

Worthy to Enter

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How blessed we are to have temples! The holy temple is “the place of [the Lord’s] throne” on the earth (Ezekiel 43:7). President Gordon B. Hinckley has told Church members: “Until you have received the sacred [temple] ordinances of the gospel, you have not received all of the wonderful blessings which this Church has to offer. The great and crowning blessings of membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are those blessings which come to us in the house of the Lord.”¹

Even though temples are located throughout the world, many of our members do not live near one of these holy buildings and therefore may not be able to attend



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the temple in the near future. It is important, however, that all Latter-day Saints live worthy to attend the temple so they will be ready when the opportunity comes.

Building the Lord’s House

A few years ago I had an experience in the Houston Texas Temple that gave me greater insight into the importance of the temple and the way I live my life.

The Houston temple was nearing completion when I had the opportunity to walk through the building with Leon Rowley, the supervisor of the temple construction.

Brother Rowley reviewed with me some of the special considerations that contractors who wish to bid on the temple must know. They are told that building a temple will be



different from any other construction project in which they have participated. They are told that we believe the temple is the house of the Lord and that it requires the finest workmanship. They are then given a list of requirements they need to consider in their bid.

First, they are told that the construction site must not be cluttered and must stay clean and organized. As Brother Rowley and I walked through the Houston temple, we saw very little clutter, and we did not need to walk around piles of construction debris, even though it was a busy day for the workers. When the workers finished a project, they cleaned up after themselves and disposed of the trash.

Second, contractors are told that *all* the rooms in the temple will be finished and painted. That day in the temple, every room was painted white. Even the storage rooms and mechanical rooms were white. There were no dark places in the temple.

Third, contractors are told that there is to be no graffiti on the walls of the temple. Often, workers at construction sites will write inappropriate things on the walls. Brother Rowley shared an incident he had experienced a few days previously. He had noticed some inappropriate words written on a wall of the temple and reminded the contractor of their agreement. The following day, he noticed that the words had been painted over. He went to the contractor

again and told him that the offensive words were still on the wall of the temple and needed to be removed. The next morning, the paint and the words were sanded off the temple wall.

Fourth, the contractors are told that initially one room will be finished to temple quality so that workers will know how to finish all the rooms in the temple. The large sealing room of the Houston temple was chosen to be finished first. As we walked into that sealing room, I noticed some little red dots on the door casings and on the moldings. Brother Rowley said that at the end of each day he inspects the workmanship to see if there are any imperfections. If additional work is needed to make it perfect, he places a little red dot to indicate the area to be refinished. The following day, the workers will putty, sand, and repaint until it is acceptable.

“Ye Are the Temple of God”

As I walked through the temple that day, the words from 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 came to my mind: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

I reflected on the great lengths the Church goes to in constructing our beautiful temples. Indeed, we are taught in the

scriptures that even the temple grounds “shall be most holy” (Ezekiel 43:12). As I pondered all of this, I was reminded that we must do all we can to keep our minds and our bodies—our personal “temples of God”—clean and pure.

First, we must not allow the ways of the world to clutter our lives. The Savior said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Too often, worldly things keep us from our prayers, scripture reading, and Church duties. President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said: “Sometimes our minds are so beset with problems, and there are so many things clamoring for attention at once that we just cannot think clearly and see clearly. At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can ‘see’ things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our troubles that we had not previously known.”²

Second, we must see that there are no dark places in our lives. The Savior has invited all to come unto Him through repentance. “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43). If our sins are serious, our bishop or branch president can help us with the repentance process. They are men of experience

and understanding. They will listen with confidentiality, and they will help us to repent and be forgiven.

Third, we must be aware of the graffiti that can come into our lives through inappropriate books, music, movies, television, or language. Repentance qualifies as the putty, sandpaper, and paint that will rid us of our spiritual graffiti. President Hinckley has also cautioned us against obtaining tattoos and body piercings.

Fourth, we “finish” our bodies to temple quality as we understand the temple recommend interview questions and are worthy to respond favorably to each one.

One of my greatest joys has been to interview members of the Church for temple recommends, to hear them respond positively and with great faith, and to rejoice as they declare themselves worthy to partake of sacred temple ordinances. It is my hope and prayer that we all can declare we are worthy to enter the temple of our God, that we may participate in the saving ordinances and enjoy eternal promised blessings. ■

NOTES

1. “Recurring Themes of President Hinckley,” *Ensign*, June 2000, 19.
2. “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 36.

By being worthy to respond favorably to the temple recommend questions, we figuratively “finish” our bodies to the quality and beauty exemplified in the construction of temples like the Houston Texas Temple, at left and on preceding page.

