



**By President
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THE HOPE OF Eternal Family Love

Of all the gifts our loving Heavenly Father has provided to His children, the greatest is eternal life (see D&C 14:7). That gift is to live in the presence of God the Father and His Beloved Son forever in families. Only in the highest of the kingdoms of God, the celestial, will the loving bonds of family life continue.

All of us hope for the joy of living in loving families. For some of us, it is a feeling we have not experienced—a feeling we know is possible but have not yet realized. We may have seen it in the lives of others. For others of us, family love has seemed more real and precious when death has separated us from a child, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, or a loving and beloved grandparent.

We have all felt the hope that someday we could feel again the warm affection of that family member we loved so much and now ache to embrace again.

Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. Because the Savior broke the bands of death, we will be resurrected. Because He atoned for our sins, we can, by our faith and repentance, become worthy of the celestial kingdom, where families are bound together in love forever.

The Savior sent the Prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith to restore the keys of the priesthood (see D&C 110). With those keys came the sealing power, offering God's greatest gift to His children—eternal life in families bound together forever.

It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim. A third of His spirit children rejected His offer in the spirit world. Out of lack of sufficient faith and then open rebellion, they chose never to know the joy of Heavenly Father's gift of eternal families.

For those of us who passed the crucial test in the pre-mortal spirit world and so qualified to receive the gift of mortal bodies, the great choice of eternal life is still ours to make. If we are blessed to find the restored gospel, we can choose to make and keep the covenants with God that qualify us for eternal life. As we endure in that faithfulness, the Holy Ghost will confirm our hope and confidence that we are on the path to eternal life, to live in families forever in the celestial kingdom.

For some, that eternal joy may seem a faint or even a fading hope. Parents, children, brothers, and sisters may have made choices that seem to disqualify them from eternal life. You may even wonder whether you have yet been qualified through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.



A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, “You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine.”

To all of those whose personal experience or whose marriage and children—or absence thereof—cast a shadow over their hopes, I offer my witness: Heavenly Father knows and loves you as His spirit child. While you were with Him and His Beloved Son before this life, They placed in your heart the hope you have of eternal life. With the power of the Atonement of

Jesus Christ working and with the Holy Spirit guiding, you can feel now and will feel in the world to come the family love your Father and His Beloved Son want so much for you to receive.

I testify that as you live worthy of the celestial kingdom, the prophetic promise that “family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine” will be yours. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider beginning by telling those you teach of a moment when you were grateful for the hope of eternal families. Invite them to ponder the moments when they’ve felt gratitude for eternal families. Ask

them if they’d like to share. You could then invite them to think of ways to improve and live more worthy of the celestial kingdom so that the prophetic promise of “family arrangements . . . more wonderful than you can imagine” can be theirs.

Sharing Eternal Happiness

One of the best things about the gospel is the knowledge of the plan of salvation. We have the awesome opportunity to be with our family for eternity. That knowledge helps us to have hope whenever we feel overwhelmed by the world. President Eyring teaches, “Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. . . . It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim.”

That blessing applies to those of us living right now and to those who have passed on—but only through our help. Our ancestors are in the spirit world right now, waiting for us to prepare their names for the temple ordinances to be performed on their behalf. But sometimes it can be hard to do



the work for them. We may be too busy, or we may live too far away from a temple to go very often.

Fortunately, there are other ways we can help our ancestors, like doing family history work, indexing, or babysitting for our parents while they go to the temple. By helping, we serve the Lord *and* bring the hope of eternal families to those on the other side of the veil.

Families Are Forever

Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement and the restoration of priesthood power to seal families, we can live with our families forever! What do you love about your family? Follow these instructions to make this paper chain to celebrate your family.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half twice so you have one long strip.
2. Draw a person with hands reaching the folded edges.
3. Cut the person out. Don’t cut where the hands touch the folded edges.
4. Unfold it. Write or draw something you love about each family member.
5. Tape multiple chains together if you have a larger family!

