



A LITTLE ON Heaven Earth

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Temple marriage describes the place you go to have a marriage performed. *Celestial marriage* is what you create by being true to the sacred covenants you make during the temple marriage ceremony.

After the vows are taken, a celestial marriage requires living a consecrated life of worthiness and celestial principles, which leads to happiness in this life and exaltation in the next. If we live the laws pertaining to celestial marriage, we will, with our spouse and with our family, be able to have a little heaven on earth. And when we live those laws, we are practicing the same laws that are practiced in heaven. We are practicing how to live with the Father and the Son and with our families in the eternities to come. That to me is the message to the world of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

By Elder
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When you are choosing your companion, make sure that both of you have a desire for a celestial marriage relationship, a desire to have a companion for eternity, a desire to have a family for eternity, and a desire to live in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Selecting a Companion

Single members of the Church often ask, “How do I find the right person to marry?” Let me suggest an approach. Measure the spiritual level of your potential future companions. First, if they are members of the Church, are they active and fully committed, or are they passive or antagonistic? Second, if they are not members, are they receptive to the gospel and its teachings, or are they noncommittal or antagonistic?

If you marry an active member in the temple for time and all eternity in the new and everlasting covenant, will you have problems? Yes. Will you be able to solve them? Yes. Will your chance be better to solve them and strengthen your testimony than if you had not married in the temple? Yes. But if you marry somebody who is antagonistic to the Church or passive toward the gospel, you are placing yourself in a position where you will find someday that you may have to choose between that individual and the Church. That is a very heavy responsibility.

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Abiding the Law

The Lord has made it clear that we can be together in eternity with our

companion only if we abide the law. In modern revelation He says:

“Prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

“For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant” (D&C 132:3–4).

Every member of the Church should read and study section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Do you realize that there is no one between the Lord and the sealer when he performs the sealing ordinance? It is a beautiful and a touching ceremony.

The deep underlying purpose of temple marriage was clarified by the Redeemer Himself when He said, “As pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant [of marriage], it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned” (D&C 132:6).

The Lord also said, “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” (D&C 132:15).

Do we realize that in the Doctrine and Covenants we are told that unless

we enter into celestial marriage, we cannot reach the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom (see D&C 131:1–4)? It is also clear what will happen to those who never receive the blessings of temple marriage: their binding is until death do they part—a very sad thing to contemplate.

The aim of the gospel and the purpose of celestial marriage are not only to keep us together but also to make us eligible for our Heavenly Father's highest reward: exaltation in the celestial kingdom, increase in that kingdom, and eternal life with our families.

Ascending Together

Celestial marriage is like climbing a mountain. You tie yourself to an eternal companion, and you start up the mountain. As children come along, you tie into them as well and continue your journey. The ropes will hold all of the mountain climbers together, but the wind, rain, snow, and ice—challenges of the world—will tear at you to pull you off that mountain.

How do you reach the summit? If Mom or Dad gives up and cuts the rope that binds them to each other and their children, chances are that one or the other may fall off the mountain and perhaps pull down other family members with them. The whole family could fall off that mountain and not reach the eternal summit. We can't take that chance.



Let us always be mindful that as members of a family, we are tied to a mountain team that is attempting to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father.

A popular proverb says, “Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee, and we will ascend together.”

A marriage partnership is not a crutch. You do not marry somebody you think is a little higher than the angels and then lean on that person. Rather, you develop yourself and your own gifts and talents. As you develop, you grow together, supporting and strengthening one another.

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The secret of a happy marriage is to protect the Achilles' heel and not take advantage of the weaknesses of those you know the best, love the most, and ultimately can hurt the most.

Before my wife and I were married, I said to her, "You know, Mary, I feel that to be successful in business I will have to work hard domestically and perhaps internationally. Do you want to go on that trip with me?" She said she did. Ten years after we were married, I was asked to go to England, and there she was with me. Then we went to Germany and later to Spain. She became international, multicultural, and bilingual because she had made up her mind that we would work and grow together.

Remember to treat each other with kindness and to respect each other for who you are and what you want to be.

I remember a woman in my ward some years ago when I was a bishop. She and her husband were having marital problems. As they spoke with me, she began to tear down her

husband in all the key areas that a man needs praise in order to respect himself. She talked of his inadequacy as a father, his inadequacies in marital relations, his inadequacy as a provider, and his inadequacies socially.

I asked her, "Why do you do this to a man you should love and sustain?"

She replied, "It's much better to argue with someone you love because you know where you can hurt him the most."

And she *meant* it.

As Latter-day Saints, however, we are to use our moral agency and utilize our opportunities for growth. Everyone has weaknesses. The adversary knows the Achilles' heel of your loved ones, your friends, your roommates, your brothers and sisters, and your parents. Do you understand *your* Achilles' heel? Do you know the situations you have to stay away from and what your weaknesses are? The secret of a happy marriage is to protect the Achilles' heel and not take advantage of the weaknesses of those you know the best, love the most, and ultimately can hurt the most.

"Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7). In other words, every day you are to help one another as you pray and speak in your exhortations and in your doings.

I remember a young couple just out of college. One parent gave them a home; the other parent gave them

furnishings and a new car. They had everything in the world given to them. Within three years they were divorced. They hadn't worked and sacrificed. They had leaned on each other and on their parents as a crutch, had crippled themselves, and hadn't grown. They hadn't learned the hard part. They hadn't worried about making their marriage work. Make sure you sacrifice, share, and grow together.

Supporting One Another

After I had served as an elders quorum president, a branch president, and a bishop over a period of five years, we moved to a new ward. My wife was soon called to be the Relief Society president. She went to her first meeting with the bishop while I chased our two youngsters up and down the halls and through the parking lot and cultural hall. I had my first experience with waiting. I waited one and a half hours. When Mary came out of the bishop's office, I had one boy in my arm and the other by the hand. I didn't have the courage to say anything, but I just gave her a look that said, "Do you realize you've kept me waiting an hour and a half?"

All she did was raise five fingers and say, "Five years." That is how long she had been waiting for me. Then I began to realize it was going to be my job to support my wife in her calling just as she had supported me in my callings.

I ask you not to lean on your spouse as a crutch but to stand strong, strengthen each other, and ask for



help as you pray together each night. I bear testimony that those moments in my life when I have been unhappy, depressed, or sad are when I have deviated, even to a minor degree, from the teachings of the Lord. That you might have true happiness and find the joy of a celestial marriage with a little heaven on earth is my prayer. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on November 9, 1976. For the full text in English, visit speeches.byu.edu.

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