

The October 5, 1843 Journal Entry

Summary: The original journal entry that had Joseph forbidding polygamy and wanting to try people for practicing or teaching it was drastically altered by later Church historians to countenance polygamy.

Joseph Smith's Journal [entry from the 5th of October 1843](#) reads:

Evening at home and walked up and down the street with my scribe. Gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives. on this Law. Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of— No man shall have but one wife.

Also, [see this image](#).

This journal entry was formerly hosted at the Joseph Smith Papers project at this link: <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-draft-1-march-31-december-1843&p=144#!/paperSummary/history-draft-1-march-31-december-1843&p=143>

The document was later revised (I believe the JSP project editors put the alteration at around 1850ish? [need to get exact date and citation]) to read:

Evening at home and walked up and down the street with my scribe. Gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrin of plurality of wives. on this law for according to the law i hold the keys of this power in the last days, for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power? and the keys are conferred – and I have continually said Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of No man shall have but one wife at a time unless the Lord directs otherwise

See an image of the resulting manuscript of [here](#).

The final print version, found in [History of the Church 6:2 as published at BYU Studies](#), reads:

Evening, at home, and walked up and down the streets with my scribe. Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives: for, according to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; *and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise.*

Possible interpretations of this event:

1. Smith was honest and later leaders were **not** honest - Joseph Smith was not lying and later leaders of the Church altered the meaning of Joseph's words to contravene their original meaning.

2. Smith was **not** honest and later leaders were honest - Joseph was prevaricating and later leaders of the Church altered the meaning of Joseph's words to fit with Joseph's original *intent* (i.e., polygamy was okay in certain circumstances).
3. Smith was **not** honest and later leaders were **not** honest - Joseph Smith lied about polygamy and later leaders dishonestly altered the meaning of Smith's deceitful statement.
4. Smith was honest and later leaders were honest - Joseph was issuing a *tactical* mandate ([described here](#)).