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God's Plan and Your Role in the Work of Salvation and Exaltation

1.0

Introduction

You have been called to serve in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thank you for your service. You will bless lives and experience joy as you serve faithfully.

This handbook will help you learn principles of Christlike service and understand your responsibilities. You will be most effective when you align your service in the Church with the work of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This chapter will help you gain a vision of:

- God's plan of happiness.
- The work of salvation and exaltation.
- The purpose of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

1.1

God's Plan of Happiness

Heavenly Father provided the plan of happiness to enable us to enjoy all His blessings. His work and glory is to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Immortality is to live forever with a resurrected physical body. Eternal life, or exaltation, is to become like God and live in His presence eternally as families.

God's Work and Glory

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

We cannot obtain immortality and eternal life without God's help. In this life, we are subject to sin and death, which separate us from Heavenly Father and prevent us from becoming more like Him.

Jesus Christ is central to God's plan. Because of Heavenly Father's infinite love for us, He sent His Son to redeem us from sin and death through His atoning sacrifice (see John 3:16). Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ ensures that each of us born on earth will be resurrected and gain immortality. His Atonement also makes it possible for us to be

cleansed from sin and have our hearts changed so we can receive eternal life and a fulness of joy.

To receive eternal life, we must “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). This invitation extends to all who have lived or will ever live on the earth. Heavenly Father wants all of His children to choose to return to Him.

1.2

The Work of Salvation and Exaltation

As we come unto Christ and help others do the same, we participate in God’s work of salvation and exaltation. This work is guided by the two great commandments to love God and to love our neighbors (see Matthew 22:37–39). We show our love for God as we keep His commandments and serve His children (see John 14:15).

The work of salvation and exaltation focuses on four divinely appointed responsibilities. These are outlined below.

The Work of Salvation and Exaltation

We come unto Christ and assist in God’s work by:

- Living the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Caring for those in need.
- Inviting all to receive the gospel.
- Uniting families for eternity.

This handbook will help you understand these four aspects of God’s work. The Holy Ghost will guide you as you do your part in fulfilling them (see 2 Nephi 32:5).

1.2.1

Living the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Living the gospel of Jesus Christ includes:

- Exercising faith in Christ, repenting daily, making covenants with God as we receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation, and enduring to the end by keeping those covenants (see 3.5.1).
- Learning and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ at home and at church.
- Becoming self-reliant in providing for ourselves and our families, both spiritually and temporally.

1.2.2

Caring for Those in Need

Caring for those in need includes:

- Serving and ministering to individuals, families, and communities.
- Sharing resources, including Church assistance, with those in need.
- Helping others become self-reliant.

1.2.3

Inviting All to Receive the Gospel

Inviting all to receive the gospel includes:

- Participating in missionary work and serving as missionaries.
- Helping new and returning Church members progress along the covenant path.

1.2.4

Uniting Families for Eternity

Uniting families for eternity includes:

- Making covenants as we receive our own temple ordinances.
- Discovering our deceased ancestors and performing ordinances for them in the temple so they can make covenants with God.
- Going to the temple regularly, where possible, to worship God and perform ordinances for His children.

1.3

The Purpose of the Church

Jesus Christ established His Church to enable individuals and families to do the work of salvation and exaltation (see Ephesians 4:11–13; see also 2.2 in this handbook). To help accomplish this divine purpose, the Church and its leaders provide:

- Priesthood authority and keys.
- Covenants and ordinances.
- Prophetic direction.
- Scriptures.
- Gospel learning and teaching support.
- Service and leadership opportunities.
- A community of Saints.

1.3.1

Priesthood Authority and Keys

Through the priesthood, God accomplishes the work of salvation and exaltation. The priesthood authority and keys needed to direct God's work on earth were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16; 112:30; see also 3.1 in this handbook). These keys are held by Church leaders today. They call and authorize others to assist in God's work (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:8, 65–67).

1.3.2

Covenants and Ordinances

In Heavenly Father's plan, we make covenants as we receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation, such as baptism (see John 3:5; see also chapter 18 in this handbook). These covenants and ordinances are essential for us to become more like God and return to dwell in His presence (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22).

1.3.3

Prophetic Direction

Through His chosen prophets, God reveals truth and provides inspired guidance and warnings (see Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:4). This guidance helps us enter and remain on the path leading to eternal life.

1.3.4

Scriptures

Under the direction of the Lord's prophets and apostles, the Church provides and preserves the word of God as found in the holy scriptures. The scriptures testify of Christ, teach His gospel, and help us exercise faith in Him (see Jacob 7:10–11; Helaman 15:7).

1.3.5

Gospel Learning and Teaching Support

The Church supports individuals and families in their responsibility to learn the truths of the gospel and teach these truths to family members and others (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–78, 118; see also 2.2.3 in this handbook).

1.3.6

Service and Leadership Opportunities

Through callings and assignments in the Church, God gives members opportunities to serve and lead. The Church provides structure to help care for members in need and to give humanitarian relief to others (see Mosiah 18:27–29).

1.3.7

A Community of Saints

As a community of Saints, Church members gather regularly to worship God and to remember the Savior by partaking of the sacrament (see Moroni 6:4–6; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77). Members also care for and minister to one another (see Ephesians 2:19).

Your Role in God's Work

As a leader in the Church, you are called to teach and support those you serve as they engage in the work of salvation and exaltation (see 1.2).

You are accountable to fulfill your calling and “teach ... the word of God with all diligence” (Jacob 1:19). Laboring with the Lord in His vineyard will bring you great joy (see Jacob 5:70–72).

Having a clear understanding of God's work, of what He invites you to do, and of the purpose of His Church will help you focus your efforts in bringing souls to Christ. Keeping this vision in mind will align you with the Savior and guide all that you do as a leader in the Church.

Refer often to the principles in this chapter. Prayerfully seek to know how you can help bring about God's purposes in the lives of those you serve. God will direct you through the promptings of the Holy Ghost.