



## THE SIMPLE TRUTHS FROM HEAVEN— THE LORD'S PATTERN

Elder Earl C. Tingey

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

CES Fireside for Young Adults • January 13, 2008 • Brigham Young University

My dear young friends, my wife and I are delighted and honored to be with you this evening. I visualize you in many locations around the world as this fireside is being broadcast over the Church satellite system in 32 languages. I trust and pray that I might be understood and that, wherever you are, you will feel the Spirit and understand my message.

I understand this audience to be primarily young single adults in various circumstances. Many of you have just graduated from high school. Others are a little older and have enjoyed several years of university or college education. Many of you are employed or enrolled in schools that provide training to educate and equip you with skills to care for yourself and a family. And, of course, many of you are returned missionaries and are looking forward to the next phase of your life, of which we will speak tonight. How grateful I am that each of you—in all of your various circumstances—would gather tonight that we may be together for a moment and feel the common spirit that prevails throughout this Church.

### Ten Simple Truths from Heaven

I have entitled my talk *The Simple Truths from Heaven—The Lord's Pattern*. The first phrase of my title is taken from a remarkable discourse given by the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in 1844, the same year he was martyred. Joseph Smith was speaking at the funeral of a member of the Church by the name of King Follett. He began his discourse with this statement: "I do not . . . intend to please your ears with superfluity of words or oratory, or with much learning; but I . . . [intend] to edify you with the *simple truths from heaven*." <sup>1</sup>

The second phrase of my title is found in scripture. The Lord's pattern is referred to in the Doctrine and Covenants: "I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations" (D&C 52:14).

I desire to teach you the simple truths of a pattern the Lord established before the foundation of the world and about which we begin to learn when we read of Adam and Eve being placed in the Garden of Eden. It is a pattern you should desire to participate in. The outstanding feature of this pattern and plan is that you may experience eternal joy. Remember Lehi's statement in 2 Nephi: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). To participate in this pattern will be the most important decision you will ever make.

Be careful that you do not reject the pattern as being too harsh. The pattern has been taught by many prophets. Remember, prophets love and speak truth, and they do not soften or modify truth to speak the easy things that people like to hear (see Isaiah 30:20; 2 Nephi 9:40). So be careful that you do not reject the prophets because your personal circumstances and timetable do not presently accommodate their counsel.

I pray that as I speak your hearts and your minds will be open to receive, through the Spirit, impressions and inspiration to guide you as you make important decisions affecting your lives. I bear witness that what I speak is the Lord's will to His children—especially to you, the young single adults of this Church.

When our loving Heavenly Father, through His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, created and organized this earth, He established a pattern with respect to the organization of the family that continues today. So now, reading from the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, let's review 10 simple truths from heaven and discuss how these truths are a pattern for you today.

### 1. God Has Created This Earth for Our Habitation and Use

First: "And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it" (Moses 3:15).

As you know, God created the heavens and the earth and all forms of life and gave His children dominion over those forms of life. God created the beautiful Garden of Eden and put man in the garden to dress it and to keep it. We may not live in the Garden of Eden as Adam initially did, but we are given the opportunity to dress and take care of that portion of the earth where we live. We are to have joy.

Thus my first simple truth from heaven is that God has created this earth for our habitation and use. We are to work. We are to better our circumstances and those about us. We have a responsibility to be busy and fully engaged in living a purposeful life and in carrying out the responsibilities given to us by our Heavenly Father.

The eternal plan of salvation, which the Father authored and Jesus Christ carried out and became Chief Advocate of, provided that we would have the opportunity to come to this earth to acquire a physical body and to prove our willingness to keep God's commandments. Well, here we are. We do live on a beautiful earth. We have the knowledge of the restored gospel. We have every opportunity humanity has ever had. What will we now do with these privileges?

## 2. Man Should Not Be Alone

Let us now look at the second simple truth from heaven. Once again, I read from the book of Moses: "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" (Moses 3:18).

Here we see that one of the simple truths from heaven is that it is not good that man or woman should be alone. He or she is to have a helpmeet. Few, if any, simple truths from heaven are more important to us than the knowledge that we are to have a helpmeet for us, a wife for a man or a husband for a woman.

Perhaps we should define *helpmeet*. You must not misunderstand what the Lord meant when Adam was told he was to have a helpmeet. A helpmeet is a companion suited to or equal to us. We walk side by side with a helpmeet, not one before or behind the other. A helpmeet results in an absolute equal partnership between a husband and a wife. Eve was to be equal to Adam as a husband and wife are to be equal to each other.

Adam was still in the Garden of Eden when the Lord declared that he was to have a helpmeet. He had not yet partaken of the fruit of the tree that would result in expulsion from the Garden of Eden and eventual physical death. Accordingly, Adam received his helpmeet for eternity. This was not a casual relationship. This was a covenant relationship.

As you contemplate your helpmeet, plan for eternity. Plan to enter a holy temple. Be worthy to enter the temple. The temple is where you and your helpmeet can form a family that will be eternal. Wherever possible, all of you young men should serve an honorable mission before you conclude selecting a helpmeet. Your mission service will prepare you for your future role as a righteous husband and father and will be a blessing to you throughout your life. It will bless your future posterity.

Occasionally we meet members, including young single adults, who have heard of, seen, or been members of families where a temple marriage did not bring happiness and was canceled. Not wanting to experience that possible result, and in fear of making a mistake, some shy away from the responsibilities of marriage, and particularly of a temple marriage.

Tonight I plead with you not to allow the actions of others to deter you from making righteous decisions and following eternal patterns. Satan, who does not desire your happiness or eternal progression, would put fear and doubt in your mind to convince you that you should not attempt to seek a helpmeet who could bring you eternal companionship and joy. Brothers and sisters, have faith, not fear, and be worthy to enter holy temples.

I urge all of you to fix in your mind the need to seek out and find a companion, as prescribed by the Lord. To do so, you must seek out opportunities to associate with members of the opposite sex who share your gospel values. For that purpose we encourage you to not only be active in the Church but to participate in all of the opportunities the Church provides for personal development and association. Our institutes of religion are marvelous facilities where you may gather and meet one another and exercise leadership qualities and talents so that you might see those about you who may complement you as a helpmeet.

I know that many of you desire marriage but lack opportunity. Our hearts ache for so many of you

faithful young single adults in that situation. I am familiar with a faithful family in the Church with several sons who were once in that situation. The parents and the sons decided to substantially increase temple worship and to continue to “bother the Lord” on this subject. Rich blessings followed, companions were found, and temple marriages occurred. Do all that you can to qualify for the Lord’s help in this respect. Be patient; trust in the Lord. The blessings will eventually come.

Remember, it is a simple truth from heaven that you are not to be alone in your eternal journey. You are to seek out a righteous companion and move forward in great faith so that you can, in His time, fulfill the eternal destiny that our Heavenly Father has planned for you.

### **3. The Plan Provides That a Man and a Woman Will Cleave unto One Another as Husband and Wife**

Later, as related in the same chapter of Moses, the Lord forms Eve. The Lord then says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Moses 3:24).

This is my third simple truth from heaven, that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. I think we could also say that a woman shall leave her father and mother and cleave unto her husband.

To cleave together as husband and wife results, in most cases, in a physical departure from the security and dependence you have on your parents. However, as you make this change, this new relationship—to adhere firmly, closely, and unwaveringly to a husband or wife—will not diminish the eternal love and respect you have for your parents.

There is no substitute for this simple truth from heaven. The revelations speak of a relationship between a man and a woman. Understanding this simple truth will eliminate all confusion with respect to issues sometimes inappropriately called “alternative lifestyles.” Such alternative lifestyle issues are the workings of Satan.

Please realize the importance of this simple truth from heaven. A man and a woman are to cleave to one

another. In other words, they are to cling faithfully to one another spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

As I have previously mentioned, this relationship is appropriate because of the beautiful ordinance of celestial marriage administered in our temples. When you have been born in the covenant or have been sealed to your parents in a temple, the bonds that bind you to your parents are rearranged just enough to allow you and your helpmeet, a man and a woman, to be sealed to one another. Through this ordinance your sealing to your parents is made stronger because your sealing to a helpmeet extends the sealing from your parents through you and down through your children and future generations.

I know of no greater decision that any of you will make than selecting a companion, a woman for a man or a man for a woman, to become one flesh in the eyes of the Lord through temple sealing. It is the pattern of the Lord that man and woman should be married and cleave unto one another. Any other pattern is not of the Lord.

### **4. Agency Is Essential**

A wonderful principle has been provided by our loving Heavenly Father that I will refer to as the fourth simple truth from heaven. This is the principle of agency. We read further in the book of Moses: “Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee” (Moses 3:17).

Each of us has agency. The Lord will not force us into making any decisions that violate our personal agency. However, we must be willing to accept the responsibility that comes from exercising the agency given to us. Remember, Satan attempted to force all people to follow him. That pattern was rejected by Heavenly Father. Satan then rebelled “and sought to destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3). Through the plan of our Heavenly Father, however, we have agency. One exercise of that agency is to seek and select a companion.

Now, we know that generally in our society the man should initiate opportunities that lead to social interaction. I would counsel all young men—yes, *all* men within the sound of my voice—that you do have the responsibility to initiate these opportunities. Do not delay this matter. There is a difference between a “lost opportunity” and a “wasted opportunity.” Do not waste time. Do not procrastinate the opportunities

you have to seek and select a companion. There has been much spoken by modern-day prophets that would encourage you to seek out a companion. This counsel especially applies to returned missionaries and those who are moving forward with their education and are mature enough to accept the responsibilities of adulthood, which include the responsibility of marriage.

Even as I give you this counsel, I am keenly aware that some of you may have experienced disappointment in past relationships. What seemed to be right did not work out, and you have to start all over again. This might be characterized as a “false start.” Most young single adults have this experience. The reasons are many: different goals, unbalanced relationship, too immature and not ready for marriage, and it just didn’t feel right. Do not be discouraged. You are working toward decisions that have an eternal consequence. Be mindful. Be prayerful. But be resolute in your desire to exercise your agency to find and select the right helpmeet.

Let me discuss for a moment a very delicate subject that often affects agency. It is a subject your parents and leaders may have strong feelings about but may not know how to discuss it with you. It is the subject of personal appearance.

Exercise of agency is sometimes influenced by personal appearance, both your own and another’s. On occasion, it is difficult to become acquainted with someone’s real self because of first impressions.

Be willing to sit down with a trusted friend and ask this question: What would you recommend I do to improve my physical appearance? Listen to what he or she says. Do not be offended, but take to heart his or her counsel. If necessary, joyfully and happily improve yourself, whether it involves having a smile on your face, losing weight, or changing your hairstyle, grooming, clothing, mannerisms, personal hygiene, or anything else.

Well, I finally said it. Are you offended at me? Remember, your body is the temple of your spirit. Be sure it is clean, tidy, neat, fit, and pure so that your spirit can shine through and be seen by all.

Of course, I realize, as we all do, that not everyone will have the opportunity to marry in this life. However, tonight I am speaking of the rule and not the exception. The rule is that we should seek a

companion even though there will be many exceptions due to health, inadequate opportunity, and other factors. Fortunately, the complete gospel plan, as we understand it, is that those who are faithful in this life but are denied the opportunity to be married will have the blessings not enjoyed during this life at a later period of time. How grateful I am for that doctrine.

## **5. We Live by Work All the Days of Our Lives**

As Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, the Lord gave them this instruction, which is my fifth simple truth from heaven. I quote again from the book of Moses: “By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou shalt return unto the ground—for thou shalt surely die—for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou wast, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Moses 4:25).

We are to work while we inhabit this earth. We should prepare ourselves to be self-reliant, and we should be willing and able to care for a family.

Fortunately, many of you have the opportunity to acquire an education in universities and colleges. Others of you have the wonderful and unique opportunity to acquire skills and training that will equip you to secure a good job and provide economically for your family. I speak, in the latter reference, of the Perpetual Education Fund. I serve as a member of the board of this fund, and I know the great blessing it is to those of you who are earnestly striving to better yourselves and to prepare yourselves to marry a companion and rear a righteous family in the Church. To all of you, I say, be willing to work and to work hard to provide for your family while you live upon this earth.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has repeatedly encouraged you to get all the education you can—to enable you to care for your family and serve in the Church.

## **6. Husbands and Wives Are to Have Children and Create a Family**

In my mind, the sixth simple truth from heaven, and the most important following the truth to cleave unto one another as husband and wife, is the truth found in the following scripture from the book of Moses: “And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto

him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth" (Moses 5:2).

This simple truth from heaven identifies the duty to bear children. Now, this simple truth lies before you—but not before marriage! Please lock firmly in your heart and mind your desire to be a parent in due time. Acquire now the attributes necessary to be a loving father or mother to the children who will eventually grace your home. Seek to acquire the patience and skill you will need to teach and rear children in the knowledge of the Lord.

The Brethren of the Church are being bolder in counseling young married couples to move forward and have a family. The world would suggest that it might not be proper to have a family until all temporal arrangements are in order. The world says delay until you have completed your education; delay until you have acquired a suitable home, furnishings, and conveniences; delay until you have secure employment that is economically sound; delay until you have acquired the toys and playthings of entertainment and convenience. All of this delaying is of the world and is the influence of Satan attempting to destroy the family.

Prophets teach that after considering means and circumstances—including personal health—and other factors of which each couple is personally aware, we should not delay having a family. Have the faith to step forward into this phase of your life, knowing that your Heavenly Father will support and sustain you with the unique and special challenges that come with being a parent.

It is not necessary to delay having a family until you have acquired all of the conveniences that your parents had when you left their home. Remember, it took your parents many years, even decades, to acquire the lovely home and furnishings that they have, and you must be willing to have the faith to start where you are and build, grow, and develop while you have a family. As husband and wife, look forward to working together and sacrificing to accomplish this purpose.

Be careful that you do not delay having a family so that you can economically acquire the toys or entertainment that, in the long run, do not bless you eternally.

If you were to speak to most older married couples in your ward or branch and among your friends, you would find that in almost every case they started their married life and began their family with very few physical possessions—especially as compared to what they now have.

Sister Tingey and I were married and our first child was born while I was in law school. Our first apartment, a basement apartment, was a huge step down from our prior experience of living in our parents' homes. The ceiling of each doorway included heating pipes, and the height of the pipes was the middle of my forehead. I cannot number how many times I hit my head going from room to room. Sister Tingey remembers the "hideous wallpaper," as she called it, displaying large red roosters. We had no laundry facilities and used a commercial Laundromat for 18 months.

Our second apartment, while I served in the military, was a duplex that shared one bathroom located between the two apartments. The bathroom had two doors, one to each apartment. You may well surmise what my wife thought of that arrangement. We slept on a fold-up bed that was easy to move around but extremely uncomfortable. Our first kitchen table was a card table with folding legs. On many occasions during the year we used that table, I inadvertently knocked one of the legs, and the entire table and contents came crashing to the floor.

For several years when we had four children under the age of nine, we lived in an apartment with only two bedrooms. Were we crowded? Absolutely! Yet, today, some of the sweetest memories of our family come from that period.

As you can see, we had few of life's necessities and no luxuries in our first living arrangements. Looking back on it, we realize it didn't matter. We were in love, we wanted to start a family, and we simply trusted in the Lord and had faith that all would work out.

Today, 48 years later, we have a lovely home with all, and probably more, of the necessities and conveniences that we need. But when we started out, we had so little. We are happier today because our love has grown through the sometimes difficult life circumstances we have shared and not because we have acquired more worldly possessions.

You must have that same faith and be willing to move forward into that life. Be prepared to start

where you are and grow and develop your family with love and appreciation for your blessings.

### **7. A Family Continues On, Becoming a Multigenerational Family**

The next simple truth from heaven is the pattern established by Adam and Eve to not only have children but to have posterity. We read: “And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters” (Moses 5:3).

We are attempting to develop a multigenerational Church. To have posterity—to be not only a parent but also a grandparent and a great-grandparent—is one of the enriching blessings that comes to faithful members of the Church.

As the General Authorities watch the Church grow and develop in many countries of the world, one of the most satisfying experiences we have is seeing faithful multigenerational families living where the Church has been for only a few decades. Already we see children, grandchildren, grandparents, and so forth. This is the ideal. This is what we should work to have wherever possible: a large and wonderful family that will assist in growing and developing the Church in any country or any land where you live.

A wonderful and very descriptive scripture appears in Psalms:

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

“Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them” (Psalm 127:3–5).

Are you willing to exercise your mind and visualize where you will be or where you want to be in 20 or 25 years? If you are now 20, what will be your life when you are 40 or 45 years of age?

In almost every instance when I have asked that question of young single adults, they have described “family” as their first priority. Physical possessions and toys are not a frequent focus. Being surrounded with a loving family—your children and grandchildren—is what most of you describe as where you want to be.

Start today to make that personal vision a self-fulfilling prophecy that will come true.

### **8. We Acknowledge God, Worship Him, and Offer unto Him Our Sacrifices**

As Adam began his life outside the Garden of Eden, he began to offer sacrifices. We read as follows:

“And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

“And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

“Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:6–8).

This simple truth from heaven is that as you establish your life as a married couple with a family, remember who you are in relation to your Heavenly Father. Remember that He is your God and your Father and you are His son or daughter. Offer sacrifices of your time and talents to Him. Be faithful in the Church. Serve your fellowman. Seek to establish righteousness. Acknowledge your many blessings by offering and returning to Him a tithe of your increase so that through humility you acknowledge and recognize the dependence you have on your Heavenly Father.

### **9. From These Sacrifices Come Promised Blessings**

The ninth simple truth from heaven is recognition of the blessings that come as a result of your sacrifice. The scriptures state:

“And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.

“And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

“And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

“And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters” (Moses 5:9–12).

Did you note some of the blessings that Adam and Eve received through their sacrifice? They enjoyed the companionship of the Holy Ghost, who bore record of the Father and the Son and guided and directed them in all of their decisions. They were blessed to enjoy the spirit of prophecy concerning their family so that they would be guided in the decisions they made and how they cared for their children. Their eyes were opened so they could see and distinguish between good and evil and could make proper choices for their family.

The scriptures state that Adam and Eve would have joy and rejoice in the blessings that came to their family. And they were promised that all of these blessings and things would be made known to their sons and daughters—their posterity.

Do you believe these promises can be yours as a result of your willingness to accept the responsibilities of marriage and family? I bear witness that they will be and that you can have the same blessings for your circumstances that Adam and Eve had for their family.

### **10. The Fulness of the Gospel, Including All Temple Ordinances, Is Available to Us**

The last simple truth I will share with you tonight relates to the blessings that result from sacred ordinances. We read in the concluding verses of the fifth chapter in Moses as follows:

“And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen” (Moses 5:58–59).

This scripture, which is my tenth simple truth from heaven, promises that all things will be yours if you follow the pattern of which we are speaking. This means, of course, that all of the blessings of the restored Church are yours. Specifically, when it refers to “an holy ordinance,” it makes reference to temples and to the beautiful temple ceremonies and ordinances that are provided therein. What a wonderful blessing to anticipate that you may be able to enjoy the full blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, including all temple blessings, when you are willing to participate in the beautiful and *simple truths from heaven* I have shared with you this evening.

### **Follow Inspired Counsel**

In summary, the 10 simple truths from heaven we have spoken of tonight are as follows:

1. God has created this earth for our habitation and use.
2. Man should not be alone.
3. The plan provides that a man and a woman will cleave unto one another as husband and wife.
4. Agency is essential.
5. We live by work all the days of our lives.
6. Husbands and wives are to have children and create a family.
7. A family continues on, becoming a multigenerational family.
8. We acknowledge God, worship Him, and offer unto Him our sacrifices.
9. From these sacrifices come promised blessings.
10. The fulness of the gospel, including all temple ordinances, is available to us.

Please do not reject this counsel. Try not to delay marriage where opportunity is available. Do not seek for perfection in a companion. Generally, perfection does not exist. Remember, you are not perfect. Instead seek for a husband or wife who will grow with you to perfection.

Do not delay having a family. Be willing to sacrifice and rear a family with all of the resulting challenges, knowing that in the process you will have wonderful memories that fortify and sustain your family for years to come.

I know that my counsel to you tonight is very weighty. For some, it would appear impossible to obtain. But please have faith, and join that faith with works. The Lord is aware of you as individuals and of your particular circumstances. He will bless you. He will assist you in bringing to pass that which is right and which you righteously desire. Please have faith.

In conclusion, I believe many of you may be saying: "I believe all that you say and desire to have and follow these patterns in my life. But how will I know if my decisions are right?"

I would like to answer: You will know in the same manner by which the leaders of the Church today receive promptings that lead to the making of many important decisions. You will know by the Spirit.

You are entitled to peace and to a spiritual witness that will confirm your feelings that it is right. Your feelings of love for one another and your compatibility as a couple will be made known to you in the manner prescribed in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

"And then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive" (D&C 11:13–14).

Do not seek for more, such as the voice of an earthquake, but listen for the still, small voice. It will come, and you will know.

May God bless you, my beloved young members—you future fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, and leaders of the Church. We love you. The Lord loves you. He wants you to be happy. He wants you to have joy. He wants you to follow the eternal pattern He has established.

I bear witness that the patterns of these simple truths from heaven are true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 6:303; italics added.