**Unit 6 Part 1: Responsibilities to My Family:**

**Family Foundations:**

As we have studied together this semester in Family Foundations, we began with the centrality of the doctrine of Christ on the Eternal Family. The Proclamation – made by all 15 Apostles who make up the highest quorums of priesthood authority in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, namely the 1st Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, begins with a reaffirmation of eternal truth and the great plan of salvation for God’s children to grow and become like their Heavenly Parents.

**Protecting our (f)amily and the (F)amily:**

We can see that protecting the family must occur in these two arenas:

1. We must make sure that we are protecting our individual families.
2. We must protect and defend the family as the fundamental institution of society.

As we protect the institution of the family – both locally and abroad – we must strive to ensure our individual families are in accord with what God has ordained and thereby our homes become places that spouses and children want to be.

**Beautiful House:**

As we have used all semester, a house is a fit representation for the family. In our heart of hearts, we all dream of a beautiful house within which to create a home and family.

**Threats to Home:**

Along these lines, what is one of the greatest threats to the structure of a beautiful home? One apt analogy for the adversary’s relentless attacks on the home and the eternal family could be represented by the all too real danger posed by termites. These insects prey and feed on the wood that frames a home and if left undetected and unchecked can ultimately destroy the structure!

**Preventing Irreparable Damage:**

What can we do to prevent termite damage to a house? We could:

* Not build the foundation of our house out of vulnerable materials.
* Do those things that prevent termites from having access to our house.
* Be vigilant in watching for early signs of damage to all areas of our house.
* Act quickly when evidence of termite damage becomes evident.
* Get advice from trusted experts who can help protect our houses from the destructive effects of termites.

**A Proclamation to the World:**

Because of this onslaught against God’s Plan of Happiness, the Lord has inspired his Prophets in our day to declare the doctrine of the eternal family in the Proclamation, and then to have them consistently and continually reference this foundational doctrinal summary in the General Conferences and official Handbook of Instructions and other publications since it was originally presented to the Church. Listen carefully now to the last two paragraphs of that Proclamation as read by President Gordon B. Hinckley. As we listen, looks for the two main arenas that the Lord would have us focus our attention and discipleship.

“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 video of President Gordon B. Hinckley giving a talk to the General Relief Society meeting in Oct. 1995 is found at lds.org (start 25:10; end 26:00)

**Protecting our (f)amily and the (F)amily:**

We can see that protecting the family must occur in these two arenas:

Script: Protecting the family must occur at two levels:

1. We must make sure that we are protecting our individual families.
2. We must protect and defend the family as the fundamental institution of society.

As we protect the institution of the family – both locally and abroad – we must strive to ensure our individual families are in accord with what God has ordained and thereby our homes become places where spouses and children want to be.

**Protecting Individual Families:**

Note the three key warnings about our individual families: violation of covenants, abuse of spouse or offspring, and failure to fulfill family responsibilities. As we review the following teachings of the Apostles and General Auxiliary leaders of the restored Church, take note of how you can personally prepare for and improve in your efforts to make and keep sacred covenants to love and serve your family members and to fulfill all the wonderful responsibilities and opportunities of family life. (Quote by President Gordon B. Hinckley giving a talk to the General Relief Society meeting in October)

**The Essence of God’s Work:**

“Let me say again that the family is the main target of evil’s attack and must therefore be the main point of our protection and defense. As I said once before, when you stop and think about it from a diabolically tactical point of view, fighting the family makes sense to Satan. When he wants to disrupt the work of the Lord, he doesn’t poison the world’s peanut butter supply and thus bring the Church’s missionary system to its collective knees. He doesn’t send a plague of laryngitis to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He doesn’t legislate against green Jell-O and casseroles. When the devil wants to strike out and disrupt the essence of God’s work, it attacks the family. It does so by

**Defend the Doctrine:**

How can we best battle these forces that undermine the establishment and eventual perfection of our families? Listen to the simple, but profound insight of General Relief Society President Julie B. Beck.

“This generation will be called upon to defend the doctrine of the family as never before in the history of the world. If they don’t know it, they can’t defend it.” (Julie B. Beck, Ensign, March 2011, video from an address to Seminaries and Institutes in August 2009, starting at 43:37)

**Exaltation is a Family Matter:**

The following statements of doctrine by Elder Nelson and Elder Scott explain the relationship between the restored Church of Jesus Christ, the infinite atonement of Christ, and the family unit.

“While salvation is an individual matter exaltation is a family matter…” (2:44—2:52)

“All Church activities advancements, quorums, and classes are means to the end of an exalted family. To make this goal possible, our Heavenly Father has restored priesthood keys in this dispensation so that essential ordinances in His plan can be performed by proper authority….” (3:52-4:21) (Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” from the October 2008 General Conference, video is from lds.org)

**Families Temple Sealed:**

“Remember that the conversion of individuals is only part of the work. Always seek to strengthen families. Teach with a vision of the importance of families being sealed in the temple…” (9:33-9:50)

“When you have the vision of the sealing ordinances of the temple, you will help build the kingdom of God on earth…” (10:15-10:25)

“To be effective and to do as Christ has done, concentrate on this basic principle of the gospel: the Atonement of Jesus Christ makes possible our becoming more like our Father in Heaven so that we can live together eternally in our family units.” (12:18-12:43) (Elder Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You An Example,” from the April 2014 General Conference. The video is from lds.org)

**Sealed Family is Eternal:**

“That proclamation on the family helps us realize that celestial marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other relationship…” (6:19-6:32)

“Thus, marriage is not only an exalting principle of the gospel; it is a divine commandment…” (7:07-7:17)

“This means that a temple marriage is not only between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God.” (8:08-8:19)

“When a family is sealed in the temple, that family may become as eternal as the kingdom of God itself…” (8:37-8:47)

**Increase Religiousness in Home:**

“In addition we need to greatly increase religious observance in the home weekly family home evening and daily family prayer and scripture study are essential. We need to introduce into our homes content that is ‘virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy’. If we make of our homes holy places that shelter us from evil, we will be protected from the adverse consequences that the scriptures have foretold.” (3:30-3:58) (Elder Quentin L. Cook, “Let There Be Light!”, October 2010 General Conference, video from lds.org)

**Put Family First:**

“The Church itself will continue to be the first and foremost institution-the “scaffolding,” as it were-to help build strong families. I can assure you that those who lead the Church have great concern about the well-being of your families, and thus you will see increasing efforts to prioritize and to focus on family needs. But as your leaders, we call upon members of the Church everywhere to put family first and to identify specific ways to strengthen their individual families.” (14:16-14:57) (Elder M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Lasts Longest,” General Conference, October 2005, video from lds.org)

**Marriage Worthy of Eternity:**

How do we build a Marriage Worthy of Eternity? The Lord’s servants counsel us to marry completely, and continue to nurture our marital relationship.

**Marry Completely:**  
“When troubles come, the parties to a contractual marriage seek happiness by walking away. They marry to obtain benefits and will stay only as long as they’re receiving what they bargained for. But when troubles come to a covenant marriage, the husband and wife work them through.” (0:54-1:14)

A contract companion gives 50 percent; a covenant companions gives 100 percent. Marriage is by nature a covenant, not just a private contract one may cancel at will.” (1:20-1:34) (Elder Bruce C. Hafen, “Covenant Marriage,” General Conference October 1996, video from lds.org)

**Nurture our Relationship:**  
“Marriage brings greater happiness than does any other human relationship. Yet some married couples fall short of their full potential. They let their romance become rusty, take each other for granted, allow other interests or clouds of neglect to obscure their vision of what their marriage really could be. Marriages would be happier if nurtured more carefully.” (2:34-3:10) (Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Nurturing Marriage,” April 2006 General Conference. Video from lds.org)

**Children Feel Loved and Wanted:**  
WE also build a family worthy of and prepared for eternity by acting together as equal partners fulfilling our divinely appointed roles to provide, protect, and promote the righteous progress of the children we may be graced to receive and rear. We do this by creating a home where all can feel loved, enjoyed, worthy of our sacrifice, and safe from harm.

**Save The Children:**

“My pleas-and I wish I were more eloquent in voicing it-is a plea to save the children. Too many of them walk with pain and fear, in loneliness and despair. Children need sunlight. They need happiness. They need love and nurture. They need kindness and refreshment and affection. Every home, regardless of the cost of the house, can provide an environment of love which will be an environment of salvation…” (17:37-18:07)

“Then there is the terrible, inexcusable, and evil phenomenon of physical and sexual abuse. It is unnecessary. It is unjustified. It is indefensible. In terms of physical abuse, I have never accepted the principle of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’ I will be forever grateful for a father who never laid a hand in anger upon his children. Somehow he had the wonderful talent to let them know what was expected of them and to give them encouragement in achieving it. I am persuaded that violent fathers produce violent sons. I am satisfied that such punishment in most instances does more damage than good. Children don’t need beating. They need love and encouragement. They need fathers to whom they can look with respect rather than fear. Above all, they need example.” (12:56-14:04) (President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Save the Children”, General Conference, October 1994, video from lds.org)

**How to Provide Such a Home:**

For those who worry that they cannot adequately provide such a home with this beautiful, loving, and nurturing environment, please remember that all of God’s children need the renovating and sanctifying power of the Atonement! That power of Christ to save and transform us all is available through gospel covenants and ordinances. Listen carefully for that hope in Elder Hales’ and Elder Christofferson’s apostolic counsel.

“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 who we will be and 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 commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities.” (4:39-5:08) (Elder Robert D. Hales, “The Eternal Family”, General Conference, October 1996, video from lds.org)

**Power in Covenants:1:**

“We need strong Christians who can persevere against hardship, who can sustain hope through tragedy, who can lift others by their example and their compassion, and who can consistently overcome temptations. We need strong Christians who can make important things happen by their faith and who can defend the truth of Jesus Christ against moral relativism and militant atheism. What is the source of such moral and spiritual power, and how do we obtain it? The source is God. Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him….” (2:11-2:55)

“We have considered first, the empowering blessings and, second, the endowment of faith that God grants to those who keep their covenants with Him. A final aspect of strength through covenants that I will mention is the bestowal of divine power. Our covenant commitment to Him will permit our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, “the power of godliness” (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives. He can do that because by our participation in priesthood ordinances we exercise our agency and elect to receive it. Our participation in those ordinances also demonstrates that we are prepared to accept the additional responsibility that comes with added light and spiritual power. In all the ordinances, especially those of the temple, we are endowed with power from on high. This “power of godliness” comes in the person and by the influence of the Holy Ghost.” (10:59-12:07) (Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants”, General Conference, April 2009, video from lds.org)

**In Review:**  
Let’s review the hope we find in the gospel to become strong and eventually perfected in our own families. Elder Hales taught that if we simply keep the commandments we can and will become the person our families want to live with for eternity. Elder Christofferson taught that when we enter into and keep the covenants through the ordained gospel ordinances we will receive added blessings, increased faith, and the powers of godliness. These same blessings will help us as we reach outward from our own families into our communities and the world to help protect and promote measure in defense of the eternal family.