



THE ETERNAL FAMILY

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-IDAHO

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

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 worshipped 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 their divine destiny as heirs 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.

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" (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness,

to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and 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.

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.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Eternal Family - Unit 2 Packet Contents

* Unit 2: Gender & Eternal Identity (Proclamation Paragraph 2)

“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.”

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Unit 2 Scriptures

Moses 3:18-25

18 And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground I, the Lord God, formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and commanded that they should come unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and they were also living souls; for I, God, breathed into them the breath of life, and commanded that whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but as for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;

22 And the rib which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, made I a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Moses 4:26

26 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living; for thus have I, the Lord God, called the first of all women, which are many.

D&C 30:6

6 And be you afflicted in all his afflictions, ever lifting up your heart unto me in prayer and faith, for his and your deliverance; for I have given unto him power to build up my church among the Lamanites;

Alma 48:11-13, 17-18

11 And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery;

12 Yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people.

13 Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.

17 Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been,

and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men.

18 Behold, he was a man like unto Ammon, the son of Mosiah, yea, and even the other sons of Mosiah, yea, and also Alma and his sons, for they were all men of God.

D&C 25

1 Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you, Emma Smith, my daughter; for verily I say unto you, all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom.

2 A revelation I give unto you concerning my will; and if thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion.

3 Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called.

4 Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come.

5 And the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., thy husband, in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness.

6 And thou shalt go with him at the time of his going, and be unto him for a scribe, while there is no one to be a scribe for him, that I may send my servant, Oliver Cowdery, whithersoever I will.

7 And thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit.

8 For he shall lay his hands upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much.

9 And thou needest not fear, for thy husband shall support thee in the church; for unto them is his calling, that all things might be revealed unto them, whatsoever I will, according to their faith.

10 And verily I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better.

11 And it shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church.

12 For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.

13 Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made.

14 Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride. Let thy soul delight in thy husband, and the glory

which shall come upon him.

15 Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come.

16 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my voice unto all. Amen.

The Divine Institution of Marriage

LDS Commentary from newsroom.lds.org
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Introduction

1. In 1995, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” which declares the following truths about marriage:

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 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.[1]

2. Since the publication of that statement, there have been many challenges to the institution of marriage. Prominent among these challenges has been the recognition by several national governments and some states and provinces that same-sex marriage—formal unions between two individuals of the same gender—are the equivalent of traditional marriage. Yet God’s purposes for establishing marriage have not changed. One purpose of this document is to reaffirm the Church’s declaration that marriage is the lawful union of a man and a woman.

3. Another purpose is to reaffirm that the Church has a single, undeviating standard of sexual morality: intimate relations are acceptable to God only between a husband and a wife who are united in the bonds of matrimony.

4. A third purpose is to set forth the Church’s reasons for defending marriage between a man and a woman as an issue of moral imperative. The Church’s opposition to same-sex marriage derives from its doctrine and teachings, as well as from its concern about the consequences of same-sex marriage on religious freedom, society, families, and children.

5. A fourth purpose of this document is to reaffirm that Church members should address the issue of same-sex marriage with respect and civility and should treat all people

with love and humanity.

The Vital Importance of Marriage

6. Marriage is sacred and was ordained of God from before the foundation of the world. Jesus Christ affirmed the divine origins of marriage: “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?”[2]

7. From the beginning, the sacred nature of marriage was closely linked to the power of procreation. After creating Adam and Eve, God commanded them to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,”[3] and they brought forth children, forming the first family. Only a man and a woman together have the natural biological capacity to conceive children. This power of procreation—to create life and bring God’s spirit children into the world—is divinely given. Misuse of this power undermines the institution of the family.[4]

8. For millennia, strong families have served as the fundamental institution for transmitting to future generations the moral strengths, traditions, and values that sustain civilization. In 1948, the world’s nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affirming that “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society.”[5]

9. Marriage is far more than a contract between individuals to ratify their affections and provide for mutual obligations. Rather, marriage is a vital institution for rearing children and teaching them to become responsible adults. Throughout the ages, governments of all types have recognized marriage as essential in preserving social stability and perpetuating life. Regardless of whether marriages were performed as a religious rite or a civil ceremony, in almost every culture marriage has been protected and endorsed by governments primarily to preserve and foster the institution most central to rearing children and teaching them the moral values that undergird civilization.

10. It is true that some couples who marry will not have children, either by choice or because of infertility. The special

status granted marriage is nevertheless closely linked to the inherent powers and responsibilities of procreation and to the innate differences between the genders. By contrast, same-sex marriage is an institution no longer linked to gender—to the biological realities and complementary natures of male and female. Its effect is to decouple marriage from its central role in creating life, nurturing time-honored values, and fostering family bonds across generations.

11. In recent decades, high rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births have resulted in an exceptionally large number of single parents. Many of these single parents have raised exemplary children. Extensive studies have shown, however, that a husband and wife who are united in a loving, committed marriage generally provide the ideal environment for protecting, nurturing, and raising children.[6] This is in part because of the differing qualities and strengths that husbands and wives bring to the task by virtue of their gender. As an eminent academic on family life has written:

The burden of social science evidence supports the idea that gender differentiated parenting is important for human development and that the contribution of fathers to child rearing is unique and irreplaceable. . . . The complementarity of male and female parenting styles is striking and of enormous importance to a child's overall development.[7]

12. In view of the close links that have long existed between marriage, procreation, gender, and parenting, same-sex marriage cannot be regarded simply as the granting of a new "right." It is a far-reaching redefinition of the very nature of marriage itself. It marks a fundamental change in the institution of marriage in ways that are contrary to God's purposes for His children and detrimental to the long-term interests of society.

Threats to Marriage and Family

13. Our modern era has seen traditional marriage and family—defined as a husband and wife with children in an intact marriage—come increasingly under assault, with deleterious consequences. In 2012, 40% of all births in the United States were to unwed mothers.[8] More than 50% of births to mothers under age 30 were out of wedlock. Further, the marriage rate has been declining since the 1980s. These trends do not bode well for the development of the rising generation.

14. A wide range of social ills has contributed to this weakening of marriage and family. These include divorce, cohabitation, non-marital childbearing, pornography, the erosion of fidelity in marriage, abortion, the strains of unemployment and poverty, and many other social phenomena. The Church has a long history of speaking out on these issues and seeking to minister to our members with regard to them. The focus of this document on same-sex marriage is not intended to minimize these long-standing

issues.

15. More recently, the movement to promote same-sex marriage as an inherent or constitutional right has gained notable ground in recent years. Court rulings, legislative actions, and referenda have legalized same-sex marriage in a number of nations, states, and jurisdictions. In response, societal and religious leaders of many persuasions and faiths have made the case that redefining marriage in this way will further weaken the institution over time, resulting in negative consequences for both adults and children.[9]

16. A large number of people around the world recognize the crucial role that traditional marriage has played and must continue to play if children and families are to be protected and moral values propagated. Because the issue of same-sex marriage strikes at the very heart of the family and has the potential for great impact upon the welfare of children, the Church unequivocally affirms that marriage should remain the lawful union of a man and a woman.

Unchanging Standards of Morality

17. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that God has established clear standards of morality for His children, who are accountable before Him for their behavior. Such standards cannot be changed by the reasoning, emotions, personal interests, or opinions of mortal beings. [10] Without the higher authority of God, as revealed in scripture and by His prophets, secular society will founder and drift.

18. Many advocates of same-sex marriage argue that traditional standards of sexual morality have changed and that "tolerance" requires that these new standards be recognized and codified in law. If tolerance is defined as showing kindness for others and respect for differing viewpoints, it is an important value in all democratic societies. But as Elder Dallin H. Oaks has observed, "Tolerance does not require abandoning one's standards or one's opinions on political or public policy choices. Tolerance is a way of reacting to diversity, not a command to insulate it from examination." [11]

19. The Savior taught that we should love the sinner without condoning the sin. In the case of the woman taken in adultery, He treated her kindly but exhorted her to "sin no more." [12] His example manifested the highest love possible.

20. In addition to using the argument of tolerance to advocate redefining marriage, proponents have advanced the argument of "equality before the law." No mortal law, however, can override or nullify the moral standards established by God. Nor can the laws of men change the natural, innate differences between the genders or deny the close biological and social link between procreation and marriage.

How Would Same-Sex Marriage Affect Religious Freedom?

21. As governments have legalized same-sex marriage as a civil right, they have also enforced a wide variety of other policies to ensure there is no discrimination against same-sex couples. These policies have placed serious burdens on individual conscience and on religious organizations.[13]

22. Same-sex marriage and anti-discrimination laws have already spawned legal collisions with the rights of free speech and of action based on religious beliefs. For example, advocates and government officials in certain states have challenged the long-held right of religious adoption agencies to follow their religious beliefs and place children only in homes with both a mother and a father. As a result, Catholic Charities in several states was forced to give up its adoption services rather than be forced to place children with same-sex couples.[14]

23. In the United States, the First Amendment right of free exercise of religion is coming under pressure from proponents of same-sex marriage. Some of these proponents advocate that tax exemptions and benefits should be withdrawn from any religious organization that does not accept such marriages.[15] The First Amendment may protect clergy from being forced to perform same-sex marriages, but other people of faith have faced and likely will continue to face legal pressures and sanctions. The same will happen with religiously affiliated institutions and educational systems. For example, a Georgia counselor contracted by the Centers for Disease Control was fired after an investigation into her decision to refer someone in a same-sex relationship to another counselor. In New Jersey, a ministry lost its tax-exempt status for denying a lesbian couple the use of its pavilion for their wedding. New Mexico's Human Rights Commission prosecuted a commercial photographer for refusing to photograph a same-sex commitment ceremony. When public schools in Massachusetts began teaching students about same-sex civil marriage, a Court of Appeals ruled that parents had no right to exempt their students.[16]

24. Similar limitations on religious freedom have already become the social and legal reality in several European nations, and the European Parliament has recommended that laws protecting the status of same-sex couples be made uniform across the European Union.[17] Where same-sex marriage becomes a recognized civil right, it inevitably conflicts with the rights of believers, and religious freedom is diminished.

How Would Same-Sex Marriage Affect Society?

25. The possible diminishing of religious freedom is not the only societal implication of legalizing same-sex marriage. Perhaps the most common argument that proponents of same-sex marriage make is that it is essentially harmless

and will not affect the institution of traditional heterosexual marriage in any way. "It won't affect your marriage, so why should you care?" is the common refrain. While it may be true that allowing same-sex marriage will not immediately and directly affect existing marriages, the real question is how it will affect society as a whole over time, including the rising generation and future generations.

26. In addition to undermining and diluting the sacred nature of marriage, legalizing same-sex marriage brings many practical implications in the sphere of public policy that will be of concern to parents and society.[18] When a government legalizes same-sex marriage as a civil right, it will almost certainly enforce a wide variety of other policies to enforce this. The implications of these policies are critical to understanding the seriousness of condoning same-sex marriage.

27. The all-important question of public policy must be: what environment is best for the child and for the rising generation? While some same-sex couples will obtain guardianship over children, traditional marriage provides the most solid and well-established social identity for children.[19] It increases the likelihood that they will be able to form a clear gender identity, with sexuality closely linked to both love and procreation. By contrast, the legal recognition of same-sex marriage may, over time, erode the social identity, gender development, and moral character of children. No dialogue on this issue can be complete without taking into account the long-term consequences for children.

28. As one example of how children will be adversely affected, the establishment of same-sex marriage as a civil right will inevitably entail changes in school curricula. When the state says that same-sex marriages are equivalent to heterosexual marriages, public school administrators will feel obligated to support this claim.[20] This has already happened in many jurisdictions, where from elementary school through high school, children are taught that marriage can be defined as a legal union between two adults of any gender, that the definition of family is fluid, and in some cases that consensual sexual relations are morally neutral.[21] In addition, in many areas, schools are not required to notify parents of this curriculum or to give families the opportunity to opt out.[22] These developments are already causing clashes between the agenda of secular school systems and the right of parents to teach their children deeply held standards of morality.

29. Throughout history, the family has served as an essential bulwark of individual liberty. The walls of a home provide a defense against detrimental social influences and the sometimes overreaching powers of government. In the absence of abuse or neglect, government does not have the right to intervene in the rearing and moral education of children in the home. Strong, independent families are vital for political and religious freedom.

Civility and Kindness

30. The Church acknowledges that same-sex marriage and the issues surrounding it can be divisive and hurtful. As Church members strive to protect marriage between a man and a woman, they should show respect, civility, and kindness toward others who have different points of view.

31. The Church has advocated for legal protection for same-sex couples regarding “hospitalization and medical care, fair housing and employment rights, or probate rights, so long as these do not infringe on the integrity of the traditional family or the constitutional rights of churches.”[23] In Salt Lake City, for example, the Church supported ordinances to protect gay residents from discrimination in housing and employment.[24]

32. The Church’s affirmation of marriage as being between a man and a woman “neither constitutes nor condones any kind of hostility toward gays and lesbians.”[25] Church members are to treat all people with love and humanity. They may express genuine love and kindness toward a gay or lesbian family member, friend, or other person without condoning any redefinition of marriage.

Conclusion

33. Strong, stable families, headed by a father and mother, are the anchor of society. When marriage is undermined by gender confusion and by distortions of its God-given meaning, the rising generation of children and youth will find it increasingly difficult to develop their natural identities as men or women. Some will find it more difficult to engage in wholesome courtships, form stable marriages, and raise another generation imbued with moral strength and purpose.

34. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, along with many other churches, organizations, and individuals, will continue to defend the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, because it is a compelling moral issue of profound importance to our religion and to the future of society.

35. The final words in the Church’s proclamation on the family are an admonition to the world from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “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.”[26]

This document is a revised and updated version of “The Divine Institution of Marriage,” first published by the Church in 2008 (.pdf file).

Notes

- [1] “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
- [2] Matthew 19:4–5.
- [3] Genesis 1:28.
- [4] See M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 41–44.
- [5] United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), Dec. 10, 1948.
- [6] David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Maggie Gallagher and Joshua K. Baker, “Do Moms and Dads Matter? Evidence from the Social Sciences on Family Structure and the Best Interests of the Child,” *Margins Law Journal* 4:161 (2004); Mark Regnerus, “How Different Are the Adult Children of Parents Who Have Same-Sex Relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study,” *Social Science Research* 41:4 (July 2012): 752–70; Regnerus, “Parental Same-Sex Relationships, Family Instability, and Subsequent Life Outcomes for Adult Children: Answering the Critics of the New Family Structures Study with Additional Analyses,” *Social Science Research* 41:6 (Nov. 2012): 1367–77; W. B. Wilcox, J. R. Anderson, W. Doherty, et al., *Why Marriage Matters, Third Edition: Thirty Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (New York: Institute for American Values and National Marriage Project, 2011); M. E. Scott, L. F. DeRose, L. H. Lippman, and E. Cook, *Two, One, or No Parents? Children’s Living Arrangements and Educational Outcomes around the World* (Washington, D.C.: Child Trends, 2013; worldfamilymap.org/2013/articles/essay/two-one-or-no-parents); Andrew J. Cherlin, *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).
- [7] David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 146.
- [8] See J. A. Martin, B. E. Hamilton, M. J. K. Osterman, et al. *Births: Final Data for 2012*. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol. 62, no. 9 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2013).
- [9] See Sherif Girgis, “Check Your Blind Spot: What Is Marriage?” *Marriage*, Feb. 15, 2013; thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/02/7942/; Lynn Wardle, “The Attack on Marriage as the Union of a Man and a Woman,” *North Dakota Law Review*, vol. 83 (June 2008): 1364–92; David Blankenhorn, *The Future of Marriage* (2007); Lynn Wardle, ed., *What’s the Harm? Does Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage Really Harm Individuals, Families, or Society?* (2008); R.R. Reno, “The Future of Marriage,” *First Things*, Jan. 2013, 3–4; Richard Neuhaus, “Disingenuousness and Clarity,” *On the Square*, May 30, 2008; firstthings.com/onthesquare/2008/05/disingenuousness-and-clarity.
- [10] See Dallin H. Oaks, “No Other Gods,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 72–75.
- [11] Dallin H. Oaks, “Weightier Matters,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001,
- [12] John 8:11.
- [13] See Douglas Laycock, Anthony R. Picarello Jr., and Robin F. Wilson, eds., *Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty, Emerging Conflicts* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008).
- [14] See usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/upload/Catholic-Adoption-Services.pdf
- [15] See Jonathan Turley, “An Unholy Union: Same-Sex Marriage and the Use of Governmental Programs to Penalize Religious Groups with Unpopular Practices,” in Laycock, Picarello, and Wilson, eds., *Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty: Emerging Conflicts*, 59–76.
- [16] Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* (New York and London: Encounter Books, 2012), 62–64.
- [17] See Roger Trigg, *Equality, Freedom, and Religion* (London and New

York: Oxford University Press, 2012); The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, Report 2012 (Vienna, Austria, 2013); “European Parliament Resolution on Homophobia in Europe,” adopted Jan. 18, 2006.

[18] See Girgis, Anderson, and George, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*.

[19] See endnote 6.

[20] Charles Russo, “Same-Sex Marriage and Public School Curricula: Preserving Parental Rights to Direct the Education of Their Children,” *University of Dayton Law Review*, vol. 32 (Spring 2007): 361–84.

[21] Gerry Shih, “Clashes Pit Parents vs. Gay-Friendly Curriculums in Schools,” *The New York Times*, Mar. 3, 2011, page A21A; John Smoot, “Children Need Our Marriage Tradition,” *Public Discourse*, June 13, 2013; thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/06/10344/; *Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism: A K-12 Curriculum Resource Guide*, Toronto District School Board (2011). [22] *Parker v. Hurley*, 514 F. 3d 87 (1st Cir. 2008); *Fields v. Palmdale School District*, 427 F.3d 1197 (9th Cir. 2005). [23] mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-responds-to-same-sex-marriage-votes.

[24] See mormonnewsroom.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/statement-given-to-salt-lake-city-council-on-nondiscrimination-ordinances.



Finding Happiness (Excerpts)

Elder Richard G. Scott
Brigham Young University Campus Education Week
August 19, 1997



1. Through repeated prayers offered in preparation of this message, I have had one objective: that I be led to communicate truths that would significantly help each of you find happiness. I recognize that the great majority I address are faithful sons and daughters of Father in Heaven who strive to obey his commandments--or sincere individuals who want to do so. For that reason I would speak to each of you as though we were in a private conversation where we share our purest feelings, our aspirations, our hopes, and our dreams as two can do when there is mutual trust and a common basis of belief. I encourage you to write the feelings and impressions that come to you. I have prayed that the Spirit confirm to your mind and heart the essence of what I would like to communicate.
2. For some time I have known how I wanted to begin this message, yet I have always been very careful not to share sacred experiences without a feeling of authorization to do so. I thought first of merely stating the principles that I learned from one such experience without reference to the specific event. Yet I realized that it would be far more meaningful if I related exactly what occurred. After prayerfully seeking guidance, I feel I can communicate an experience that is sacred to me. It indelibly taught how precious and of inestimable worth is the gospel plan or plan of happiness Heavenly Father has given us. I have seen that plan from a different perspective than ever before in my life, and that has given me greater understanding and appreciation for it. I pray that when we conclude you may feel that same gratitude. May you also resolve to take fuller advantage of the inexpressibly rich opportunities the Lord has given us for true happiness, now and forever.
3. Recently I awoke from a most disturbing dream. I ached physically, was saturated with perspiration, and my heart was pounding. Every sense was sharpened. The transition from sleep to wakefulness was imperceptible. I have come to recognize that as an indication of a significant spiritual experience in a dream. I had been taught lessons that would change my life. Although the actual dream was extensive, the key lessons communicated can be summarized by reference to a few specific experiences in the dream.
4. In it I found myself in a very different and unknown environment. Everything was strange to me. I could not recognize where I was or any of the individuals who surrounded me. I was anxiously seeking my wife, Jeanene. We had been separated, and I wanted very much to find her. Each individual I encountered said that I would not be able to do that. Repeatedly as I sought in different directions to find her, I was emphatically told to forget her for she would not be found. I was frustrated at every turn. One said, "She is no longer the same individual. There isn't a Jeanene like you knew?"
5. I thought, that is impossible. I know her, and I know she will never change.
6. Then I was told, "You are not the same. There is no individual by the name of Richard Scott, and soon all of the memories you've had of Jeanene, your children, and other loved ones will be eradicated."
7. Fear entered my heart, accompanied by a horrifying feeling. Then came the thought: "No, that is impossible. Those relationships are enduring and unchanging. As long as we live righteously, they cannot be eliminated. They are eternally fixed."
8. As more encounters came I realized that I was surrounded with evil individuals who were completely unhappy, with no purpose save that of frustrating the happiness of others so that they too would become miserable. These wicked ones were striving to manipulate those persons over whom they sought to exercise control. I somehow was conscious that those who believed their lies were being led through treachery and deceit from what they wanted most. They soon began to believe that their individuality, their experience, and their relationships as families and friends were being altered and lost. They became angry, aggressive, and engulfed by feelings of hopelessness.
9. The pressure became more intense to accept as reality that what I had been no longer existed and that my cherished wife was no longer the same. Should I encounter her she wouldn't recognize me nor want me. I resisted those thoughts with every capacity that I could find. I was determined to find her. I knew that there must be a way and was resolute in searching no matter what the cost in time or effort.

10. It was then that I broke out of that oppressive surrounding and could see that it was an ugly, artificial, contrived environment. So intense were the feelings generated by what I had been told by those bent on destroying my hope to take me captive that I had not realized the forces of opposition that made my efforts appear fruitless could have no power over me unless I yielded through fear or abandonment of my principles. The environment appeared real, yet it had been generated from fear and threat. Although it was simulated, to those who let themselves believe the falsehoods thrust upon them it became reality.
11. I can now understand that because of my faith in the truths of the gospel plan, I could break through Satan's manipulative, evil environment to see it as it is--not only in the dream, but in real life as well--a confining, controlling, destructive influence that can be overcome by faith in and obedience to truth. Others were disheartened, disoriented, and finally overcome as they lost hope because they either lacked a foundation of truth to engender conviction, courage, and confidence or they let their belief be overcome by the pressure of the moment.
12. As I awoke there flooded over me feelings of love and gratitude for our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son that I do not have the capacity to express. My heart and mind filled with consuming love for them and inexpressible appreciation for the blessings that are available to every spiritual child of Father in Heaven willing to believe and be obedient to the plan of happiness. I cannot convey the unspeakable joy, the feeling of being wrapped in pure love, the absolute assurance that we will never lose our identity or memory of cherished relationships or the benefits of righteous acts as we continue to resist evil and are obedient to truth.
13. Our Father's love, his perfections, and his perfect righteousness are absolute guarantees that we will ever exist as an individual entity, an intelligence clothed with spirit and body with latent divine capacities that mature and flower through obedience to his plan and his commandments. We have in his Son a perfect example of willing obedience and perfect love. How hopeless life would be without the absolute assurance of justice centered in fixed laws that are the bedrock foundation of the Father's plan. What is true one day cannot be manipulated to be something else by the whim or command of another personage. Your happiness is absolutely guaranteed as you willingly obey his commandments, receive all of the necessary ordinances, and are obedient to them, for he is a perfect, loving Father who will never change.
14. Somehow during that horrifying experience, I glimpsed how except for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which lets us rectify mistakes through his plan of redemption, justice would demand a recompense for every error committed in life that we could not fulfill. Thus we could not return to Father in Heaven's presence. We would be left under the dominion of Lucifer, whose intent is to capture us and to destroy everything that is good and righteous in our beings. Over time we would become like Satan because we would lose all hope of returning to Father in Heaven and of benefiting from his righteousness, his mercy, and his perfect love.
15. Although I would not welcome another like experience, this dream has taught me how easy it is to take for granted our relationship with our Father in Heaven and his Beloved Son, our Master and Savior. Oh, how blessed are we that they are as they say they are, perfect in every possible capacity and attribute. Fundamental to their purpose is that you "might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).
16. Recognizing that you are a person who wants to live worthily and be obedient to Father in Heaven, how would Satan strive to lead you from the path to happiness? Surely he would not be successful by tempting you to commit serious transgression--at least not initially. He would more likely fill your mind and heart with visions of many, many worthwhile things--none of which could be criticized as being wrong, but, taken together, they would so occupy your time that you would not do those things that are absolutely essential for eternal life with Father in Heaven and his Beloved Son. Nephi warned of that approach:
17. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well--and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.
18. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none--and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. [2 Nephi 28:21-22]
19. It is clear that no one who has an inclination to live the commandments of God would intentionally do things that would separate him or her from the Lord. I am confident you have the intention of doing all of the right things. Yet I wonder, are you doing them as fully and as completely as you are capable of doing? That is not an accusatory question. It is one asked in sincerity to help you, if needed, to open your eyes and evaluate each day's decisions to confirm that what you are doing will lead you to where you most desire to be. Be certain that you are not being led "carefully" from the main track to happiness onto a sidetrack that can, in time, result in the loss of that which is most precious.
20. What are some of the warning signals that are red flags indicating danger ahead? Do you think of others more than of yourself? If you are married, are you more understanding of your companion, more anxious to make life easier for that beloved being than for yourself? Do you seek time with your children or your parents

in preference to a group of private friends? Have you received all the ordinances of the temple that you can receive--or is that something left for a future day? If so, that day may never come. Does the acquiring of things, when viewed in the brilliant light of reality, sometimes mean more to you than obeying principles known to be true? Do you thirst after righteousness? Or are there times when the allure of stimulating images is allowed to temporarily fill your mind because, after all, they are really not that bad? Do your actions focus on entertainment, immediate satisfaction, self-interests, or personal gratification even though your goals are elsewhere?

21. Do you find yourself often thinking of all of the things that you wish you had that you've not been blessed to have--maybe even very desirable ones like a husband or wife or children, good health, more personal attractiveness, more joy and happiness and peace of mind--while neglecting to recognize all that the Lord has blessed you with already? Do you ever pray to him when your heart is so filled with things to thank him for that you do not feel inclined to ask for anything else?
22. If you are one of the truly happy individuals who love your Father in Heaven and are grateful for each day's blessings, reaching out to others in preference to thoughts of self, I rejoice for you. You have found a pattern of life that will ever bring you happiness. I can do little more than encourage you to continue to enjoy a life squarely centered in love of your Father in Heaven, your Savior, and those blessed to be within the circle of your righteous influence. If, however, you are among those who have not found a fullness of joy, even in your determination to live the commandments of the Lord, I pray that there could be something of worth in what we've talked about. I pray that you may feel how very much your Father in Heaven loves you and wants you to be happy. I pray that you will be stirred to recognize how infinitely blessed you are to have a Father in Heaven, to have a plan that is perfect, to be able to acquire a clear understanding of what brings happiness in life through pondering, prayer, and application of his teachings. I pray that you may grasp how comforting it is to have a fixed identity that can be counted on forever and to live in an environment where there is unchanging truth and justice tempered by mercy. May you be even more sensitive to the direction the Lord would give you in your personal life so that you may grow in understanding and perfection.
23. In my dream there was no physical evidence that what my faith led me to do could be done. There was nothing to indicate in any way that what I so much desired could possibly happen. There was nothing that I could see or hear or touch to encourage me. On the contrary, all around me was like a confirmation that I would never see the Jeanene I so much love ever again. Now I recognize that it was my faith in our Father in Heaven and his perfect Son as well as in their holy plan of happiness that freed me from that devastating environment. Fortunately you do not have to live in a world where there is nothing to support you in your convictions. By the choices you make, you can surround yourself with individuals and influences that will constantly aid you in your determination to live the commandments of God. In so doing you will receive the fullness of blessings possible from his comprehensive plan of happiness conditioned to your specific needs. By choosing to continually participate in Church activities you constantly renew influences for good from others with like dreams and the determination to live righteous lives. As you serve others there comes a strengthening of your own capacities. There quietly distills upon you a confirmation that those principles that guide your life taken from the Lord's commandments are true. Your selfless service to others in your home, in the Church, and in every other walk of life will help verify your confidence in the plan of the Lord. You will know that Satan can have no power over you except as permitted by fear, indolence, disobedience, and appetite.
24. In contrast, everywhere about you there are individuals that embrace the appealing offerings of Satan as the only real way of life. They do not recognize and many even deny the existence of spiritual guidance or the reality of a loving Father in Heaven. They allow themselves to be convinced that what is really enduring is what they see, touch, smell, hear, and taste. In short, they confine themselves to the world Satan wants them to be confined in. They cut themselves off from the glorious opportunities that their holy Father in Heaven wants them to have. Don't you make that mistake.
25. One can center his or her life in falsehood as though it were truth and be increasingly bound by the arch enemy of God while being subtly led from eternal happiness.
26. Although it may not be a welcome insight, you will grow more rapidly through challenge and trial than from a life of ease and serenity with no disturbing elements. The intent of your Father in Heaven is to lift you from where you are to where he knows you will have eternal purpose and unspeakable happiness. By using the talents, abilities, and latent capacities developed in the premortal existence, he will lead you through growth experiences here on earth. When faced squarely and lived fully without complaint, they will raise you to glorious heights of accomplishment and service. To do all of that during the brief period you are on earth is a tremendous challenge. To accelerate your growth and attainment in his plan for you, sometimes he employs a pattern described on the label of some medicines: "shake well before using."
27. Such shaking comes through stirring challenges and stretching tests. You likely have encountered some already. You undoubtedly will encounter others. They may come in the form of an accident, the conferral of a

great responsibility, or a move that dramatically changes your surroundings and circle of trusted friends. You may begin educational or professional pursuits that prove far more demanding than anticipated. Perhaps personal illness, handicaps, or the death of a loved one puts seeming barriers in your path. In truth they are more likely giant steps intended to lift you to higher levels of understanding and accomplishment. How these challenges are confronted is critically important to your happiness and personal growth now and forever. When armed with the power that an understanding and application of the teachings of the Lord provide--and with faith in him and in the capacity of the Holy Ghost to guide and fortify--you will overcome those challenges and gain the intended growth and attainment. As you remember that you are an eternal being, with latent capacities derived from divine parentage, you will not allow yourself to be limited by the confining world that Satan would have you believe is all that exists.

28. All of what we have discussed is true because you have a Father in Heaven who loves you very much and wants your eternal happiness and also because you have a Savior and Redeemer. He willingly took upon himself the consequences of all the transgressions of the Father's children that have been or ever will be committed. As Jehovah he understood what his Father asked him to do, as only a god could. Yet it was through this experience and those that followed--culminating in his giving of his life, being laid in the tomb, and his glorious resurrection--that he earned the right to judge each of Father in Heaven's children according to how they use this time of probation here on earth. Although he committed absolutely no transgression, he allowed the consequences of all others' transgressions to come upon him and thereby learned what, as a Savior, he needed to know and feel. We cannot comprehend, we cannot appreciate adequately the price he paid nor what this selfless, sinless, perfect being has done for us in total obedience to his Father's will.
29. I solemnly witness that God our Father lives, that his plan is perfect. I bear testimony that as you raise your voice in prayer, those prayers are heard and can best be answered when they come from a broken heart and a contrite spirit. I know that someday I will be judged on how well I testified of my certain knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore I solemnly witness that because of the Atonement of the Savior, the plan of happiness will succeed and Satan's plan is doomed to failure. I know that Jesus Christ lives. I solemnly witness with every capacity that I possess that he lives and that he loves you and will help you find happiness. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Finding Happiness
(QR Code)





The Moral Force of Women

Elder D. Todd Christofferson
General Conference, October 2013



1. From age immemorial, societies have relied on the moral force of women. While certainly not the only positive influence at work in society, the moral foundation provided by women has proved uniquely beneficial to the common good. Perhaps, because it is pervasive, this contribution of women is often underappreciated. I wish to express gratitude for the influence of good women, identify some of the philosophies and trends that threaten women's strength and standing, and voice a plea to women to cultivate the innate moral power within them.
2. Women bring with them into the world a certain virtue, a divine gift that makes them adept at instilling such qualities as faith, courage, empathy, and refinement in relationships and in cultures. When praising the "unfeigned faith" he found in Timothy, Paul noted that this faith "dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice."¹
3. Years ago, while living in Mexico, I observed firsthand what Paul meant. I recall a particular young mother, one of many among the women of the Church in Mexico whose faith in God graces their lives so naturally that they seem scarcely aware of it. This lovely woman radiated a moral authority, born of goodness, that influenced all around her for good. With her husband, she sacrificed a number of pleasures and possessions for their higher priorities, seemingly without a second thought. Her ability to perform feats of lifting, bending, and balancing with her children was near superhuman. The demands on her were many and her tasks often repetitive and mundane, yet underneath it all was a beautiful serenity, a sense of being about God's work. As with the Savior, she was ennobled by blessing others through service and sacrifice. She was love personified.
4. I have been remarkably blessed by the moral influence of women, in particular my mother and my wife. Among other women that I look to in gratitude is Anna Daines. Anna and her husband, Henry, and their four children were among the pioneers of the Church in New Jersey, in the United States. Beginning in the 1930s, when Henry was a doctoral student at Rutgers University, he and Anna worked tirelessly with school and civic organizations in Metuchen, where they lived, to overcome deeply rooted prejudice against Mormons and to make the community a better place for all parents to raise their children.
5. Anna, for example, volunteered at the Metuchen YMCA and made herself indispensable. Within a year she was appointed president of the Mothers' Auxiliary and then "was asked to run for one of the three women's positions on the YMCA board of directors. She won without opposition, and so joined the very council that only a few years before had refused to let the Saints meet in their building!"²
6. My family moved into the New Brunswick Ward when I was a teenager. Sister Daines took notice of me and often expressed her confidence in my abilities and potential, which inspired me to reach high—higher than I would have without her encouragement. Once, because of a thoughtful and timely warning from her, I avoided a situation that would surely have led to regret. Although she is no longer here, Anna Daines's influence continues to be felt and reflected in the lives of her descendants and countless others, myself included.
7. My grandmother Adena Warnick Swenson taught me to be conscientious in priesthood service. She encouraged me to memorize the sacramental blessings on the bread and water, explaining that in this way I could express them with greater understanding and feeling. Observing how she sustained my grandfather, a stake patriarch, engendered in me a reverence for sacred things. Grandma Swenson never learned how to drive a car, but she knew how to help boys become priesthood men.
8. A woman's moral influence is nowhere more powerfully felt or more beneficially employed than in the home. There is no better setting for rearing the rising generation than the traditional family, where a father and a mother work in harmony to provide for, teach, and nurture their children. Where this ideal does not exist, people strive to duplicate its benefits as best they can in their particular circumstances.
9. In all events, a mother can exert an influence unequalled by any other person in any other relationship. By the power of her example and teaching, her sons learn to respect womanhood and to incorporate discipline and high moral standards in their own lives. Her daughters learn to cultivate their own virtue and to stand up for

what is right, again and again, however unpopular. A mother's love and high expectations lead her children to act responsibly without excuses, to be serious about education and personal development, and to make ongoing contributions to the well-being of all around them. Elder Neal A. Maxwell once asked: "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?"³

10. Most sacred is a woman's role in the creation of life. We know that our physical bodies have a divine origin⁴ and that we must experience both a physical birth and a spiritual rebirth to reach the highest realms in God's celestial kingdom.⁵ Thus, women play an integral part (sometimes at the risk of their own lives) in God's work and glory "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."⁶ As grandmothers, mothers, and role models, women have been the guardians of the wellspring of life, teaching each generation the importance of sexual purity—of chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage. In this way, they have been a civilizing influence in society; they have brought out the best in men; they have perpetuated wholesome environments in which to raise secure and healthy children.
11. Sisters, I don't want to overpraise you as we sometimes do in Mother's Day talks that make you cringe. You don't have to be perfect;⁷ I don't claim that you are (with one possible exception who is sitting nearby at the moment). What I mean to say is that whether you are single or married, whether you have borne children or not, whether you are old, young, or in between, your moral authority is vital, and perhaps we have begun to take it and you for granted. Certainly there are trends and forces at work that would weaken and even eliminate your influence, to the great detriment of individuals, families, and society at large. Let me mention three as a caution and a warning.
12. A pernicious philosophy that undermines women's moral influence is the devaluation of marriage and of motherhood and homemaking as a career. Some view homemaking with outright contempt, arguing it demeans women and that the relentless demands of raising children are a form of exploitation.⁸ They ridicule what they call "the mommy track" as a career. This is not fair or right. We do not diminish the value of what women or men achieve in any worthy endeavor or career—we all benefit from those achievements—but we still recognize there is not a higher good than motherhood and fatherhood in marriage. There is no superior career, and no amount of money, authority, or public acclaim can exceed the ultimate rewards of

family. Whatever else a woman may accomplish, her moral influence is no more optimally employed than here.

13. Attitudes toward human sexuality threaten the moral authority of women on several fronts. Abortion for personal or social convenience strikes at the heart of a woman's most sacred powers and destroys her moral authority. The same is true of sexual immorality and of revealing dress that not only debases women but reinforces the lie that a woman's sexuality is what defines her worth.
14. There has long been a cultural double standard that expected women to be sexually circumspect while excusing male immorality. The unfairness of such a double standard is obvious, and it has been justifiably criticized and rejected. In that rejection, one would have hoped that men would rise to the higher, single standard, but just the opposite has occurred—women and girls are now encouraged to be as promiscuous as the double standard expected men to be. Where once women's higher standards demanded commitment and responsibility from men, we now have sexual relations without conscience, fatherless families, and growing poverty. Equal-opportunity promiscuity simply robs women of their moral influence and degrades all of society.⁹ In this hollow bargain, it is men who are "liberated" and women and children who suffer most.
15. A third area of concern comes from those who, in the name of equality, want to erase all differences between the masculine and the feminine. Often this takes the form of pushing women to adopt more masculine traits—be more aggressive, tough, and confrontational. It is now common in movies and video games to see women in terribly violent roles, leaving dead bodies and mayhem in their wake. It is soul-numbing to see men in such roles and certainly no less so when women are the ones perpetrating and suffering the violence.
16. Former Young Women general president Margaret D. Nadauld taught: "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."¹⁰ In blurring feminine and masculine differences, we lose the distinct, complementary gifts of women and men that together produce a greater whole.
17. My plea to women and girls today is to protect and cultivate the moral force that is within you. Preserve that innate virtue and the unique gifts you bring with you into the world. Your intuition is to do good and to be good, and as you follow the Holy Spirit, your moral

authority and influence will grow. To the young women I say, don't lose that moral force even before you have it in full measure. Take particular care that your language is clean, not coarse; that your dress reflects modesty, not vanity; and that your conduct manifests purity, not promiscuity. You cannot lift others to virtue on the one hand if you are entertaining vice on the other.

18. Sisters, of all your associations, it is your relationship with God, your Heavenly Father, who is the source of your moral power, that you must always put first in your life. Remember that Jesus's power came through His single-minded devotion to the will of the Father. He never varied from that which pleased His Father.¹¹ Strive to be that kind of disciple of the Father and the Son, and your influence will never fade.
19. And do not be afraid to apply that influence without fear or apology. "Be ready always to give an answer to every [man, woman, and child] that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."¹² "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."¹³ "Bring up your children in light and truth."¹⁴ "Teach [them] to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord."¹⁵
20. In these exhortations to women, let no one willfully misunderstand. By praising and encouraging the moral force in women, I am not saying that men and boys are somehow excused from their own duty to stand for truth and righteousness, that their responsibility to serve, sacrifice, and minister is somehow less than that of women or can be left to women. Brethren, let us stand with women, share their burdens, and cultivate our own companion moral authority.
21. Dear sisters, we rely on the moral force you bring to the world, to marriage, to family, to the Church. We rely on blessings you bring down from heaven by your prayers and faith. We pray for your security, welfare, and happiness and for your influence to be sustained. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. 2 Timothy 1:5.
2. Orson Scott Card, "Neighborliness: Daines Style," *Ensign*, Apr. 1977, 19.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, "The Women of God," *Ensign*, May 1978, 10–11.
4. See Moses 2:27.
5. See Moses 6:57–60.
6. Moses 1:39.
7. "A century ago, attachment scholar John Bowlby found that the bond created through the innumerable caring interactions between a mother and child is the critical foundation for social-emotional development. ... And feminist scholar Sara Ruddick identified a mother's 'attentive love' as the core of effective parenting. Through the 'patient eye of love,' mothers develop a special knowledge of their children—a knowledge that gives them unique insight into what the truly 'best practices' for each child should be" (Jenet Jacob Erickson, "Love, Not Perfection, Root of Good Mothering," *Deseret News*, May 12, 2013, G3).

8. It is true that many women over many generations have been exploited or saddled with unfair burdens both in family and employment, but selflessness and sacrifice need not and should not become abusive or exploitative. Elder Bruce C. Hafen observed: "If being 'selfless' means a woman must give up her own inner identity and personal growth, that understanding of selflessness is wrong. ... But today's liberationist model goes too far the other way, stereotyping women as excessively independent of their families. A more sensible view is that husbands and wives are interdependent with each other. ... The critics who moved mothers from dependence to independence skipped the fertile middle ground of interdependence. Those who moved mothers from selflessness to selfishness skipped the fertile middle ground of self-chosen service that contributes toward a woman's personal growth. Because of these excesses, debates about the value of motherhood have, ironically, caused the general society to discount not only mothers but women in general" ("Motherhood and the Moral Influence of Women" [remarks to the World Congress of Families II, Geneva, Plenary Session IV, Nov. 16, 1999], http://worldcongress.org/wcf2_spkrs/wcf2_hafen).

9. One mother in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial observed: "With the exception of some Mormons, evangelicals and Orthodox Jews, scads of us don't know how to teach our own sons and daughters not to give away their bodies so readily. ... Still, in my own circle of girlfriends, the desire to push back is strong. I don't know one of them who doesn't have feelings of lingering discomfort regarding her own sexual past. And not one woman I've ever asked about the subject has said that she wishes she'd 'experimented' more" (Jennifer Moses, "Why Do We Let Them Dress Like That?" *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 19, 2011, C3).

10. Margaret D. Nadauld, "The Joy of Womanhood," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 15; or *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 18.

11. See John 8:29.

12. 1 Peter 3:15.

13. 2 Timothy 4:2.

14. Doctrine and Covenants 93:40.

15. Doctrine and Covenants 68:28.

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The Moral Force of Women (QR Code)





“Brethren We Have a Work to Do” & “Let Us Be Men”

(Excerpts)

Elder D. Todd Christofferson
General Conference, October 2006 & 2012



Brethren We Have a Work to Do

1. Brethren, much has been said and written in recent years about the challenges of men and boys. A sampling of book titles, for example, includes *Why There Are No Good Men Left*, *The Demise of Guys*, *The End of Men*, *Why Boys Fail*, and *Manning Up*. Interestingly, most of these seem to have been written by women. In any case, a common thread running through these analyses is that in many societies today men and boys get conflicting and demeaning signals about their roles and value in society.
2. The author of *Manning Up* characterized it this way: “It’s been an almost universal rule of civilization that whereas girls became women simply by reaching physical maturity, boys had to pass a test. They needed to demonstrate courage, physical prowess, or mastery of the necessary skills. The goal was to prove their competence as protectors of women and children; this was always their primary social role. Today, however, with women moving ahead in an advanced economy, provider husbands and fathers are now optional, and the character qualities men had needed to play their role—fortitude, stoicism, courage, fidelity—are obsolete and even a little embarrassing.”¹
3. In their zeal to promote opportunity for women, something we applaud, there are those who denigrate men and their contributions. They seem to think of life as a competition between male and female—that one must dominate the other, and now it’s the women’s turn. Some argue that a career is everything and marriage and children should be entirely optional—therefore, why do we need men?² In too many Hollywood films, TV and cable shows, and even commercials, men are portrayed as incompetent, immature, or self-absorbed. This cultural emasculation of males is having a damaging effect. ...
4. Some men and young men have taken the negative signals as an excuse to avoid responsibility and never really grow up. In an observation that is too often accurate, one university professor remarked, “The men come into class with their backward baseball caps and [their lame] the ‘word processor ate my homework’ excuses. Meanwhile, the women are checking their
5. Brethren, it cannot be this way with us. As men of the priesthood, we have an essential role to play in society, at home, and in the Church. But we must be men that women can trust, that children can trust, and that God can trust. In the Church and kingdom of God in these latter days, we cannot afford to have boys and men who are drifting. We cannot afford young men who lack self-discipline and live only to be entertained. We cannot afford young adult men who are going nowhere in life, who are not serious about forming families and making a real contribution in this world. We cannot afford husbands and fathers who fail to provide spiritual leadership in the home. We cannot afford to have those who exercise the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God, waste their strength in pornography or spend their lives in cyberspace (ironically being of the world while not being in the world).
6. Brethren, we have work to do.
7. Young men, you need to do well in school and then continue your education beyond high school. Some of you will want to pursue university studies and careers in business, agriculture, government, or other professions. Some will excel in the arts, music, or teaching. Others will choose a military career or learn a trade. Over the years, I have had a number of craftsmen work on projects and repairs at my home, and I have admired the hard work and skill of these men. In whatever you choose, it is essential that you become proficient so that you can support a family and make a contribution for good in your community and your country. ...
8. You adult men—fathers, single adults, leaders, home teachers—be worthy models and help the rising generation of boys become men. Teach them social and other skills: how to participate in a conversation, how to get acquainted and interact with others, how to relate to women and girls, how to serve, how to be active and enjoy recreation, how to pursue hobbies without

becoming addicted, how to correct mistakes and make better choices.

9. And so to all who are listening, wherever this message may reach you, I say as Jehovah said to Joshua, “Be strong and of a good courage” (Joshua 1:6). Take heart and prepare the best you can, whatever your circumstances. Prepare to be a good husband and father; prepare to be a good and productive citizen; prepare to serve the Lord, whose priesthood you hold. Wherever you are, your Heavenly Father is mindful of you. You are not alone, and you have the priesthood and the gift of the Holy Ghost. ...
10. 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.”⁵ 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). Together with the Relief Society, priesthood quorums can build up parents and marriages, and quorums can provide the blessings of the priesthood to single-parent families.
11. Yes, brethren, we have work to do. Thank you for the sacrifices you make and the good you do. Keep going, and the Lord will help you. At times you may not know quite what to do or what to say—just move forward. Begin to act, and the Lord assures that “an effectual door shall be opened for [you]” (D&C 118:3). Begin to speak, and He promises, “You shall not be confounded before men; for it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say” (D&C 100:5–6). It is true that we are in many ways ordinary and imperfect, but we have a perfect Master who wrought a perfect Atonement, and we have call upon His grace and His priesthood. As we repent and purge our souls, we are promised that we will be taught and endowed with power from on high (see D&C 43:16).
12. The Church and the world and women are crying for men, men who are developing their capacity and talents, who are willing to work and make sacrifices, who will help others achieve happiness and salvation. They are crying, “Rise up, O men of God!”⁶ God help us to do it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Kay S. Hymowitz, Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men into Boys (2011), 16.
2. “When you ask young people today what will make them adults, almost no one mentions marriage. They are far more likely to see issues around work—completing education, financial independence, a full-time job—as the signs that they have arrived. Work, career, independence: these are

the primary sources of identity today” (Hymowitz, Manning Up, 45). The pressure on women to adopt this anti-marriage ethic is especially intense. A Times of London contributor wrote: “No one, not my family or my teachers, ever said, ‘Oh yes, and by the way you might want to be a wife and mother too.’ They were so determined we would follow a new, egalitarian, modern path that the historic ambitions of generations of women—to get married and raise a family—were intentionally airbrushed from their vision of our future” (Eleanor Mills, “Learning to Be Left on the Shelf,” Sunday Times, Apr. 18, 2010, www.thetimes.co.uk; in Hymowitz, Manning Up, 72). Another writer in her 40s quoted some responses to an article she wrote about her regrets over not marrying: “I am totally appalled by your need for a man,” “Get some self-esteem!” “You have taken codependency to a whole new low,” and “If my daughter grows up to want a man half as much as you do, I will know that I’ve done something wrong in raising her” (Lori Gottlieb, Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough [2010], 55). The good news is that most people, including educated young adults, aren’t buying the anti-marriage, antifamily message. “According to a study by a University of Pennsylvania economist, in the United States in 2008, 86 percent of college-educated white women were married by age 40, compared with 88 percent of those with less than a four-year degree. The numbers for white, college-educated men are similar: 84 percent of them were married by 40 in 2008. The conventional wisdom, not borne out by research, by the way, may have it that marriage is a raw deal for women. But college-educated white women don’t seem to believe it. They are the most likely of any group to think that ‘married people are generally happier than unmarried people’ ... The large majority—70 percent—of first-year college students think raising a family is ‘essential’ or ‘very important’ to their futures” (Hymowitz, Manning Up, 173–74).

3. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *Why There Are No Good Men Left: The Romantic Plight of the New Single Woman* (2003), 67.

4. Amanda Dickson, “‘Hunger Games’ Main Character a Heroine for Our Day,” *Deseret News*, Apr. 2, 2012, www.deseretnews.com.

5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 134.

6. “Rise Up, O Men of God,” Hymns, no. 323.

Let Us Be Men (excerpts)

1. Years ago, when my brothers and I were boys, our mother had radical cancer surgery. She came very close to death. Much of the tissue in her neck and shoulder had to be removed, and for a long time it was very painful for her to use her right arm.
2. One morning about a year after the surgery, my father took Mother to an appliance store and asked the manager to show her how to use a machine he had for ironing clothes. The machine was called an Ironrite. It was operated from a chair by pressing pedals with one’s knees to lower a padded roller against a heated metal surface and turn the roller, feeding in shirts, pants, dresses, and other articles. You can see that this would make ironing (of which there was a great deal in our family of five boys) much easier, especially for a woman with limited use of her arm. Mother was shocked when Dad told the manager they would buy the machine and then paid cash for it. Despite my father’s good income as a veterinarian, Mother’s surgery and medications had left them in a difficult financial situation.
3. On the way home, my mother was upset: “How can we afford it? Where did the money come from? How will

we get along now?” Finally Dad told her that he had gone without lunches for nearly a year to save enough money. “Now when you iron,” he said, “you won’t have to stop and go into the bedroom and cry until the pain in your arm stops.” She didn’t know he knew about that. I was not aware of my father’s sacrifice and act of love for my mother at the time, but now that I know, I say to myself, “There is a man.”

4. The prophet Lehi pled with his rebellious sons, saying, “Arise from the dust, my sons, and be men” (2 Nephi 1:21; emphasis added). By age, Laman and Lemuel were men, but in terms of character and spiritual maturity they were still as children. They murmured and complained if asked to do anything hard. They didn’t accept anyone’s authority to correct them. They didn’t value spiritual things. They easily resorted to violence, and they were good at playing the victim.
5. We see some of the same attitudes today. Some act as if a man’s highest goal should be his own pleasure. Permissive social mores have “let men off the hook” as it were, so that many think it acceptable to father children out of wedlock and to cohabit rather than marry. 1 Dodging commitments is considered smart, but sacrificing for the good of others, naive. For some, a life of work and achievement is optional. ...
6. We who hold the priesthood of God cannot afford to drift. We have work to do (see Moroni 9:6). We must arise from the dust of self-indulgence and be men! It is a wonderful aspiration for a boy to become a man—strong and capable; someone who can build and create things, run things; someone who makes a difference in the world. It is a wonderful aspiration for those of us who are older to make the vision of true manhood a reality in our lives and be models for those who look to us for an example.
7. In large measure, true manhood is defined in our relationship to women. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have given us the ideal to pursue in these words:
8. “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. ... 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.” 3
9. ... President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking in this meeting in April 1998, gave specific counsel for young men:
10. “The girl you marry will take a terrible chance on you. ... [You] will largely determine the remainder of her life. ...
11. “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 Tim. 5:8).” 4
12. Integrity is fundamental to being men. Integrity means being truthful, but it also means accepting responsibility and honoring commitments and covenants. President N. Eldon Tanner, a former counselor in the First Presidency and a man of integrity, told of someone who sought his advice:
13. “A young man came to me not long ago and said, ‘I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in arrears, and I can’t make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?’
14. “I looked at him and said, ‘Keep your agreement.’
15. “‘Even if it costs me my home?’
16. “I said, ‘I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather have a husband who would keep his word, meet his obligations, ... and have to rent a home than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledges.’” 5
17. Good men sometimes make mistakes. A man of integrity will honestly face and correct his mistakes, and that is an example we can respect. Sometimes men try but fail. Not all worthy objectives are realized despite one’s honest and best efforts. True manhood is not always measured by the fruits of one’s labors but by the labors themselves—by one’s striving. 6
18. Though he will make some sacrifices and deny himself some pleasures in the course of honoring his commitments, the true man leads a rewarding life. He gives much, but he receives more, and he lives content in the approval of his Heavenly Father. The life of true manhood is the good life.
19. Most importantly, when we consider the admonition to be men, we must think of Jesus Christ. When Pilate brought Jesus forth wearing a crown of thorns, he declared, “Behold the man!” (see John 19:4–5). Pilate may not have fully understood the significance of his own words, but the Lord indeed stood before the people then as He stands today—the highest ideal of manhood. Behold the man!
20. The Lord asked His disciples what manner of men they should be and then answered, “Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27; see also 3 Nephi 18:24). That is our ultimate quest. What did He do that we can emulate as men?
21. Jesus rejected temptation. When confronted by the great tempter himself, Jesus “[yielded] not to the temptation” (Mosiah 15:5). He countered with scripture:

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Gospel commandments and standards are our protection also, and like the Savior, we may draw strength from the scriptures to resist temptation.

22. The Savior was obedient. He forsook completely the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19) and yielded His will to the Father (see Mosiah 15:7). He was baptized to show “that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments” (2 Nephi 31:7).
23. Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). He employed the divine powers of the holy priesthood to bless those in need, “such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases” (Mosiah 3:5). Jesus told His Apostles: “Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:44–45). As His fellow servants, we may become great in His kingdom through love and service.
24. The Savior was fearless in opposing evil and error. “Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple ... and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:12–13). He called upon all to repent (see Matthew 4:17) and be forgiven (see John 8:11; Alma 5:33). So might we stand firm in defending sacred things and in raising the warning voice.
25. He gave His life to redeem mankind. Surely we can accept responsibility for those He entrusts to our care.
26. Brethren, let us be men, even as He is.

Notes

1. See, for example, James E. Faust, “Challenges Facing the Family,” Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, Jan. 10, 2004, 1–2; Eduardo Porter and Michelle O’Donnell, “Middle-Aged, No Degree, No Wife,” New York Times, published in Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Aug. 6, 2006, p. A7; Peg Tyre, “The Trouble with Boys,” Newsweek, Jan. 30, 2006, 44–51.

2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.

3. “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” Ensign, May 1998, 49–50.

4. In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 99; or Improvement Era, Dec. 1966, 1137.

5. In the late 1830s, after the Saints had abandoned Kirtland, the Lord called a man named Oliver Granger to go back and try to settle some unfinished matters for the First Presidency. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord said: “Therefore, let [Oliver Granger] contend earnestly for the redemption of the First Presidency of my Church, saith the Lord; and when he falls he shall rise again, for his sacrifice shall be more sacred unto me than his increase, saith the Lord. ... Therefore let no man despise my servant Oliver Granger, but let the blessings of my people be on him forever and

ever” (D&C 117:13, 15; emphasis added).

Brethren We Have a Work to Do
(QR Code)



Let Us Be Men
(QR Code)





Marriage Is Essential To His Eternal Plan

Elder David A. Bednar
Ensign, Jun 2006, 82-87



The Doctrinal Ideal of Marriage

1. We have been counseled strongly by the First Presidency to devote our best efforts to the strengthening of marriage and the home. Such instruction has never been more needed in the world than it is today, as the sanctity of marriage is attacked and the importance of the home is undermined.

2. Even though the Church and its programs support marriage and family and generally are successful at doing so, we should always remember this basic truth: no instrumentality or organization can take the place of the home or perform its essential functions.¹ Consequently, today I will speak with you primarily as men and women, as husbands and wives, and as mothers and fathers and secondarily as priesthood and auxiliary leaders in the Church. My assignment is to discuss the essential role of eternal marriage in our Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness.

3. We will focus on the doctrinal ideal of marriage. My hope is that a review of our eternal possibilities and a reminder about who we are and why we are here in mortality will provide direction, comfort, and sustaining hope for us all, regardless of our marital status or personal present circumstances. The disparity between the doctrinal ideal of marriage and the reality of daily life may seem at times to be quite large, but you gradually are doing and becoming much better than you probably recognize.

4. I invite you to keep in mind the following questions as we discuss principles related to eternal marriage.

Question 1: In my own life, am I striving to become a better husband or a wife, or preparing to be a husband or a wife, by understanding and applying these basic principles?

Question 2: As a priesthood or auxiliary leader, am I helping those I serve to understand and apply these basic principles, thereby strengthening marriage and the home?

5. As we prayerfully ponder these questions and consider our own marriage relationships and our responsibilities in the Church, I testify the Spirit of the Lord will enlighten our

minds and teach us the things we need to do and to improve (see John 14:26).

Why Marriage is Essential

6. In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles 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.”² This keynote sentence of the proclamation teaches us much about the doctrinal significance of marriage and emphasizes the primacy of marriage and family in the Father’s plan. Righteous marriage is a commandment and an essential step in the process of creating a loving family relationship that can be perpetuated beyond the grave.

7. Two compelling doctrinal reasons help us to understand why eternal marriage is essential to the Father’s plan.

Reason 1: The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation.

8. The eternal nature and importance of marriage can be fully understood only within the over arching context of the Father’s plan for 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 . . . has a divine nature and destiny.”³ The great plan of happiness enables the spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Father to obtain physical bodies, to gain earthly experience, and to progress toward perfection.

9. “Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose”⁴ and in large measure defines who we are, why we are here upon the earth, and what we are to do and become. For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary.

10. After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. Importantly, however, God said it was “not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18; Moses

3:18), and Eve became Adam's companion and helpmeet. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. Alone, neither the man nor the woman could fulfill the purposes of his or her creation.

11. By divine design, men and women are intended to progress together toward perfection and a fullness of glory. Because of their distinctive temperaments and capacities, males and females each bring to a marriage relationship unique perspectives and experiences. The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way. The man completes and perfects the woman and the woman completes and perfects the man as they learn from and mutually strengthen and bless each other. "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11; italics added).

Reason 2: By divine design, both a man and a woman are needed to bring children into mortality and to provide the best setting for the rearing and nurturing of children.

12. The commandment given anciently to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today. "God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. ... The means by which mortal life is created [are] divinely appointed." ⁵ Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.

13. A home with a loving and loyal husband and wife is the supreme setting in which children can be reared in love and righteousness and in which the spiritual and physical needs of children can be met. Just as the unique characteristics of both males and females contribute to the completeness of a marriage relationship, so those same characteristics are vital to the rearing, nurturing, and teaching of children. "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." ⁶

Guiding Principles

14. The two doctrinal reasons we have reviewed about the importance of eternal marriage in the Father's plan of happiness suggest guiding principles for those who are preparing to marry, for those who are married, and for our service in the Church.

Principle 1: The importance of eternal marriage can be understood only within the context of the Father's plan of happiness.

14. We frequently speak about and highlight marriage as a fundamental unit of society, as the foundation of a strong nation, and as a vital sociological and cultural institution. But the restored gospel helps us to understand that it is so much more!

15. Do we perhaps talk about marriage without adequately teaching the importance of marriage in the Father's plan? Emphasizing marriage without linking it to the simple and fundamental doctrine of the plan of happiness cannot provide sufficient direction, protection, or hope in a world that grows increasingly confused and wicked. We would all do well to remember the teaching of Alma—that "God gave unto [the children of men] commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption" (Alma 12:32; italics added).

16. Elder Parley P. Pratt expressed beautifully the blessings that come to us as we learn about, understand, and strive to apply in our lives the doctrinal ideal of marriage:

17. "It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter.

18. "It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. ...

19. "I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean. ... In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.

20. "Yet, at that time, my dearly beloved brother, Joseph Smith, had ... merely lifted a corner of the veil and given me a single glance into eternity." ⁷

21. As men and women, as husbands and wives, and as Church leaders, can we see how the importance of eternal marriage can be understood only within the context of the Father's plan of happiness? The doctrine of the plan leads men and women to hope and prepare for eternal marriage, and it defeats the fears and overcomes the uncertainties that may cause some individuals to delay or avoid marriage. A correct understanding of the plan also strengthens our resolve to steadfastly honor the covenant of eternal marriage. Our individual learning, our teaching, and our testifying in both the home and at church will be magnified as we ponder and more fully understand this truth.

Principle 2: Satan desires that all men and women might be miserable like unto himself.

22. Lucifer relentlessly assails and distorts the doctrines that matter most to us individually, to our families, and to the world. Where is the adversary focusing his most direct and diabolical attacks? Satan works unremittingly to confuse understanding about gender, to promote the premature and unrighteous use of procreative power, and to hinder righteous marriage precisely because marriage is ordained of God and the family is central to the plan of happiness. The adversary's attacks upon eternal marriage will continue to increase in intensity, frequency, and sophistication.

23. Because today we are engaged in a war for the welfare of marriage and the home, in my latest reading of the Book of Mormon I paid particular attention to the ways the Nephites prepared for their battles against the Lamanites. I noted that the people of Nephi "were aware of the intent of [their enemy], and therefore they did prepare to meet them" (Alma 2:12; italics added). As I read and studied, I learned that understanding the intent of an enemy is a key prerequisite to effective preparation. We likewise should consider the intent of our enemy in this latter-day war.

24. The Father's plan is designed to provide direction for His children, to help them become happy, and to bring them safely home to Him. Lucifer's attacks on the plan are intended to make the sons and daughters of God confused and unhappy and to halt their eternal progression. The over arching intent of the father of lies is that all of us would become "miserable like unto himself" (2 Ne. 2:27), and he works to warp the elements of the Father's plan he hates the most. Satan does not have a body, he cannot marry, and he will not have a family. And he persistently strives to confuse the divinely appointed purposes of gender, marriage, and family. Throughout the world, we see growing evidence of the effectiveness of Satan's efforts.

25. More recently the devil has attempted to combine and legally validate confusion about gender and marriage. As we look beyond mortality and into eternity, it is easy to discern that the counterfeit alternatives the adversary advocates can never lead to the completeness that is made possible through the sealing together of a man and a woman, to the happiness of righteous marriage, to the joy of posterity, or to the blessing of eternal progression.

26. Given what we know about our enemy's intent, each of us should be especially vigilant in seeking personal inspiration as to how we can protect and safeguard our own marriages—and how we can learn and teach correct principles in the home and in our Church assignments about the eternal significance of gender and of the role of marriage in the Father's plan.

Principle 3: The ultimate blessings of love and happiness are obtained through the covenant relationship of eternal marriage.

27. The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point in a covenant marriage relationship. Please notice how the Savior is positioned at the apex of this triangle, with a woman at the base of one corner and a man at the base of the other corner. Now consider what happens in the relationship between the man and the woman as they individually and steadily "come unto Christ" and strive to be "perfected in Him" (Moro. 10:32). Because of and through the Redeemer, the man and the woman come closer together.

28. As a husband and wife are each drawn to the Lord (see 3 Ne. 27:14), as they learn to serve and cherish one another, as they share life experiences and grow together and become one, and as they are blessed through the uniting of their distinctive natures, they begin to realize the fulfillment that our Heavenly Father desires for His children. Ultimate happiness, which is the very object of the Father's plan, is received through the making and honoring of eternal marriage covenants.

29. As men and women, as husbands and wives, and as Church leaders, one of our paramount responsibilities is to help young men and women learn about and prepare for righteous marriage through our personal example. As young women and men observe worthiness, loyalty, sacrifice, and the honoring of covenants in our marriages, then those youth will seek to emulate the same principles in their courting and marriage relationships. As young people notice that we have made the comfort and convenience of our eternal companion our highest priority, then they will become less self-centered and more able to give, to serve, and to create an equal and enduring companionship. As young women and men perceive mutual respect, affection, trust, and love between a husband and a wife, then they will strive to cultivate the same characteristics in their lives. Our children and the youth of the Church will learn the most from what we do and what we are—even if they remember relatively little of what we say.

30. Unfortunately many young members of the Church today are fearful of and stumble in their progress toward eternal marriage because they have seen too much of divorce in the world and of broken covenants in their homes and in the Church.

31. Eternal marriage is not merely a temporary legal contract that can be terminated at any time for almost any reason. Rather, it is a sacred covenant with God that can be binding in time and throughout all eternity. Faithfulness and fidelity in marriage must not simply be attractive words spoken in sermons; rather, they should be principles evident in our own covenant marriage relationships.

32. As we consider the importance of our personal example, do you and I discern areas where we need to improve? Is the Holy Ghost inspiring our minds and softening our hearts and encouraging us to do and to

become better? As priesthood and auxiliary leaders, are we focusing our efforts on strengthening marriage and the home?

33. Husbands and wives need time together to fortify themselves and their homes against the attacks of the adversary. As we strive to magnify our callings in the Church, are we unintentionally hindering husbands and wives and mothers and fathers from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities in the home? For example, do we sometimes schedule unnecessary meetings and activities in a way that interferes with the essential relationship between a husband and a wife and their relationships with children?

34. As we sincerely ponder these questions, I am confident the Spirit is even now helping and will continue to help each of us learn the things we should do at home and in the Church.

The Spiritual Resources We Need

35. Our responsibilities to learn and understand the doctrine of the plan, to uphold and be examples of righteous marriage, and to teach correct principles in the home and at church may cause us to wonder if we are equal to the task. We are ordinary people who must accomplish a most extraordinary work.

36. Many years ago, Sister Bednar and I were busy trying to meet the countless competing demands of a young and energetic family—and of Church, career, and community responsibilities. One evening after the children were asleep, we talked at length about how effectively we were attending to all of our important priorities. We realized that we would not receive the promised blessings in eternity if we did not honor more fully the covenant we had made in mortality. We resolved together to do and to be better as a husband and a wife. That lesson learned so many years ago has made a tremendous difference in our marriage.

37. The sweet and simple doctrine of the plan of happiness provides precious eternal perspective and helps us understand the importance of eternal marriage. We have been blessed with all of the spiritual resources we need. We have the fullness of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We have the Holy Ghost and revelation. We have saving ordinances, covenants, and temples. We have priesthood and prophets. We have the holy scriptures and the power of the word of God. And we have The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

38. I testify that we have been blessed with all of the spiritual resources we need to learn about, to teach, to strengthen, and to defend righteous marriage—and that indeed we can live together in happiness as husbands and wives and families in eternity. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes:

1. See First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999; or Liahona, Dec. 1999, 1; Ensign, June 1999, 80.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.
3. Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.
5. Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.
6. Liahona, Oct. 2004, 49; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102.
7. Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 297–98.

Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan
(QR Code)





“For Time and All Eternity” (Excerpts)

President Boyd K. Packer
General Conference, October 1993



1. Dear brethren and sisters, the scriptures and the teachings of the Apostles and prophets speak of us in premortal life as sons and daughters, spirit children of God. Gender existed before, and did not begin at mortal birth.
2. In the great council in heaven, God’s plan was presented: the plan of salvation, the plan of redemption, the great plan of happiness. The plan provides for a proving; all must choose between good and evil. His plan provides for a Redeemer, an atonement, the Resurrection, and, if we obey, our return to the presence of God.
3. The adversary rebelled and adopted a plan of his own. Those who followed him were denied the right to a mortal body. Our presence here confirms that we sanctioned our Father’s plan.
4. 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. The specters of heartbreak and guilt follow him about. Only repentance can heal what he hurts.
5. The plan of happiness requires the righteous union of male and female, man and woman, husband and wife. Doctrines teach us how to respond to the compelling natural impulses which too often dominate how we behave.
6. A body patterned after the image of God was created for Adam, and he was introduced into the Garden. At first, Adam was alone. He held the priesthood, but alone, he could not fulfill the purposes of his creation.
7. No other man would do. Neither alone nor with other men could Adam progress. Nor could Eve with another woman. It was so then. It is so today.
8. Eve, an help meet, was created. Marriage was instituted, for Adam was commanded to cleave unto his wife [not just to a woman] and “to none else.”
9. A choice, it might be said, was imposed upon Eve. She should be praised for her decision. Then “Adam fell that men might be.”
10. Elder Orson F. Whitney described the Fall as having “a twofold direction—downward, yet forward. It brought man into the world and set his feet upon progression’s highway.”
11. God blessed Adam and Eve “and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply.” And so the family was established.
12. There is nothing in the revelations which suggests that to be a man rather than to be a woman is preferred in the sight of God, or that He places a higher value on sons than on daughters.
13. All virtues listed in the scriptures—love, joy, peace, faith, godliness, charity—are shared by both men and women, and the highest priesthood ordinance in mortality is given only to man and woman together.
14. After the Fall, natural law had far-reaching sovereignty over mortal birth. There are what President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., called “pranks” of nature, which cause a variety of abnormalities, deficiencies, and deformities. However unfair they seem to man’s way of reasoning, they somehow suit the purposes of the Lord in the proving of mankind.
15. The following of every worthy instinct, the responding to every righteous urge, the consummating of every exalting human relationship are provided for and approved in the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and protected by commandments revealed to His church.
16. Except Adam and Eve by nature be different from one another, they could not multiply and fill the earth. 28 The complementing differences are the very key to the plan of happiness.
17. Some roles are best suited to the masculine nature and others to the feminine nature. Both the scriptures and the patterns of nature place man as the protector, the provider.
18. Those responsibilities of the priesthood, which have to do with the administration of the Church, of necessity function outside the home. By divine decree, they have been entrusted to men. It has been that way since the beginning, for the Lord revealed that “the order of this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son. . . . This order was instituted in the days of Adam.”

19. A man who holds the priesthood does not have an advantage over a woman in qualifying for exaltation. The woman, by her very nature, is also co-creator with God and the primary nurturer of the children. Virtues and attributes upon which perfection and exaltation depend come naturally to a woman and are refined through marriage and motherhood....
20. I close with a parable.
21. Once a man received as his inheritance two keys. The first key, he was told, would open a vault which he must protect at all cost. The second key was to a safe within the vault which contained a priceless treasure. He was to open this safe and freely use the precious things which were stored therein. He was warned that many would seek to rob him of his inheritance. He was promised that if he used the treasure worthily, it would be replenished and never be diminished, not in all eternity. He would be tested. If he used it to benefit others, his own blessings and joy would increase.
22. The man went alone to the vault. His first key opened the door. He tried to unlock the treasure with the other key, but he could not, for there were two locks on the safe. His key alone would not open it. No matter how he tried, he could not open it. He was puzzled. He had been given the keys. He knew the treasure was rightfully his. He had obeyed instructions, but he could not open the safe.
23. In due time, there came a woman into the vault. She, too, held a key. It was noticeably different from the key he held. Her key fit the other lock. It humbled him to learn that he could not obtain his rightful inheritance without her.
24. They made a covenant that together they would open the treasure and, as instructed, he would watch over the vault and protect it; she would watch over the treasure. She was not concerned that, as guardian of the vault, he held two keys, for his full purpose was to see that she was safe as she watched over that which was most precious to them both. Together they opened the safe and partook of their inheritance. They rejoiced for, as promised, it replenished itself.
25. With great joy they found that they could pass the treasure on to their children; each could receive a full measure, undiminished to the last generation.
26. Perhaps some few of their posterity would not find a companion who possessed the complementary key, or one worthy and willing to keep the covenants relating to the treasure. Nevertheless, if they kept the commandments, they would not be denied even the smallest blessing.
27. Because some tempted them to misuse their treasure, they were careful to teach their children about keys and covenants.
28. There came, in due time, among their posterity some few who were deceived or jealous or selfish because one was given two keys and another only one. "Why," the selfish ones reasoned, "cannot the treasure be mine alone to use as I desire?"
29. Some tried to reshape the key they had been given to resemble the other key. Perhaps, they thought, it would then fit both locks. And so it was that the safe was closed to them. Their reshaped keys were useless, and their inheritance was lost.
30. Those who received the treasure with gratitude and obeyed the laws concerning it knew joy without bounds through time and all eternity.
31. I bear witness of our Father's plan for happiness, and bear testimony in the name of
32. Him who wrought the Atonement, that it might be, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See D&C 76:24; see also Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9.
2. See D&C 132:63; First Presidency, "Origin of Man" (Nov. 1909), 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), 4:203; see also Spencer W. Kimball, Ensign, Mar. 1976, p. 71; Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, Nov. 1983, p. 83.
3. See Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 348-49, 357, 365.
4. See Abr. 3:24-27.
5. See Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14; Alma 42:5; Moses 6:62.
6. See Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25-36; Alma 17:16; Alma 18:39; Alma 22:13-14; Alma 39:18; Alma 42:11, 13.
7. Alma 42:8.
8. See Alma 42:2-5.
9. See 2 Ne. 9:28; Alma 12:4, 5; Hel. 2:8; 3 Ne. 1:16; D&C 10:12, 23; Moses 4:3.
10. See Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 181, 297.
11. See Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 181.
12. See 2 Ne. 2:18; 2 Ne. 28:20.
13. See Alma 39:5; Moro. 9:9.
14. See D&C 130:2; D&C 131:2; 1 Cor. 11:11; Eph. 5:31.
15. See Moses 6:8-9.
16. See Moses 3:8.
17. See Moses 6:67.
18. See Moses 3:18.
19. See Moses 3:23-24.
20. D&C 42:22; emphasis added.
21. See Moses 4:7-12.
22. 2 Ne. 2:25.
23. Cowley and Whitney on Doctrine, comp. Forace Green (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963), p. 287.
24. Moses 2:28; see also Gen. 1:28; Gen. 9:1.
25. See Gal. 5:22-23; D&C 4:5-6; Alma 7:23-24.
26. See D&C 131:2.
27. See "Our Wives and Our Mothers in the Eternal Plan," address given in general Relief Society conference, 3 Oct. 1946, in J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1984).
28. See Gen. 1:28, note 28c.
29. See D&C 75:28; 1 Tim. 5:8.
30. D&C 107:40-41; see also D&C 84:14-16.

For Time and All Eternity
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Unit 2 Additional Readings

Links and QR Codes



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Same Gender Attraction Interview

[First Presidency Letter and Statement on Same-Sex Marriage](#)



First Presidency Letter and Statement on Same-Sex Marriage