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PREPARING TO ENTER THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

*Smile when you think of the temple.
It is a place of power and blessing.*

At a temple open house, I noticed some girls file behind their parents through the temple. They smiled as they found their reflections in brides' room mirrors. "Remember," their grandmother whispered, "how special you are and how much Heavenly Father loves you." Each girl imagined the time when she would return to the temple as a woman of faith, with maturing loveliness and capacity, ready to fulfill her mission on the earth. Boys who attended the open house also had glimpses of their future blessings and responsibilities.

What these children felt in the temple was right. Heavenly Father wants to bless you. His greatest blessings come as you enter the temple to receive sacred ordinances and to make and keep sacred covenants. You are responsible to prepare and be ready.

The temple is important in your life, especially when you're young: "The young man needs his place in

the temple even more than his father and his grandfather, who are steadied by a life of experience; and the young girl just entering life, needs the spirit, influence and direction that come from participation in the temple ordinances."¹ Begin now to prepare your heart and mind to be able to fully *receive* and *understand* these blessings (see Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20).

Receiving the Fulness of the Gospel

If you will prepare yourself to enter the temple, you will be "*ready* to receive the fulness of [His] gospel" in the temple (D&C 35:12; emphasis added). The temple is a place of power and blessing. The Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Saints to gather to Kirtland, Ohio, USA, where they would eventually build a temple. "There you shall be *endowed with power* from on high" (D&C 38:32; emphasis added).

At a recent temple open house, an Apostle gathered his family around

the holy altar in a sealing room. He taught them that everything we do in the Church—classes, activities, programs, and meetings—prepares us to come to the temple altar to receive the sealing ordinance. The temple represents the very essence of your Heavenly Father's plan for your eternal happiness and progression.

Preparing to Make Covenants with God

Your preparation to enter the temple and make covenants doesn't happen quickly. It began with your baptism and the confirming gift of the Holy Ghost and then grows with prayer, scripture study, obedience, and service. It invites cleanliness weekly as you participate in the sacrament. It happens as you learn to seek forgiveness through repentance, as you keep standards, and as you worthily carry a limited-use temple recommend. Youth programs will help you, but your preparation is personal; you are developing *your* worthiness,



KEY POINTS

- In the temple you receive ordinances essential to your salvation.
- You must enter the temple clean and pure, free from any unforgiven transgression.
- As in the scriptures, many of the teachings and ordinances in the temple are symbolic, allowing you to learn more and more each time you return to the temple.

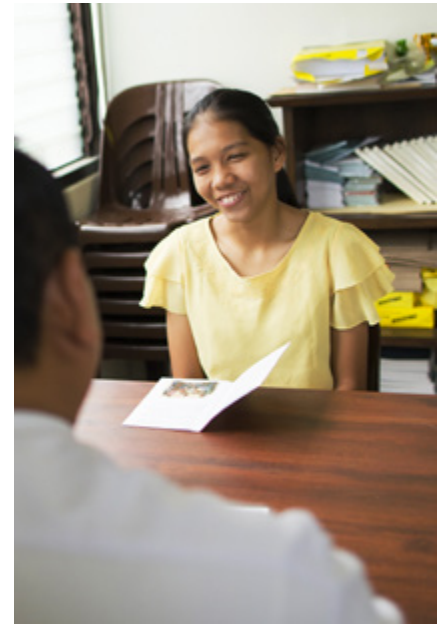
your testimony, *your* conversion. The Savior's Atonement applies to you personally.

As you increase your level of spiritual maturity, you will desire to prepare for and enter the temple. There you will receive ordinances and make covenants, which are necessary steps to draw closer to your Heavenly Father. Temple ordinances are "the most exalted . . . ordinances that have been revealed to mankind."²

As you receive temple ordinances, you make solemn covenants with your Father only one time for yourself, and then you will strive to abide by them throughout your life. Each time you enter the temple, you can feel of His Spirit and receive additional revelation and understanding while providing the necessary ordinances for others. You will understand and receive assurance of your eternal existence and the unending power of your covenants. If we were not eternal beings, the temple would have no significance. You enter the temple and make covenants *because* you will exist eternally and want to be with your Heavenly Father and your family in "never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41). This assurance grows in your own soul and is confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

Being Worthy

The role of the Holy Ghost is real. He teaches you, purifies you, and conveys the Father's love (see Romans



5:5). The Holy Spirit of Promise is the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, which validates each covenant eternally.

In order to receive the Spirit, you must enter the temple clean and pure, free from any unforgiven transgression. If the adversary could succeed in any way to overcome you, it would be to keep you from the temple or to entice you to go there unworthily.

For this reason, you will be invited to sit in a personal interview with your bishop or branch president, to consider your worthiness and readiness to receive a recommend to enter the temple. Be honest and trust him to help you. In reality, you are determining your own standing before the Lord (see D&C 109:24). You will sign your own recommend first. You are witnessing your worthiness before the Lord.³

To be worthy does not mean you are perfect yet. It means that your heart is right, that you are living the commandments, and that you desire to be better each day.

Learning from Symbols

In the temple, as in the scriptures, the Lord teaches using symbols. You can find many symbols in the scriptures, such as the rock, the seed, the fruit, the tree of life, and the bread and water of the sacrament (see, for example, 1 Nephi 11; Alma 32; Helaman 5:12). Baptism by immersion symbolizes new life, rebirth, and cleanliness (see Romans 6:3–5). In the temple we all wear white, symbolizing purity, holiness, light, and equality.

Some symbols in the temple are both physical and spiritual. For example, wearing the garment is a physical daily reminder of the temple covenants and the promised blessings. If respected and honored, the garment protects us from temptations and unrighteous influences.

Each of the temple ordinances is symbolic. “In a sacred ceremony, an individual may be washed and anointed,”⁴ reminiscent of the kings and priests of ancient Israel being prepared to take their positions (see 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13). The instruction and covenants in the endowment signify being clothed or invested with additional power and promises from God (see Luke 24:49). Perhaps the most beautiful symbol is the sealing ordinance, in which a couple is united in an unbreakable bond which can last through all eternity.

The promises in the temple are rich and noble. They are the “great favors” and “great blessings” (3 Nephi 10:18)



that our Father has reserved for you personally. So smile when you think of the temple.

No matter your age, do whatever is necessary to be ready to receive the greatest blessings your Father in Heaven offers to you. Trust how it felt when you were a child and sang, “I love to see the temple. I’m going there someday. . . . I’ll prepare myself while I am young. This is my sacred duty.”⁵ It can be true for you. ■

NOTES

1. John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Apr. 1921, 91–92.
2. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002), 1.
3. See Joshua 24:22, 27: “Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses.” Then Joshua took a large stone and placed it beneath an oak, saying, “This stone [like our personal temple recommend] shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words.”
4. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, 1.
5. “I Love to See the Temple,” *Children’s Songbook*, 95.

WHY DO WE BUILD TEMPLES?

“We must gain some feeling for why we build temples, and why the ordinances are required of us. Thereafter we are continually instructed and enlightened on matters of spiritual importance. It comes line upon line, precept upon precept, until we gain a fullness of light and knowledge. This becomes a great protection to us—to each of us personally. . . .

“... No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness.

“Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection. . . .

“... If we will enter into our covenants without reservation or apology, the Lord will protect us. We will receive inspiration sufficient for the challenges of life. . . .

“So come to the temple—come and claim your blessings.”

Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (booklet, 2002), 37.