15); hence there are spiritual and physical laws to obey if we are to be happy.

Moral and Natural Laws

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There are eternal laws, including laws relating to this power to give life, “irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated” (D&C 130:20).

There are spiritual laws which define the moral standard for mankind (see JST, Romans 7:14–15; 2 Nephi 2:5; D&C 29:34; D&C 134:6). There are covenants that bind, seal, safeguard, and give promise of eternal blessings. There are physical or natural laws which govern attraction to a mate, love of offspring, and the instinct to protect them.

## Thou Shalt Not Kill

Every time physical conditions are met, conception will take place, whether in wedlock or out. Once a life is conceived, to destroy that life, even before birth, is a major transgression, save conception results from rape, the mother’s life hangs in the balance, or the life of the unborn is certified to be hopeless. We do not know all about when a spirit enters the body, but we do know that life, in any form, is very precious. While we are given the power to generate life and commanded to do so, we have no license to destroy it. “For the Lord ... in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man” (Ether 8:19). And the commandment given at Sinai was renewed in this dispensation: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13; see also 2 Nephi 9:35) “nor do anything like unto it” (D&C 59:6).

## To Be Controlled

The eternal laws of the gospel of Jesus Christ do not prohibit our



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responding to inborn, God-given mating instincts. Alma admonished his son Shiblon, “See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love” (Alma 38:12). A bridle is used to guide, to direct. Our passion is to be controlled—but not controlled by extermination, as with a plague of insects; not controlled by eradication, as with a disease. It is to be controlled as electricity is controlled, to generate power and life. When lawfully used, the power of procreation will bless and it will sanctify (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 309).

The gospel tells us when and with whom these sacred powers may be safely experienced. As with all things, the scriptures do not contain page after page of detailed commandments covering every possible application of the law of life. Rather they speak in general terms, leaving us free to apply the principles of the gospel to meet the infinite variety of life.

We are free to ignore the counsels and commandments of the scriptures, but when the revelations speak in such blunt terms, such as “thou shalt not,” we had better pay attention. When we obey, we can enjoy these life-giving powers in the covenant of marriage, and from our fountains of life will spring our children, our family! Love between husband and wife can be constant and bring fulfillment and contentment all the days of their lives.

## *Children of God*

No greater ideal has been revealed than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and that by virtue of our creation we differ

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from all other living things (see Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59). “All flesh,” the scriptures teach, “is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts” (1 Corinthians 15:39).

Men and women have unique responsibility in begetting life. The scriptures tell us that “men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil. And the law is given unto men.” (2 Nephi 2:5.) We are intelligent beings and we are accountable for our actions, even for our thoughts (see Alma 12:14).

Creatures in the animal kingdom are drawn together in season by the compelling instinct to mate. Once impregnation takes place, they separate, ordinarily leaving the mother alone to protect and provide for her offspring, for that is the way of the animal. But it is not the way of mankind. Family life among animals is a rarity and even then is generally temporary. Except for rare examples, for instance among birds, the bond between animal parents is transitory; between sire and offspring, almost nonexistent.

Animals cannot be accountable for the standards of morality by which mankind is judged. They are ruled by the physical laws of nature. Animals by and large are promiscuous in responding to their mating instincts. Nevertheless, their mating rituals follow set patterns and have rigid limitations. For instance, animals do not pair up with their own gender to satisfy their mating instincts. Nor are these mating instincts expressed in the molestation of their own offspring.

Children of God can willfully surrender to their carnal nature and, seemingly without remorse, defy the laws of morality and degrade

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themselves even below the beasts.

## The Tempter

Temptations are ever present in mortal life. The adversary is jealous toward all who have power to beget life. He cannot beget life; he is impotent. He and those who followed him were cast out of heaven and forfeited the right to a mortal body. He will, if he can, take possession of your body, direct how you use it. His angels even begged to inhabit the bodies of swine (see Matthew 8:31). He knows the supernal value of our power of procreation and jealously desires to rule those who have it. And, the revelations tell us, “he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). He will tempt you, if he can, to degrade, to corrupt, if possible to destroy this gift by which we may, if we are worthy, have eternal increase (see D&C 132:28–31).

## The Obsession

The rapid and sweeping deterioration of values in society is characterized now by a preoccupation—even an obsession—with the procreative act. Abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it are openly scoffed at as being out of date; marriage and parenthood are ridiculed as burdensome and unnecessary. Modesty, a virtue present in a refined individual or society, is all but gone.

Morality is no longer a measure of character for prominent role models for our youth—the politicians, the athletes, the entertainers. With ever fewer exceptions, what we see and read and hear has the

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mating act as the central theme. Censorship of any kind is forced offstage as a violation of individual freedom. That which should be absolutely private is disrobed and acted out center stage. In the shadows backstage wait addiction, pornography, perversion, infidelity, abortion, and—the ugliest of them all—incest and molestation. And all of them are on the increase. In company with them now is the pestilent disease, which, like a biblical plague, threatens races of mankind. In fact, all of mankind.

The philosophies which now converge all have one thing in common: either by insinuation or by declaration they reject God as our creator, as our Father, as our lawgiver.

## The Evil Idea

The knowledge that we are the children of God is a refining, even an exalting truth. On the other hand, no idea has been more destructive of happiness, no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak, more suffering and mischief, no idea has contributed more to the erosion of the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, but only advanced animals. There flows from that idea the not too subtle perception that we are compelled to yield to every carnal urge, are subject to physical but not to moral law.

The man-from-animal theory has been passed about enough to be pronounced true on the basis of general acceptance. Because it seems to offer logical explanations for some things, it is widely taught and generally accepted as the solution to the mystery of life.



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I know there are two views on the subject. But it is one thing to measure this theory solely against intellectual or academic standards, quite another to measure it against moral or spiritual or doctrinal standards.

When the theory that man is the offspring of animals is planted in young minds, it should be accompanied by careful instruction to set it in isolation in the garden of the mind until faith is well rooted. Otherwise, seeds of doubt may spring up and choke out the seedling of faith, and the harvest will be bitter fruit and the giver will have served the wrong master.

The knowledge that we are the children of God is a refining, even an exalting truth.

## Freedom to Choose

Lehi taught that men are free and must be free, free “to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day” (2 Nephi 2:26).

Society now excuses itself from any responsibility for the high incidence of sexual immorality in young people except for teaching children in school the physical process of human reproduction in order to prevent pregnancy or disease, and providing teenagers with devices which are supposed to protect them against both. When any effort is made to include in these courses basic universal values—not just values of the Church but those of civilization, of society itself—

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the protest arises, “You are imposing religion upon us, infringing upon our freedom.”

It is interesting how one virtue, when given exaggerated or fanatical emphasis, can be used to batter down another. How clever the deception when freedom—the virtue—is invoked to justify vice!

The advocates for lifting all restraints excuse themselves from responsibility by saying, “I do not intend to do any of these things myself, but I think everyone should be free to choose what they want to do without any moral or legal interference.” With that same logic, one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers set to keep the careless from falling to their death should be pulled down on the theory that each individual has the moral right to choose how close to the edge he will go.

## **There Are Higher Laws**

Anyone who has been taught the plan of salvation understands that to advocate freedom from all moral restraints is to preach what is contrary to God’s will. The phrase “free agency” does not appear in the scriptures. The only agency spoken of there is moral agency—“which,” the Lord said, “I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment” (D&C 101:78).

Civilizations of the past—Sodom and Gomorrah, for example—have destroyed themselves by disobedience to the laws of morality. “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the

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Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction.” (2 Nephi 26:11; see also Genesis 6:3; Ether 2:15; D&C 1:33; Moses 8:17.)

If we pollute our fountains of life or lead others to transgress in that way, there will be penalties more “exquisite” and “hard to bear” (see D&C 19:15) than all the physical pleasure could ever be worth. Alma told his son Corianton, “Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5). We do not escape the consequences when we transgress.

The only legitimate employment of the powers of procreation is between husband and wife who have been legally and lawfully married. Anything other than this violates the commandments of God himself. And as Alma said, “I say unto you, if ye speak against it, it matters not, for the word of God must be fulfilled” (Alma 5:58).

You who are married will know the joy of parenthood and feel the responsibility which comes with family life. Always keep in mind and make a central part of your lives the rearing of your children in light and truth. Give to these precious souls the best that you are learning from life. And accept this caution. A married couple may be tempted to introduce things into their relationship that are unworthy. Do not, as the scriptures warn, “change the natural use into that which is against nature” (Romans 1:26). If you do, the tempter will drive a wedge between you. If something unworthy has become part of your relationship, be wise and don’t ever do it again.

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## Exceptions

When we speak of marriage, family life, there inevitably comes to mind, “What about the exceptions? There are always exceptions!” Some are born with limitations and cannot beget children. Some innocent ones have their marriage wrecked because of the infidelity of their spouses. Others do not marry and live lives of single worthiness, while at once the wayward and the wicked seem to enjoy it all.

For now, I offer this comfort: God is our Father! All the love and generosity manifest in the ideal earthly father is magnified, beyond the capacity of mortal mind to comprehend, in Him who is our Father and our God. His judgments are just, His mercy without limit, His power to compensate beyond any earthly comparison.

Remember that mortal life is a brief moment, for we will live eternally. There will be ample—I almost used the word time, but time does not apply here—there will be ample opportunity for all injustices, all inequities to be made right, all loneliness and deprivation compensated, and all worthiness rewarded when we keep the faith. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19). It does not all end with mortal death; it just begins.

## Repentance

Already I have warned that the awesome powers of the adversary will be employed to entice all mankind to sinfully use the sacred



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power of procreation. Do not yield, for every debt of transgression must be paid “till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing” (Matthew 5:26). The law of justice demands it, and “... your sufferings [will] be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not” (D&C 19:15).

In the universal battle for human souls, the adversary takes enormous numbers of prisoners. Many, knowing of no way to escape, are pressed into his service. Every soul confined in a concentration camp of sin and guilt has a key to the gate. The key is labeled Repentance. The adversary cannot hold them, if they know how to use it. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the tempter.

The world being what it is, if you have already made a mistake it can certainly be understood. It cannot, under the law, be condoned, but it can be understood. You must stop conduct that is immoral. You must stop it now!

Nowhere is the generosity and kindness and mercy of God more manifest than in repentance. Do you understand the consummate cleansing power of the atonement made by the Son of God, our Savior, our Redeemer, who said, “I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent”? (D&C 19:16.) I know of no sin connected with transgression of the moral law which cannot be forgiven, assuming, of course, full and complete repentance. I do not exempt abortion.

The formula is stated in forty words: “Behold, he who has repented

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of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.” (D&C 58:42–43.) I know of no more beautiful words in all of revelation than these. “The same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.”

## Confession—The Bishop

The formula for repentance requires that we confess. Our first confession is to the Lord in prayer. When our mistakes are not grievous ones, and if they are personal, that may be all that is required by way of confession.

If our transgression includes tampering with the procreative capacities of another of either gender, then there is a necessary confession beyond prayer. From His priesthood the Lord has designated the bishop to be the common judge. If your transgression is serious, and your conscience will tell you whether it is or not, seek out the bishop.

The bishop represents the Lord in extending forgiveness for the Church. At times he must administer bitter medicine. Alma told Corianton, “Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment” (Alma 42:16). I would not want to live in a world where there was no repentance, and if punishment is a condition of that, I will willingly accept that. There is the idea abroad that one can send a postcard of prayer and receive in return full forgiveness and be ready at once for a mission or for marriage in the temple. Not so. There are payments to be made. If a bishop offers

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comfort only and, in misguided kindness, seeks to relieve you of the painful but healing process in connection with repentance, he will not serve you well.

Forgiveness from the Lord is earned through great personal effort. It takes courage to face the reality of your transgression, accept whatever penalty is required, and allow sufficient time for the process to work. When that is done, you will be innocent again. The Lord said: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

## He Will Remember Our Sins No More

“This is the covenant that I will make with them ... , I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16–17).

Alma, who in his youth had a rebellious spirit, spoke from his own experience about the great relief repentance brings: “Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:18–20.)

Sometimes, even after confession and penalties, the most difficult

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part of repentance is to forgive oneself. President Joseph Fielding Smith told of a woman who had repented of immoral conduct and was struggling to find her way. She asked him what she should do now. In turn, he asked her to read to him from the Old Testament the account of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Lot, and of Lot's wife, who was turned to a pillar of salt (see Genesis 19:26). Then he asked her what lesson those verses held for her.

She answered, "The Lord will destroy those who are wicked."

"Not so," President Smith told this repentant woman. "The lesson for you is 'Don't look back!'"

## The Temple

Reverently now I use the word temple. As I do, there comes to mind the words: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). I envision a sealing room and an altar, with a young couple kneeling there, or perhaps a more mature couple who joined the Church a year ago. This sacred temple ordinance is more, much more, than a wedding, for this marriage is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and the scriptures promise that the participants, if they remain worthy, "shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions" (D&C 132:19).

I think of the words of the sealing ordinance, which cannot be written here. I understand, in a small measure at least, the sacred nature of the fountain of life which is in us. And I see the joy that awaits



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those who accept this supernal gift and use it worthily.



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## **Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge**

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
In Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 117-20; or Ensign, Nov. 1993,  
86-88

You wonderful, righteous members of this church constantly inspire and motivate me. Thank you for your zest for life, your generous giving of self, your devotion, and your determination to live worthily. I also express gratitude to our many friends who have joined us through these conference sessions. May the messages given bless your lives.

### **Importance of Spiritual Knowledge**

Recently in South America a youth inquired, “Can you give us suggestions that will help us know the Savior better and be able to constantly follow His example?” That meaningful question and others like it have prompted this message on acquiring spiritual knowledge.

President Ezra Taft Benson emphasized the importance of spiritual knowledge, saying:

“We should make daily study of the scriptures a lifetime pursuit. ...

“... The most important [thing] you can do ... is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. ... Learn the doctrine. Master the principles. ...

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“You must ... see that ... searching the scriptures is not a burden laid upon [us] by the Lord, but a marvelous blessing and opportunity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, p. 61; or Ensign, Nov. 1986, 47).

President Spencer W. Kimball commented:

“Spiritual learning takes precedence. The secular without the foundation of the spiritual is ... like the foam upon the milk, the fleeting shadow. ... One need not choose between the two ... for there is opportunity to get both simultaneously” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ... p. 390).

## How to Acquire Spiritual Knowledge

As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. A true principle makes decisions clear even under the most confusing and compelling circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle. I have tried to do that with gaining spiritual knowledge. The result is now shared in hope that it will be a beginning place for your study. That statement of principle is:

To acquire spiritual knowledge and to obey it with wisdom, one must—

In humility, seek divine light.

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Exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

Hearken to His counsel.

Keep His commandments.

As spiritual knowledge unfolds, it must be understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded.

I will explain that statement using examples from the scriptures, the prophets, and the precious, though difficult, laboratory of personal experience. My desire is that the suggestions given will help you in your quest for spiritual truth throughout your life. Then, in time, you may accomplish this objective given by President Joseph F. Smith:

“The greatest achievement mankind can make in this world is to familiarize themselves with divine truth, so thoroughly, so perfectly, that the example or conduct of no creature living in the world can ever turn them away from the knowledge that they have obtained. ...

“From my boyhood I have desired to learn the principles of the gospel in such a way ... that it would matter not to me who might fall from the truth, ... my foundation would be ... certain in the truths that I have learned” (Gospel Doctrine [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 3-4).

Like President Smith, you and I need that kind of secure anchor to keep our life centered in righteousness and to avoid being swept away by the ruthless waves of worldliness.

Humbly Seek Divine Light



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The following scriptures teach why we should seek divine light:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105; italics added).

“I, the Lord, ... will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words” (2 Nephi 10:14; italics added).

“It is I that speak; ... I am the light which shineth in darkness, and by my power I give these words unto thee.

“... Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

“... I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

“And ... by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive” (D&C 11:11–14; italics added).

Analogies with physical light help us understand the power of spiritual light. A bulb ignited in a dark room overpowers darkness. Yet if the darkness is too intense, it can overpower light, as with a bulb plunged into a bucket of black ink. Spiritual light overcomes the darkness of ignorance and disbelief. When transgression severely clouds a life, the focused spiritual truths of repentance cut the blackness as a laser penetrates the darkest ink.

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Humility is essential to the acquiring of spiritual knowledge. To be humble is to be teachable. Humility permits you to be tutored by the Spirit and to be taught from sources inspired by the Lord, such as the scriptures. The seeds of personal growth and understanding germinate and flourish in the fertile soil of humility. Their fruit is spiritual knowledge to guide you here and hereafter.

A proud individual cannot know the things of the Spirit. Paul taught this truth, saying:

“The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ...

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:11, 14).

Since it requires much personal effort to gain and use worthwhile knowledge, you cannot endlessly sample from every fascinating arena of life. Therefore, you should select carefully a few vital areas where you can focus energy to learn and share vital truths. I know that to gain knowledge of great worth requires extraordinary personal effort. This is particularly true when our desire is to obtain spiritual knowledge. President Kimball said it this way:

“The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden ones—but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them. ... Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedi-

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cation of one's life. ... Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pp. 389–90).

Brigham Young learned truth by carefully listening to Joseph Smith and striving to understand everything that was taught by word, example, or the Spirit. The resulting tutoring has blessed generations. It conditioned Brigham Young to learn additional truths and to share far more than he had received personally from Joseph Smith. Follow his example.

## Exercise Faith and Hearken to Jesus' Counsel

The need to exercise faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely essential. It is the foundation of the plan of salvation. When that exercise of faith is coupled with sincere effort based upon a willingness to hearken to His counsel, great personal growth and blessings follow. The Savior declared:

"I now give unto you a commandment ... to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

"For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

"For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

"And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world;

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and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

“And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto ... the Father” (D&C 84:43–47; italics added).

## Obeys the Commandments

The role of obedience in gaining spiritual knowledge is crucial, as this comment of President Joseph Fielding Smith confirms:

“Now the Lord would give us gifts. He will quicken our minds. He will give us ... a knowledge that will be so deeply rooted in our souls that [it] can never be rooted out, if we will just seek for the light ... and the understanding which is promised to us, and which we can receive if we will only be true and faithful to every covenant and obligation pertaining to the gospel of Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1958, p. 22).

To keep the commandments, you must know them. The best single source for learning them is the scriptures. President Joseph Fielding Smith gave this admonition:

“Today we are troubled by evil-designing persons who [endeavor] to destroy the testimonies of members of the Church, and many ... are in danger because of lack of understanding and because they have not sought the guidance of the Spirit. ... It is a commandment from the Lord that members ... be diligent ... and study ... the fundamental truths of the gospel. ... Every baptized person [can] have



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an abiding testimony ... , but [it] will grow dim and eventually disappear [without] study, obedience, and diligent seeking to know and understand the truth” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1963, p. 22; or Improvement Era, Dec. 1963, p. 1062).

Profound spiritual truth cannot simply be poured from one mind and heart to another. It takes faith and diligent effort. Precious truth comes a small piece at a time through faith, with great exertion, and at times wrenching struggles. The Lord intends it be that way so that we can mature and progress. Moroni said, “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6). To explain that truth, President Harold B. Lee gave this wise instruction:

“The Savior’s blood, His atonement, will save us, but only after we have done all we can to save ourselves by keeping His commandments. All of the principles of the gospel are principles of promise by which the plans of the Almighty are unfolded to us” (Stand Ye in Holy Places [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 246).

## Apply Spiritual Knowledge

As packets of knowledge unfold, they must be understood, valued, obeyed, remembered, and expanded. I’ll explain:

Understood. As each element of truth is encountered, you must carefully examine it in the light of prior knowledge to determine where it fits. Ponder it; inspect it inside out. Study it from every vantage point to discover hidden meaning. View it in perspective to con-

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firm you have not jumped to false conclusions. Prayerful reflection yields further understanding. Such evaluation is particularly important when the truth comes as an impression of the Spirit.

Valued. You show knowledge is valued by expressing appreciation for it, especially in heartfelt prayers of gratitude. The Lord said, “He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more” (D&C 78:19).

Obedied. Obedient application of truth is the surest way of making it eternally yours. The wise use of knowledge will permeate your life with its precious fruit.

Remembered. Powerful spiritual direction in your life can be overcome or forced into the background unless you provide a way to retain it. Brigham Young declared, “If you love the truth you can remember it” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 10). Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in time of need. Spiritually sensitive information should be kept in a sacred place that communicates to the Lord how you treasure it. That practice enhances the likelihood of your receiving further light.

Expanded. This thought refers to rich benefits that come from your efforts to enlarge, extend, and increase your understanding of truth. Use the scriptures and the declarations of the prophets to expand your knowledge. You will find that efforts to share knowledge are often rewarded with more understanding as additional light flows into your mind and heart (see D&C 8:2–3).

Study and Apply Conference Messages

We have come to the end of a great conference. Through its mes-

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sages, you have been given inspired truth without much effort on your part. Make these truths yours through study and thoughtful application and by emulating a prophet of God, Spencer W. Kimball, who at the conclusion of a conference, taught:

“While sitting here, I have made up my mind that when I go home from this conference this night there are many, many areas in my life that I can perfect. I have made a mental list of them, and I expect to go to work as soon as we get through with conference” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, p. 164; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, p. 111).

The privilege of learning absolute truth is sacred to me. I stand in awe that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are willing, even anxious for us to learn from them. Please use what I have shared with sensitivity for the wondrous privilege given each of us, willing to obey, to be taught eternal truth. Gaining spiritual knowledge is not a mechanical process. It is a sacred privilege based upon spiritual law. I testify that you can receive inspired help. Humbly ask your Eternal Father. Seek divine light. Exercise faith in the Savior. Strive to hearken to His counsel and obey His commandments. He will bless and lead you as you move through this sometimes treacherous world.

I solemnly testify that Jesus Christ guides this, His church. He knows and loves you personally. As you walk in faithful obedience, He will bless you, inspire you, and lead you to greater knowledge and capacity. I certify that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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## **We Must Do Our Part**

### **We Must Do Our Part**

Principles can often be divided into two main parts: if and then. The if part is a statement of general counsel from the Lord. The then part is the promised results of obeying or disobeying that counsel.

God called the Word of Wisdom “a principle with promise” (D&C 89:3). The if part is the counsel to keep our bodies physically and spiritually pure. The then part promises health, wisdom, strength, and other blessings.

The Lord keeps His promises: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). We must do our part to qualify for the blessings (see D&C 130:20–22). We should also remember that God determines the then part according to His wisdom and not according to our expectations.

Principles are not always taught or written in the if-then format. For example, General Authorities do not always say “if you have faith, then you will have the Lord’s power in your life.” Instead, they may relate examples that illustrate faith or motivate us to be faithful.





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## **Foundations for Eternal Marriage**

Elder Richard G. Scott

“The most important principle I can share: Anchor your life in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life—more important than life itself, more important than a beloved companion or children or anyone on earth. Make their will your central desire. Then all that you need for happiness will come to you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 43; or Ensign, May 1993, 34).

