

D&C#31 "Sealed...for Time and for All Eternity"

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I. Introduction

In the world in which we live, the importance of marriage has been greatly diminished in modern times. Many see no reason for marriage. They reason with the increasing divorce rate; the legal expenses associated with the dissolution of a marriage, including alimony and property settlement; combined with the ease of co-habitation, marriage is no longer a viable union. For those who do support marriage, it has been broadened to include members of the same sex. It may appear to the outsider the importance of marriage had outlived its usefulness. It is no longer necessary or important.

While that may be seen as the prevailing attitude, the wisdom of the ages challenges this thinking and says, "not so fast." Be careful when you choose to erode the bedrock upon which society has been built, as there will be consequences to bear.

One of the major functions marriage provides is the bearing and caring of children. Within the home and family, the children are taught values and standard of the society in which they live. They are nurtured and loved by a father and mother who have made a commitment to each other and their children to stand together, even when the going gets tough. Both individuals know there will be challenges they will have to face and differences they will experience. They have learned this is part of the life experience and must be addressed. As they face and resolve their differences, not only do they grow closer together as a

couple, but become stronger as individuals. It is likely there will be difference that remain, but one learns that unless he or she is married to an axe murderer, resolution is the first choice, not divorce. After all, you are not perfect so why should you expect perfection in your partner. In truth, as we learn to continue to love one another, despite our differences, the differences begin to diminish in importance.

We would be wise if we would strive daily to make each other happy. Many marriages begin with the desire to accept our spouse for better or worse. Unfortunately, too often this desire becomes short-circuited. Shortly after the marriage ceremony, too many of us begin the futile process of trying to change this or that aspect of our spouse's behavior. Frequently, to our disappointment, our well intended efforts often fail because the desire for change our spouse' behavior is ours, not theirs. In thoughtful retrospection, we all know how difficult it is to change behavior, even if it is our own idea. It is impossible if it is the decision of someone else, even someone whom we love.

J. Spencer Kinard states,

"Marriage would be more successful if each would try to make his partner happy rather than good. Making our spouses good, though, is a great temptation. We don't live with anyone very long before we see their faults. We trip over their inefficiencies and sloppiness, suffer for their moments of selfishness. We're stung by outbursts of anger and by things they've left undone. It doesn't take a genius to see how they could improve our lives--if they would only change. So, we make our lists, create improvement programs, and remind our partners frequently of their faults. Others may nag, but we gently suggest, and see ourselves as virtuous all the while. After all, our efforts are only for their good.

"Well, there is nothing that does less good in marriage than vowing to change the other. Marriage ought to be a sanctuary from a painful world, a place to soothe our feelings and gain the strength to run another day. But it can't be if one partner is trying to remake the other. Then, instead, there is a discomfort, a feeling that home is a briar patch full of thorns where one does not quite

measure up. Worse, the improvement programs we design for someone else rarely work. Growth is self-initiated. It is an inner striving to be more. We can't make someone kind or thoughtful. Fat people don't lose weight because someone else tells them to. We can no more mold someone than tell a flower when to bloom.

"We ought to give up the futile idea of making our partners good and concentrate on making them happy. That starts by accepting our helpmate, faults and all, with unconditional love. It means noticing the thousand good things our loved one does every day and offering praise for them. No one lives with a perfect person. So let us not be surprised that we don't. For every change we'd make in our partners, they could list a change they'd make in us. So when we feel the urge to make somebody good, we can start with ourselves. When we want to make somebody happy, we can look to our partners. Ironically, if make them happy, we'll go a long way toward making them good." ("A Happy and Good Marriage," in "*A Time For Reflection from the Spoken Word given by J. Spencer Kinard*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986, 81-82).

The challenges of life and earning a living can be daunting for most of us. It is nice to know at the end of the day, there is someone at home who cares about you, and whom you care about. To have a partner who is willing to listen to your challenges, even if they have no knowledge about the issues, can make a big difference in your life. Just the simple fact of their offering non-judgmental listening, without giving either advice or criticism, can make a big difference in a person's life. This is true, incidentally, for men as well as women, though most women seem to be much better at this kind of listening than most men. Men seem to need to solve the problem, while most women are better at just giving comfort, which often serves to make the problem solvable.

Down the road, there will come a time in your life when you are old and gray. You will reflect back upon your life. The choice you made not to marry so you could play the field and have no responsibilities, will begin to look very empty. You will recall how the risks of marriage and its potential failure and accompanying expenses led you to "opt out" of marriage and to choose a single life. Now in your declining years you may wish that you had made a different

choice. There are no children for you to call or who call you to ask how you are doing. Yes, you have friends, but they have their own families and activities. You sit down, and with the TV, eat your supper alone. You may argue, that this may also be the end result even if you had married, but had never had children, and then your wife or husband suddenly died. The problem is that you are alone. If you had married, even if your spouse had died, at least you would have some special memories to help lift your spirits. Your choice not to marry had consequences. I don't believe that is the way we are to live our lives though I understand many may disagree with my conclusion. Thank goodness, the option of marriage is still on the table. It is the only option that makes sense for the preservation of our society.

II. Eternal Marriage is Essential in Heavenly Father's Plan

Whether you chose to be married by a church minister or a judge, the legal phrasing of the marriage vow is the same in all instances. The phrase is "till death you do part." It means that when one or the other of the partners die, the marriage is ended or the legal contract is terminated. What should be the happiest day of your life is marred by the fact that your marriage is for this life only. It is a built-in divorce clause. But what, you argue, if you want it to last beyond this life. You believe that it is not true that we live and we die...period. You believe that life goes on beyond this life. You feel that your relationship with your spouse, forged in this life, does not abruptly end at death, but will continue on. You're not sure exactly how it works, but in your heart, you believe marriage relationships extend beyond this life.

In the scriptures, both ancient and modern, we learn that marriage was ordained of God.

Old Testament, Genesis 2:18, 24

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

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

Spencer W. Kimball states,

"To cleave unto him means that the spouse then becomes pre-eminent in the life of the husband or wife and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, 250).

Doctrine and Covenants 49:15-16

- 15 And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.**
- 16 Wherefore, it lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation;**

Eternal marriage is one of the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Not only does the Church teach that marriage is important and it is only between a man and a woman, but it also teaches it can be forever.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4

- 1 In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;**
- 2 And in order to obtain the highest [glory of the celestial kingdom], a man must enter into the order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];**
- 3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.**
- 4 He may enter into the other [kingdoms], but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.**

In other words, the right of eternal increase or to have children, is reserved for those who choose to enter into the bonds of eternal marriage during their mortal life or accept the sealing of their marriage by proxy in the House of the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:15-16,

- 15 Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and**

she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

16 Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

In verses 15 and 16, the Lord reveals that those who choose to marry, but are not sealed in the Lord's Holy House by his authorized servants, their marriage is not in effect after they depart this life. It will be the same as if they had been married by a church minister or justice of the peace, their marriage is not 'in force when they are dead' (D&C 132:15).

Doctrine and Covenants 132:26, 46

26 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation;...

46 And verily, verily, I say unto you [Joseph], that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven.

In verse 26 we learn that when marriage is performed in the Temple of the Lord, is pronounced by his authorized servants, and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, unless either individual commits serious transgressions, the marriage is valid for eternity.

In verse 46, we learn the main difference between a marriage for this life only and an eternal marriage is due to the restoration of the sealing power from God in these latter days. This authority was bestowed upon Joseph Smith and subsequently upon each of his authorized successors.

Parley P. Pratt states,

"[After first hearing Joseph Smith teach regarding eternal marriage], 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...I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion...In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also." (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*. Edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt. Deseret Book Co, 1938, [Fifth Edition, 1961], 298).

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve state,

"[M]arriage between man and woman is essential to [God's] eternal plan." ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," in *Ensign*, November, 1995, 102).

Joseph B. Wirthlin states,

"The sweet companionship of eternal marriage is one of the great blessings God has granted His children. Certainly, the many years I have shared with my beautiful companion have brought me the deepest joys of my life. From the beginning of time, marital companionship of husband and wife has been fundamental to our Heavenly Father's great plan of happiness. Our lives are touched for good, and we are both edified and ennobled as we savor the sweet blessings of association with dear members of the family." ("Valued Companions," in *Ensign*, November 1997, 32).

*Why is marriage an essential part of God's eternal plan?

God knows that the best way for his spirit children to be taught righteous principles that will bless their lives occurs within a family, protected by the bonds of marriage. Here a child learns from their father and mother the important roles they will fill during their lifetime and respect for the counterpart roles of those not of their

gender. They are also taught by caring and loving parents, the rules and expectations of the society. As they mature, this will assist them in becoming a productive member of society. Without the protection and care of a family, they will be required to learn the rules in a world where there is little patience or forgiveness of error.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of Heavenly Father." ("The Shield of Faith," in *Ensign*, May 1995, 8).

*When a man and a woman are married for time and eternity in the temple, they make a covenant [not only between themselves but also], with the Lord. What blessings will they receive if they are true to their covenant?

"a. They will be together "in time, and through all eternity. Their children may also be part of their eternal family.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:19 [underline added]

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them--Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths--then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and

glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost, who confirms that the priesthood ordinances we have received and the covenants we have made are acceptable to God. This approval depends on our [enduring] faithfulness." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 178).

"b. They will be exalted in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-3

1 In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;
2 And in order to obtain the highest [glory of the celestial kingdom], a man must enter into the order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];
3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:23-24 [underline added]

23 But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.
24 This is eternal lives--to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

"c. They will 'inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities,...powers [and] dominions.'

Doctrine and Covenants 132:19 [underline added]

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by

the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said of them--Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection, and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths...

"d. They will continue to have seed, or spirit children throughout eternity.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:19, 30-31 [underline added]

19 ...[The couple will go on]to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

30 Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and the fruit of his loins--from whose loins ye are [by birth or adoption], namely, my servant Joseph--which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.

Doctrine and Covenants 131:3-4 [underline added]

3 And if he [or she] does not [marry in the Holy Temple], he [or she] cannot obtain it.

4 He [or she] may enter into the other [kingdoms], but that is the end of his [or her] kingdom; he [or she] cannot have an increase.

"e. They shall be gods, because they have all power'

Doctrine and Covenants 132:20-21 [underline added]

20 Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

(a-e. *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 178).

The LDS Bible Dictionary states,

Marriage. Latter-day revelation tells us that marriage under the law of the gospel and the holy priesthood is for eternity, and that men and women thus sealed in marriage continue to have children throughout eternity. Although this concept of marriage is not fully presented in our present Bible, traces of it are found in New Testament, Matthew 16:16-19; 19:3-8; 22:23-30; and Pearl of Great Price, Moses 4:18. However the fullest explanation is found in *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132." (LDS Bible Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 728-729).

*What blessings does temple marriage bring in mortality?

One of the greatest blessings a "temple marriage" brings to the marital relationship is that it is a covenant relationship between the man, his wife and their Heavenly Father. The covenant relationship reminds the couple that they are to put forth their best effort to have a successful marriage, and as they do so, God will bless them in this endeavor. Because their marriage had its beginning in the Holy Temple, they are held to a higher level of commitment in their marriage due to their sacred promises, not only to each other, but to God. We are reminded of Christ's counsel to the Pharisees who inquired of him regarding a man putting his wife away or divorcing her "for every cause?" (New Testament, Matthew 19:3).

New Testament, Matthew 19:6

**6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.
What therefore God hath joined together, let not man
put asunder [to put apart or separate].**

III. Youth Should Prepare Now for Eternal Marriage

We begin our preparation as to whom we will marry in our youth. The values and aspirations to which we aspire will have an important effect upon whom we select to marry. It is unlikely, for example, one who values the importance of education, will chose to marry someone for whom education is unimportant, and visa versa. You may ask, "If this is true, doesn't that mean if I marry someone exactly like myself, won't our marriage be boring? A young man once posed this exact question to his wiser father. The father's reply was, "My advice to you is to marry someone who is exactly like you, and after you are married, you will find that you have enough differences to keep your life interesting for the rest of your life."

*Why do you think temple marriage is emphasized so frequently to the youth of the Church?

Marriage is probably the most important decision we will ever make during our life, second only to our choice to live the teachings of the gospel. Whom we marry and where, will have a great effect upon the joy and happiness we will experience in our life. A temple marriage means that we are both united to live the teachings of the gospel throughout our lives and to raise our children in righteousness. It means that we are committed to each other and to our Heavenly Father within the bonds of a sacred covenant. We promise to love each other, and to support each other in achieving our highest potential. We are firm in our commitment to resolve differences as they arise and to have peace and harmony in our home.

Spencer W. Kimball states,

"Marriage is perhaps the most vital of all...decisions and has the most far-reaching effects, for it has to do not only with immediate happiness, but also with eternal joys. It affects not only [the] two people involved, but also their families and particularly their children and their

children's children down through the many generations." ("Oneness in Marriage," in *Ensign*, March 1977, 3).

*What are some things that young men and women can do to prepare to be married in the temple?

Preparation for temple marriage begins with living a virtuous life. It means keeping yourself morally clean. It means that like Joseph of old, you remove yourself from all evil. Your thoughts and hands are both clean. You exercise self-control over your desires and urges at all times and in all places. Sexual abstinence before marriage and complete fidelity after marriage is your standard.

It means waiting until you are sixteen before you date. Initially, when you do date, you choose not to "go steady." You want to date a number of individuals so you may find those qualities, besides physical attraction, that are most meaningful to you. Those marriages that experience the greatest degree of happiness are those where your wife or husband is also your best friend.

*What kind of person do you want to marry someday?

I would suggest that you write down on a piece of paper those qualities most important to you. Gather input from others as you prepare your list. Talk to others, parents, your Bishop, trusted adults, and take advantage of their experience. Seek the guidance of your Heavenly Father.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"Choose a companion of your own faith. You are much more likely to be happy. Choose a companion you can always honor, you can always respect, one who will complement your own life, one to whom you can give your entire heart, your entire love, your entire allegiance, your entire loyalty." ("Life's Obligations," in *Ensign*, February 1999, 2).

Richard G. Scott adds,

"There is more to a foundation of eternal marriage than a pretty face or an attractive figure. There is more to consider than popularity or charisma. As you seek your eternal companion, look for someone who is developing the essential attributes that bring happiness: a deep love of

the Lord and of His commandments, a determination to live them, one that is kindly understanding, forgiving of others, and willing to give of self, with the desire to have a family crowned with beautiful children and a commitment to teach them in the home.

"An essential priority of a prospective wife is the desire to be a wife and mother. She should be developing the sacred qualities that God has given His daughters to excel as a wife and mother: patience, kindness, a love of children, and a desire to care for them rather than seeking professional pursuits. She should be acquiring a good education to prepare for the demands of motherhood.

"A prospective husband should also honor his priesthood and use it in service to others. Seek a man who accepts his role as provider of the necessities of life, has the capacity to do it, and is making concerted efforts to prepare himself to fulfill those responsibilities.

"I suggest that you not ignore many possible candidates who are still developing these attributes, seeking the one who is perfected in them. You will likely not find that perfect person, and if you did,...[they may not be] interest[ed] in you. These attributes are best polished together as husband and wife." ("Receive the Temple Blessings," in *Ensign*, May 1999, 26).

*How can parents and other adults...help small children prepare for eternal marriage?

One way is to establish a home where love, peace, and harmony are present. An atmosphere where the members are glad to be home. Another is to display a picture of the temple where the parents were married in a prominent place in the home. Other suggestions include, talking about the temple and its importance in Family Home evening; plan a family visit to the grounds of a temple and invite the children to go up and touch the walls of the temple for themselves, and share with the children that Mom and Dad go to the temple each month so they can do the work for their own ancestors who did not have that opportunity to receive the ordinances for themselves.

IV. After a Husband and Wife are Sealed in the Temple, They Must Abide in the Covenant to Receive the Promised Blessings

A young woman later stated,

"I was just sure the first ten years would be bliss. But during our first year together I discovered...there were a lot of adjustments. Of course, they weren't the kind of thing you ran home to tell mother about. But I cried into my pillow now and again. The problems were almost always related to learning to live on someone else's schedule and to do things someone else's way. We loved each other, there was no doubt about that. But we also had to get used to each other. I think every couple has to get use to each other." (*Sheri L. Dew. Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley.* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996, 118).

*Who expressed these words regarding her marriage?

The individual is Marjorie P. Hinckley, wife of Gordon B. Hinckley.

For most, if not all, it takes love, work, and dedication to have a successful marriage. I think this includes a lot of patience. Even when you love your spouse, it takes time and effort to develop those qualities within yourself that help you make your spouse happy and your marriage successful.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:19 [underline added]

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant [in the temple], and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is appointed this power and keys of this priesthood;...and if ye [they] abide in my covenant;...it shall be done unto them..in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world;...

It is important to understand that the foundation upon which the eternal marriage covenant is built is on their individual obedience to the covenants they made in the temple.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:22

**22 Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and
shalt cleave unto her and none else.**

*What does it mean to love a husband or wife with all one's heart?

To love our spouse with "all one's heart" means that our commitment to marriage is total, with nothing held back by either the husband or the wife. In the words of Spencer W. Kimball, "the spouse...becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife...[no] person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse..." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, 250). As we noted earlier in this lesson, this is also his definition of "to cleave to a husband or wife and none else." (see *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, [1969], 250.)

Spencer W. Kimball continues,

"Marriage presupposes total allegiance and total fidelity. Each spouse takes the partner with the understanding that he or she gives totally to the spouse all the heart, strength, loyalty, honor, and affection, with all dignity. Any divergence is sin; any sharing of the heart is transgression. As we should have 'an eye single to the glory of God,' so should we have an eye, an ear, a heart single to the marriage and the spouse and family." (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972, [Fifth Printing, 1975], 143).

Gordon B. Hinckley added his advice to couples,

"Determine that there will never be anything that will come between you that will disrupt your marriage. Make it work. Resolve to make it work. There is far too much of divorce, wherein hearts are broken and sometimes lives are destroyed. Be fiercely loyal one to another." ("Life's Obligations," in *Ensign*, February 1999, 4).

An observation I made, both as a therapist and church leader, was the apparent neglect that many couples experienced from their spouse. This neglect seemed to fuel their frequent complaints. It became apparent to me that many couples, within a year or two of their marriage, began

to take each other for granted. They seemed to be under the impression that their love for each other would continue to increase without either of them having to do anything to nourish it. They erroneously had concluded that they could spend an inordinate number of hours apart from each other engaged in other areas of personal importance or interest, and all would be well with their marital relationship.

I would counsel them that like a delicate seed, love must be nourished or it will not grow. It is the common garden variety of weeds, not flowers, that grow without any care or attention. If they wanted to rekindle their love, they would need to spend time together. I would then offer them the following suggestion. Each week or two, they were to go on a date together. One of the partners would choose the activity, and the other partner would agree to go. The one who chose the activity was to alternate. Each were able to choose two activities from which they could be excused, but all others, they were to attend and agree to have a good time. Most couples were initially fearful regarding the choice of an opera or a football game, but over time they found many mutually enjoyable activities. They came to realize that spending time together was the purpose of the activity, not the event. This simple remedy to address an important part of their marriage that had been neglected, played an important part in serving to strengthen their relationship.

It was the Savior who stated,

New Testament, Luke 12:34

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We all have obligations which demand our attention. Some are essential, others are optional. When our obligations become more important than spending time with our spouse, we will pay a price. It may not be obvious at first, but over time, it will become apparent that all is not well in the marriage. Those who ignore the warning signs, may then find themselves in the office of a lawyer or therapist. Hopefully, it is with a therapist, because that means that there is still hope on one or both of the partners that with help the marriage can still be saved.

*When a man and woman are married in the temple, they covenant to be true to one another and be true to the Lord. What are some things that married couples can do to strengthen their love for each other and for the Lord?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"[Things to do could include:] praying and reading the scriptures together, seeking to be guided by the Spirit together, holding [weekly] family home evening, going on dates together, taking time to talk to one another, helping one another around the house, and attending the temple together." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 180).

V. Faithful Saints Will Not Be Denied the Blessings of Eternity

In this lesson on eternal marriage, we have addressed its importance for the youth, for single individuals, and those who are married. In the gospel net, there are also others who either have never been married or who have been married and are now divorced, or have lost their spouse to death. They find themselves in a Church that values marriage, as they do, but they are not married. What about them?

I say to you, don't give up or settle for less. While the journey is long, especially when you find yourself alone, do not despair. The Lord knows you also. I do not pretend to know all the answers as to why some have the blessing of marriage, while others do not or why the end comes too soon. What I do know is that if we do the best we can under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, none of the blessings the Lord has for those who are faithful and obedient will be denied them.

Richard G. Scott states,

"If you are single and haven't identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil. The Lord knows the intent of your heart. His prophets have stated that you

will have that blessing as you consistently live to qualify for it. We do not know whether it will be on this or the other side of the veil. But live for it. Pray for it." ("Receive the Temple Blessings," in *Ensign*, May 1999, 27).

I do know that mortality, at times, seems long and arduous, but in comparison to eternity, it is hardly a blip in the screen. Some day the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth. Afterward begins the Millennium. It will be a thousand years of further growth and development in an atmosphere of the terrestrial environment. We will no longer be subject to the evils of Satan's power. Goodness and peace will reign. It is my opinion that at that time, all who desire, and are worthy to be joined in holy matrimony, will have that opportunity extended to them. There, we will live in families, as we did in the pre-existence, and none will be denied. Those who choose to be single, will find many who will open their doors and invite them into their homes. A place will be set at their table, and they will say, "Come and eat with us. Be part of our family."

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"We know that many worthy and wonderful Latter-day Saints currently lack the ideal opportunities and essential requirements for their progress. Singleness, childlessness, death, and divorce frustrate ideals and postpone the fulfillment of promised blessings. In addition, some women who desire to be full-time mothers and homemakers have been literally compelled to enter the full-time workforce. But these frustrations are only temporary. The Lord has promised that in the eternities no blessing will be denied his sons and daughters who keep the commandments, are true to their covenants, and desire what is right.

"Many of the most important deprivations of mortality will be set right in the Millennium, which is the time of fulfilling all that is incomplete in the great plan of happiness for all of our Father's worthy children. We know that will be true of temple ordinances. I believe it will also be true of family relationships and experiences." ("The Great Plan of Happiness," in *Ensign*, November 1993, 75).

In the meantime, take full advantage of the talents you have. Share them with others. Reach out to those in need. Be kind to those around you. Serve in the Church. Ask the Bishop for a calling and watch a big smile of gratitude come on his face. Know that mortality is not forever. Some day, the millennial day will begin, and Christ will return.

Doug Stewart's excerpts from Saturday's Warrior may be helpful, [underline added],

"Jimmy: But how can you know? How can anybody really know. And I don't mean just that...I mean anything spiritual. You talk about freedom and truth and God...like it was part of you. Me, I've got to have answers and proof for everything.

"Pam: Your problem is you want all the answers at once. Excuse the example, but Sir Galahad didn't find the Holy Grail in one afternoon...

"...It's like watching the stars appear at night. First, just one little light shines over there in the western sky...and then another and another, until finally...well, look for yourself, Jimmy!

"A whole wonderful blazing Universe that began with one little star.

"Song: Line Upon Line"

"Pam: Isn't it something, Jimmy? Millions and billions of stars up there, and trillions more we can't even see...a whole universe of opportunity! And wouldn't it be tragic to throw it all away because we can't see it all, right this minute.

"Jimmy: Line upon line, huh? I guess it's something to think about." (*Saturday's Warrior: A Musical in Search of Who You Are*. Book and Lyrics by Doug Stewart. Orem, Utah: Published by Doug Stewart, 1974, 48-49).

The words, "wouldn't it be tragic to throw it all away because we can't see it all, right this minute," have numerous applications in our lives. Like Jimmy, we sometimes think we have to have all the answers and proof for everything right now. That is not, however, how it has worked for me. Most of my knowledge and understanding,

especially the spiritual, has come, "line upon line, precept upon precept" (D&C 128:21). When the insight has come, I have always been grateful, that I didn't give up because I couldn't see it all immediately. The Lord has promised us great blessings, but we must never give up.

VI. Conclusions

Over the past several years, the marriage relationship has come under attack. Some have concluded that marriage, as traditionally defined by society, is now obsolete. The definition of marriage has been broadened, or diluted, to even include those of the same gender. Broader, seems to mean more enlightened. Those who choose to have children often do so with no protection to ensure their union will last longer than a few months. One result has been an increase of single mothers raising their children, either by herself or with the assistance of her elderly parents.

The foundation of civilization is built upon the bedrock of the family. History has proved the best place to raise children is in a home with a father and mother who are committed to love each other. When challenges arise, the couple seek to resolve them rather than fleeing from them. Children raised in a stable home, where peace and harmony abide, have a greater opportunity for success than those who are not. As we strive to strengthen the home, we also strengthen our nation.

Eternal Marriage is Essential in Heavenly Father's Plan: It was God himself who instituted marriage. His plan was that the marriage relationship would last, not only for mortality, but beyond. In order for this to occur, it was necessary the authority to bind marriages for eternity be restored to the earth. Without this authority, marriage would remain "for time only" or it would end upon the death of either of the spouses.

This lesson notes five blessings that occur as the marriage takes place within the walls of God's Holy Temple. They are: (1) Their marriage is for time and eternity, with their children becoming part of their eternal family; (2) They will be exalted in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom to live with Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ; (3) They will inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, powers, and dominions; (4) They will continue to have seed

or Spirit children throughout eternity; and, (5) They shall be gods because they have received all power from God.

Youth Should Prepare Now for Eternal Marriage: It is important that we teach our youth the blessings available from a temple marriage. It is also important they need to qualify their lives in order to receive these blessings. This includes living a life of righteousness; Obeying the standards of the gospel; understanding what it means to love another person in word and action; learning how to resolve differences; doing difficult things and not quitting; and, being morally clean in thought and action. It also means learning how to care for young children with patience so they will be prepared to welcome children into their home.

After a Husband and Wife are Sealed in the Temple, They Must Abide in the Covenant to Receive the Promised Blessings: In order to receive the promised blessings from the Lord, it is essential that each partner treat the other with love and kindness. It means resolving differences; increasing patience and being totally committed to your spouse above all others. It involves making your spouse happy and your marriage successful.

Faithful Saints Will Not Be Denied the Blessings of Eternity: Those who have never married, been divorced, or have lost their spouse due to death, are not forgotten by the Lord. If they continue to be faithful and obedient to the covenants they have made, they will also receive all the blessings of the Lord. They will have, if not already sealed, the opportunity of marriage either here or in the life hereafter. As they remain faithful, doing the best they can, and sincerely desiring what is right, the time will come when they will receive all the blessings God has for His children. It is important they not give up or turn away because of what they don't have now. If they remain faithful, and do their part in building God's kingdom on earth, the blessings will come.

In the next lesson, [D&C#32], we will discuss the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum. We will explore the many insights and understanding that came from the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and address the effect they have on our lives today.