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Abiding in God and Repairing the Breach

Christ has the power to bring us into loving fellowship with the Father and with one another.

We need to continually deepen our knowledge of and obedience to Heavenly Father. Our relationship with Him is eternal. We are His beloved children, and that will not change. How are we going to wholeheartedly accept His invitation to draw near to Him and thus enjoy the blessings He longs to give us in this life and in the world to come?

The Lord said to ancient Israel, and He says to us, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”¹ Speaking as would the Father, He also says to us, “Thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.”² Do we trust Him enough to abide in Him and walk with Him?

We are here on this earth to learn and grow, and the most important learning and growing will come from our covenant connection to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. From our faithful relationship with Them come godly knowledge, love, power, and capacity to serve.

“We are duty-bound to learn all that God has revealed about himself.”³ We must understand that God the Father directed His Son, Jesus Christ, to create

the earth *for our growth*, that Heavenly Father gave His Son to pay the demands of justice *for our salvation*, and that the Father’s priesthood power and the Son’s true Church with the necessary ordinances were restored *for our blessings*. Can you feel the depth of love running through Their preparations for our joy and growth? We need to know that Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation is that we obey the laws and ordinances of

the gospel and gain eternal life and thus become as God is.⁴ This is the true and lasting happiness Heavenly Father offers us. There is no other true and lasting happiness.

Our challenges can pull us off this course of happiness. We can lose our trusting connection to God if trials drive us to distraction instead of sending us to our knees.

This simple couplet begs us to do some priority sifting:

*Some things matter; some things don't.
A few things last, but most things
won't.*⁵

Sisters, what matters to you? What is lasting to you? A matter of lasting value to the Father is that we learn of Him, humble ourselves, and grow in obedience to Him through earthly experiences. He wants us to change our selfishness into service, our fears into faith. These lasting matters can test us to our core.

It is *now*, with our mortal limitations, that the Father asks us to love





when loving is most difficult, to serve when serving is inconvenient, to forgive when forgiving is soul stretching. How? How will we do it? We earnestly reach for Heavenly Father's help, in the name of His Son, and do things His way instead of pridefully asserting our own will.

I recognized my pride when President Ezra Taft Benson spoke on cleansing the inner vessel.⁶ I imagined myself as a pitcher. How was I to get the residue of pride out of my pitcher? Independently forcing ourselves to have humility and trying to make ourselves love others is insincere and hollow, and it simply doesn't work. Our sins and pride create a breach—or a gap—between us and the font of all love, our Heavenly Father.

Only the Savior's Atonement can cleanse us of our sins and close that gap or breach.

We want to be encircled in the arms of our Heavenly Father's love and guidance, and so we put His will first and with a broken heart plead that Christ will pour streams of cleansing water into our pitcher. At

first it may come drop by drop, but as we seek, ask, and obey, it will come abundantly. This living water will begin to fill us, and brimming with His love, we can tip the pitcher of our soul and share its contents with others who thirst for healing, hope, and belonging. As our inner pitcher becomes clean, our earthly relationships begin to heal.

Sacrifice of our personal agendas is required to make room for the eternal plans of God. The Savior, who speaks for the Father, pleads with us, "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you."⁷ Drawing near unto the Father can mean learning of His truth through the scriptures, following prophetic counsel, and striving to do His will more completely.

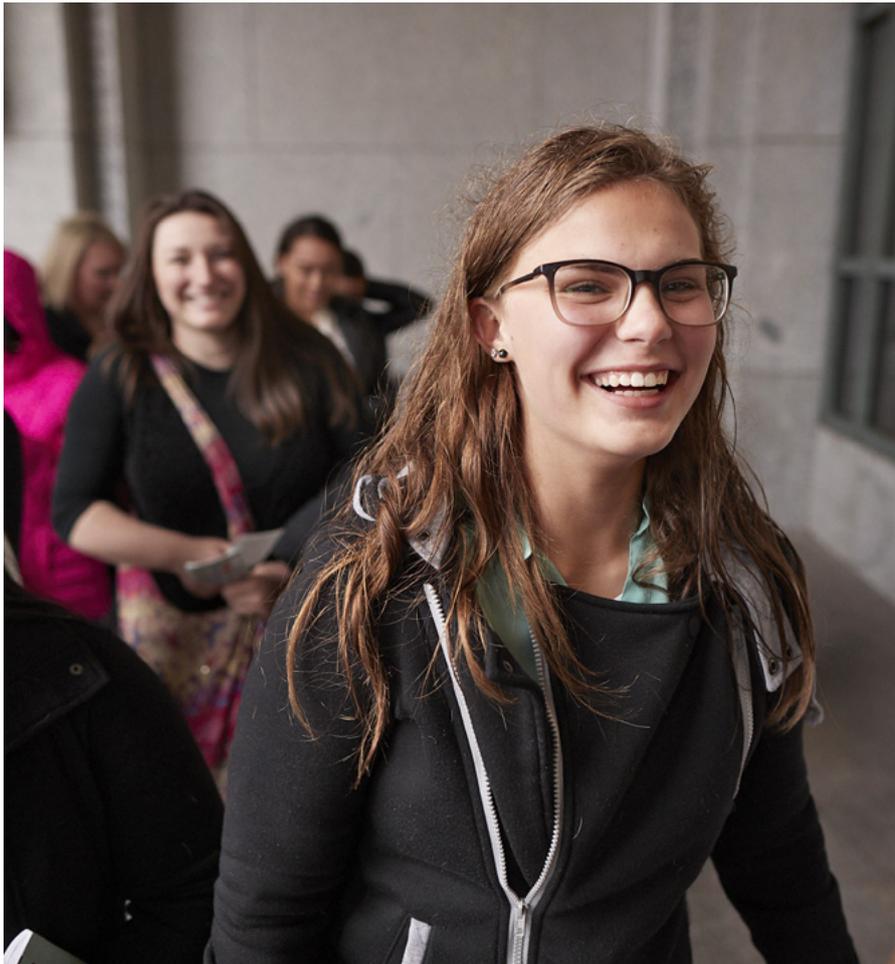
Do we understand that Christ has the power to bring us into loving fellowship with the Father and with one another? He, by the power of the Holy Ghost, can give us needed insight into relationships.

A Primary teacher told me about a powerful experience with his class of 11-year-old boys. One of them, whom

I'll call Jimmy, was an uncooperative loner in class. One Sunday the teacher was inspired to put aside his lesson and tell why he loved Jimmy. He spoke of his gratitude and his belief in this young man. Then the teacher asked the class members to tell Jimmy something they appreciated about him. As class members, one by one, told Jimmy why he was special to them, the boy lowered his head and tears began to roll down his face. This teacher and class built a bridge to Jimmy's lonely heart. Simple love, honestly expressed, gives hope and value to others. I call this "repairing the breach or the gap."

Perhaps our life in a loving premortal world set up our yearning for true, lasting love here on earth. We are divinely designed to give love and be loved, and the deepest love comes when we are one with God. The Book of Mormon invites us to "be reconciled unto [God] through the atonement of Christ."⁸

Isaiah spoke of those who faithfully live the law of the fast and thus become for their own posterity a repairer of the breach. They are the



ones who, Isaiah promises, will “build the old waste places.”⁹ In a similar way, the Savior repaired the breach, or distance, between us and Heavenly Father. He, through His great atoning sacrifice, opens the way for us to partake of God’s loving power, and then we are enabled to repair the “waste places” in our personal lives. Healing emotional distance between each other will require our acceptance of God’s love, coupled with a sacrifice of our natural selfish and fearful tendencies.

One memorable night a relative and I disagreed about a political issue. She briskly and thoroughly took my comments apart, proving me wrong within earshot of family members. I felt foolish and uninformed—and I probably was. That night as I knelt to pray, I hurried to explain to Heavenly Father how difficult this relative was! I talked on and on. Perhaps I paused in my complaining and the Holy Ghost had

a chance to get my attention, because, to my surprise, I next heard myself say, “You probably want me to love her.” Love her? I prayed on, saying something like, “How can I love her? I don’t think I even like her. My heart is hard; my feelings are hurt. I can’t do it.”

Then, surely with help from the Spirit, I had a new thought as I said, “But You love her, Heavenly Father. Would You give me a portion of Your love for her—so I can love her too?” My hard feelings softened, my heart started to change, and I began to see this person differently. I began to sense her real value that Heavenly Father saw. Isaiah writes, “The Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”¹⁰

Over time the gap between us sweetly closed. But even if she had not accepted my changed heart, I had learned that Heavenly Father will help us love even those we may think are

unlovable, if we plead for His aid. The Savior’s Atonement is a conduit for the constant flow of charity from our Father in Heaven. We must choose to abide in this love in order to have charity for all.

When we give our heart to the Father and the Son, we change our world—even if circumstances around us do not change. We draw closer to Heavenly Father and feel His tender acceptance of our efforts to be true disciples of Christ. Our discernment, confidence, and faith increase.

Mormon tells us to pray with all energy of heart for this love and it will be bestowed upon us from its source—Heavenly Father.¹¹ Only then can we become repairers of the breach in earthly relationships.

Our Father’s infinite love reaches out to us, to bring us back into His glory and joy. He gave His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to repair the breach that gapes wide between us and Him. Reunion with Father in Heaven is the essence of lasting love and eternal purpose. We must make the connection with Him now to learn what really matters, to love as He loves, and to grow to be like Him. I testify that our faithful relationship with Heavenly Father and the Savior matters eternally to Them and to us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Jeremiah 31:3.
2. Moses 6:34.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Mystery of Godliness” (Brigham Young University fireside, Jan. 6, 1985), 1, speeches.byu.edu.
4. See Bruce R. McConkie, “The Mystery of Godliness,” 4.
5. Author unknown.
6. See Ezra Taft Benson, “Cleansing the Inner Vessel,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 4–7.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 88:63.
8. Jacob 4:11.
9. Isaiah 58:12.
10. Isaiah 30:26.
11. See Moroni 7:48.