

# DEVELOPING UNITY IN MARRIAGE

## LESSON 2

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**Purpose** To help married couples be more unified and to help single members prepare to enjoy unity in marriage.

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**Preparation**

1. As you prepare yourself to teach, look for ways to follow the principles under “Your Responsibilities as a Teacher” (pages ix–xi in this manual).
2. Read the lesson’s bold headings. These headings give an overview of the doctrines and principles in the lesson. As part of your preparation, ponder ways to help participants apply these doctrines and principles. Seek the guidance of the Spirit in deciding what you should emphasize to meet participants’ needs.
3. If the *Family Home Evening Resource Book* (31106) is available, study “Achieving Oneness in Marriage” on pages 239–40. Consider referring to the article during the lesson.
4. Bring to class a piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each participant.

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**The Lord has commanded husbands and wives to be one.**

To begin the lesson, write on the chalkboard  $1+1=1$ .

- How does this describe the marriage relationship?

After participants have discussed this question, read Genesis 2:24 with them. Emphasize that God has commanded husbands and wives to be one.

- What does it mean for a husband and wife to be one?

Have participants read the following statement by Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (page 8 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant’s Study Guide*):

“At the creation of man and woman, unity for them in marriage was not given as hope; it was a command! ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24). Our Heavenly Father wants our hearts to be knit together. That union in love is not simply an ideal. It is a necessity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 85; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 66).

Explain that this lesson discusses several ways in which husbands and wives can be unified.

**Husbands and wives are to value each other as equal partners.**

Explain that an important principle of unity in marriage is that husbands and wives should value each other as equal partners. While serving as First Counselor in the First Presidency, President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“Marriage, in its truest sense, is a partnership of equals, with neither exercising dominion over the other, but, rather, with each encouraging and assisting the other in whatever responsibilities and aspirations he or she might have” (“I Believe,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 6).

- Why must husbands and wives value one another as equal partners to be one?
- What are some attitudes or customs that keep husbands and wives from being equal partners in their marriage? What can husbands and wives do to overcome such challenges?

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

“It was not meant that the woman alone accommodate herself to the priesthood duties of her husband or her sons. She is of course to sustain and support and encourage them.

“Holders of the priesthood, in turn, must accommodate themselves to the needs and responsibilities of the wife and mother. Her physical and emotional and intellectual and cultural well-being and her spiritual development must stand first among [their] priesthood duties.

“There is no task, however menial, connected with the care of babies, the nurturing of children, or with the maintenance of the home that is not [a husband’s] equal obligation” (“A Tribute to Women,” *Ensign*, July 1989, 75).

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled priesthood holders: “As a husband and worthy priesthood bearer, you will want to emulate the example of the Savior, whose priesthood you hold. You will make giving of self to wife and children a primary focus of your life. Occasionally a man attempts to control the destiny of each family member. He makes all the decisions. His wife is subjected to his personal whims. Whether that is the custom or not is immaterial. It is not the way of the Lord. It is not the way a Latter-day Saint husband treats his wife and family” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 32; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 26).

- What are some things husbands and wives do when they value each other as equal partners? (Consider summarizing participants’ answers on the chalkboard. As needed, share the ideas listed below and invite participants to share experiences that relate to those ideas.)
  - a. They share responsibility for ensuring that the family prays together, conducts family home evening, and studies the scriptures together.
  - b. They work together in planning how family finances are used.
  - c. They consult together and come to agreement on household rules and how to discipline children. The children see that their parents are unified in such decisions.
  - d. They plan family activities together.
  - e. They both help with housekeeping responsibilities.
  - f. They attend church together.

**Husbands and wives should allow their individual characteristics and abilities to complement one another.**

Read 1 Corinthians 11:11 with participants. Then share the following statement by Elder Richard G. Scott:

“In the Lord’s plan, it takes two—a man and a woman—to form a whole. . . . For the greatest happiness and productivity in life, both husband and wife are needed. Their efforts interlock and are complementary. Each has individual traits that best fit the role the Lord has defined for happiness as a man or woman. When used as the Lord intends, those capacities allow a married couple to think, act, and rejoice as one—to face challenges together and overcome them as one, to grow in love and understanding, and through temple ordinances to be bound together as one whole, eternally. That is the plan” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73–74).

To illustrate the principle taught by Elder Scott, conduct the following exercise:

Give each participant a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask each participant who is married to list some of his or her characteristics and abilities and some of the characteristics and abilities of his or her spouse. Ask each participant who is single to think of a married couple and list some characteristics and abilities of the husband and wife. After participants have had a few minutes to write, ask the following questions:

- In what ways can the characteristics and abilities that you have listed help married couples be unified? (Ask participants to share specific examples.)
- In what ways have you seen differences between husbands and wives become strengths in their relationship?

Read the following statement by Sister Marjorie P. Hinckley, wife of President Gordon B. Hinckley, about her first year of marriage:

“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 used to each other. Early on I realized it would be better if we worked harder to get used to each other than constantly try to change each other” (*Church News*, 26 Sept. 1998, 4).

- In what ways might the results be different when couples try to “get used to each other” rather than “constantly try to change each other”?

### **Husbands and wives must be loyal to one another.**

Share the following counsel from President Gordon B. Hinckley, the 15th President of the Church:

“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,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2, 4).

- What does the word *loyal* mean to you? (Answers may include being faithful, true, and trustworthy in a relationship.)

Explain that the Lord emphasized the need for husbands and wives to be loyal to one another. Read Doctrine and Covenants 42:22 with participants. Point out that this commandment applies equally to husbands and wives.

- What does it mean to cleave to a husband or wife and none else?

President Spencer W. Kimball, the 12th President of the Church, taught:

“The words *none else* eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent 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" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 143).

- How can a person keep social, occupational, and Church commitments from interfering with loyalty to his or her spouse?
- What are some specific ways in which couples can show loyalty to one another? (If participants have difficulty answering this question, share a few examples, such as those listed below.)
  - a. A husband can reschedule work, recreation, or other appointments to celebrate his wife's birthday.
  - b. A wife can pray daily for the success of her husband in his activities.
  - c. They can listen to each other, even when doing so may not be convenient.
  - d. They can speak lovingly and respectfully about each other in conversations with family members and friends.

### **Conclusion**

Emphasize that the Lord and His prophets have commanded husbands and wives to be unified in love and to work together as equal partners. Husbands and wives can show their loyalty to each other every day through their thoughts, words, and actions.

As prompted by the Spirit, testify of the truths discussed during the lesson.

Refer to pages 8–11 in the *Marriage and Family Relations Participant's Study Guide*. Encourage participants to review the doctrines and principles in this lesson by (1) following at least one of the suggestions in "Ideas for Application" and (2) reading the article "That We May Be One," by Elder Henry B. Eyring. Point out that married couples can receive great benefits from reading and discussing the articles in the study guide together.

Remind participants to bring their study guides to class for the next lesson.