**Unit 5 Part 2: The Solemn Responsibility of Parenting: Transcript**

**Children are an heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3):**

“Never forget that these little ones are the songs and daughters of God and that yours is a custodial relationship to them, that He was a parent before you were parents and that He has not relinquished His parental rights or interest in these His little ones. Now, love them, take care of them. Fathers, control your tempers, now and in all the years to come. Mothers, control your voices; keep them down. Rear your children in love, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Take care of your little ones. Welcome them into your homes, and nurture and love them with all of your hearts. They may do, in the years that come, some things you would not want them to do, but be patient, be patient. You have not failed as long as you have tried. Never forget that.” (Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, Salt Lake University Third Stake conference, 3 Nov. 1996; reported in *Ensign*, July 1997)

**Another Chance:**

As we embark on learning what the Lord expects of parents in relation to their children, Elder L. Tom Perry offers this perspective about what he would have done differently if given another opportunity with young children in his home.

“I’ve often thought of the happy times we had when our family was young and our children were at home. I have made a mental review of those days and considered the changes I would make in our family organization and administration if we had the opportunity to live that period over again. There are two areas I would determine to improve if that privilege were granted to me to have young children in our home once again. The first would be to spend more time as husband and wife in family executive committee meeting learning, communicating, planning, and organizing to better fulfill our roles as parents. The second wish, I would like, if I could have those year over, would be to spend more family time. This includes more consistent meaningful family home evenings.” (Elder L. Tom Perry, “Therefore I Was Taught,” Ensign, May 1994)

**Rearing Children:**

In a recent Word-wide leadership training session with 2 Apostles and all 3 General Auxiliary Presidents, important counsel was given about how to best attain the lofty goal of rearing children in love and righteousness.

(Video, 2008 Worldwide Training Roundtable discussion)

[Sister Beck] I think one of the most important concepts for parents to grasp about a home is to create a climate. Often we say it’s tasks or we measure things by achievements or things or lists. But we can think of a climate where something can grow. The word nurture means to help something grow. Something can’t grow where it’s too dry or too cold or the ground is too hard. The job of parents in rearing children is to keep that climate where things can grow with the Spirit, where there’s faith and hope and charity….

[Sister Tanner] I think as we talk about making a home, we need certain principles, we need certain skills, and the lack of homemaking skills- and I don’t just mean baking bread-has created, I think, an emotional homelessness that has some of the very same byproducts as street homelessness. People who do not have a place to go that has the Spirit, that has the emotional stability, that has the principles that we’ve been talking about, have a lot of the same problems of despair, of turning to drugs or immorality, that street homeless people have. And we have an opportunity, mothers and fathers working together, to create an environment to be homemakers, to create an environment that will make a home. Home is not just a place; it’s a feeling, and it’s a spirit.

[Elder Oaks] I’m glad you speak of homemaking because homemaking is a word of disparagement in the eyes of some, and it should not be. But we may need to define it. Homemaking is not just baking bread or cleaning a house. Homemaking is to make the environment necessary to nurture our children toward eternal life, which is our responsibility as parents. And that homemaking is as much for fathers as it is for mothers.

**The Real Task of Parents:**

The most significant ingredient in the loving climate parents should be seeking to create in their home comes from the Spirit as parents and children work to grow their testimonies of, and conversion in Christ. Wise parents recognize and work to achieve what Elder Christofferson has called “the real task of parents.”

“Of course, as has been repeated by prophets over the years, “The most important of the Lord’s work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes.” 9 We have much to do to strengthen marriage in societies that increasingly trivialize its importance and purpose. We have much to do to teach our children “to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:28). Our task is nothing less than to help our children experience the mighty change of heart or conversion to the Lord spoken of so eloquently in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 5:1-12; Alma 26).” (Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “Brethren, We Have A Work to Do,” General Conference, Oct. 2012)

**Light and Truth:**

The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one. (D&C 93: 36-37) And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you; (D&C 50:25) Why do we want to bring light and truth into the family?

And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day. And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you; He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all. (D&C 50:23-26) Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God. And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light, and truth, through disobedience, form the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth. (D&C 93:38-40) Read these passages with reference to the marriage relationship. What are the specific ways a couple can become more unified in order to receive more light? What effect will that have on the rest of the family?

Now, this was what Ammon desired, for he knew that King Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness-yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, he was carried away in God- (Alma 19:6) What effect can light have on individuals and families, as illustrated by King Lamoni?

**The Shield of Faith:**

Producing light and truth in our homes requires that parents carefully craft what Elder Packer describes as the shield of faith. Consider why it is best made in the home rather than outside of it.

“Lest parents and children be “tossed to and fro,” and misled by “cunning craftiness” of men who “lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14), our Father’s plan requires that, like the generation of life itself, the shield of faith is to be made and fitted in the family. No two can be exactly alike. Each must be handcrafted to individual specifications.

“The plan designed by the Father contemplates that man and woman, husband and wife, working together, fit each child individually with a shield of faith made to buckle on so firmly that it can neither be pulled of nor penetrated by those fiery darts. It takes the steady strength of a father to hammer out the metal of it and the tender hands of a mother to polish and fit it on. Sometimes one parent is left to do it alone. It is difficult, but it can be done.

“In the Church we can teach about the materials from which a shield of faith is made: reverence, courage, chastity, repentance, forgiveness, compassion. In church we can learn how to assemble and fit them together. But the actual making of and fitting on of the shield of faith belongs in the family circle. Otherwise it may loosen and come off in a crisis.” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Shield of Faith,” April Conference 1995)

**Love & Law:**

As you listen the next teachings by Elder Oaks and President Kim B. Clark of BYU-Idaho, look for the divine interplay between love and law. Why do you need both love and law in a home? What are the forces against having both love and law effectively and faithfully our homes?

“I have been impressed to speak about God’s love and God’s commandments. My message is that God’s universal and perfect love is shown in all the blessings of His gospel plan, including the fact that His choicest blessings are reserved for those who obey His laws. These are eternal principles that should guide parents in their love and teaching of their children.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)

**Choicest Blessings via Law:**

“God’s choicest blessings are clearly contingent upon obedience to God’s laws and commandments. The key teaching is from modern revelation: “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated- “And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20-21). This great principle helps us understand the why of many things….” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)

**Law and the Purpose of Love:**

“The love of God does not supersede His laws and His commandments, and the effect of God’s laws and commandments does not diminish the purpose and effect of His love. The same should be true of parental love and rules…. Joseph Smith taught that God ‘institute[d] laws whereby [the spirits that He would send into the world] could have a privilege to advance like himself.” God’s love is so perfect that He lovingly requires us to obey His commandments because He knows that only through obedience to His laws can we become perfect, as He is” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)

**The Lord’s Nurture & Admonition:**

In a Devotional to the students and faculty at BYU-Idaho in September 2009, President Kim B. Clark explained how we can check whether our efforts are in alignment with both God’s love and God’s law. His illustration of a 4-square box is helpful in not only campus relationships, but as you will see it is insightful in the marriage and family setting as well.

“The nurture of the Lord is His warmth, kindness, and strengthening power; His mercy and grace; His divine encouragement, good cheer, confidence, and hope. The nurture of the Lord is the pure love of Christ [equivalent to God’s love]. The admonition of the Lord is the laws and commandments of the Lord, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the doctrines of salvation, and the ordinances and covenants of the temple. The admonition of the Lord is the standard of His glorious gospel [equivalent to God’s law]. These two dimensions combine to create a framework I have found helpful in understanding how we help each other. Think of this as a map of your efforts to help your roommates and friends establish the doctrines, attitudes, and practices of Zion in their lives.” (President Kim B. Clark, “Building Zion Together,” BYU-Idaho Devotional, September 15, 2009)

**Love and Standards:**

If you are trying to help someone establish the patterns of Zion, you need to be in the upper right zone. You need to be in the zone in Zion, the zone of high love and high standards. There are two reasons. First, the upper right is the only zone where we are fully living the gospel. It is the only zone where we love one another with the pure love of Christ and teach the standards of the gospel by precept and by example, the way the Savior would teach them. Second, the upper right zone is the only zone where you can help another person establish the patters of Zion effectively.

Look carefully at the other three zones. In each one an important part of the gospel message is missing.

Let’s take first High Love – Low Standards. You love and support, but don’t teach doctrine or encourage righteous attitudes or actions. Your message is: The gospel is not important.

High Standards – Low Love

You admonish without love, and so what you say sounds arbitrary, harsh and judgmental. Your message is: You are not important.

Low Love – Low Standards

You neither love nor admonish. Your message is: I don’t care about you or the gospel.

In the zone of Zion (high love and high standards), the message is: I care. You are important. The gospel is important.

Being in the zone of Zion takes courage and discipline and faith. To be there you must do two things at the same time-

1. You must show great love and support and encouragement;
2. And, at the very same time, you must teach doctrine, set a good example, and encourage righteous attitudes and behavior.

(President Kim B. Clark, “Building Zion Together,” BYU-Idaho Devotional, September 15, 2009)

**Love & Law Scenario 1:**

“Does parental love require that these substances or their consumption be allowed in the home, or do the requirements of civil law or the seriousness of the conduct or the interests of other children in the home require that this be forbidden?”” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)

In this exercise, let’s apply Elder Oaks counsel about God’s love and law to two scenarios the Apostle described in his General Conference talk, and we’ll use President Clark’s box analogy to sort and label several common responses to these situations.

1. A wayward child-such as a teenager indulging in alcohol or drugs. There are younger brothers and sisters in the home. Potential responses by the parents:
   * Express your concern for them and hope they just grow out of it.
   * Ignore it, looking forward to them leaving one day.
   * Forbid consumption at home, teach them the Word of Wisdom.
   * Kick them out of the house now.

**Love & Law Scenario 2:**

“… if an adult child is living in cohabitation, does the seriousness of sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage require that this child feel the full weight of family disapproval by being excluded from any family contacts, or does parental love require that the fact of cohabitation be ignored? I have seen both of these extremes, and I believe that both are inappropriate.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)

A young adult in a cohabitation relationship tells grieving parents, “If you really loved me, you would accept me and my partner just like you accept your married children.” Potential responses by the parents:

* Stop contact, no reunions, visits, etc. so they will know how wrong they are.
* “It’s their life, they can (and will) do whatever they want.”
* Invite them to visit and keep contact so you can teach God’s plan for families while rejecting any cohabitation while visiting your home (to which they are continually invited)
* Let it go; it only makes us disagree and argue; much better to avoid the likely contention and preserve our relationship.

**Parental Wisdom:**

As we have worked through Elder Oaks’ two examples, it must be understood that parents have the need and the right to receive spiritual guidance from the Lord in knowing how best to apply both love and law in their homes and their parenting. Listen for Elder Oaks’ prophetic explanation of how both can be appropriately applied.

“Where do parents draw the line? That is a matter for parental wisdom, guided by the inspiration of the Lord. There is no area of parental action that is more needful of heavenly guidance or more likely to receive it than the decisions of parents in raising their children and governing their families. This is the work of eternity. As parents grapple with these problems, they should remember the Lord’s teaching that we leave the ninety and nine and go out into the wilderness to rescue the lost sheep. President Thomas S. Monson has called for a loving crusade to rescue our brothers and sisters who are wandering in the wilderness of apathy or ignorance. These teachings require continued loving concern, which surely requires continued loving associations. Parents should also remember the Lord’s frequent teaching that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth’ (Hebrew 12:6). In his conference talk on tolerance and love, Elder Russell M. Nelson taught that “real love for the sinner may compel courageous confrontation-not acquiescence! Real love does not support self-destructing behavior.” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Love and Law,” General Conference, Oct. 2009)