

# Gender Is an Essential Characteristic of Eternal Identity and Purpose



*Teach the scriptures and statements that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you teach to share what they have felt and learned.*

**The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

## Why Is Gender Essential?

**Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “[Gender] in large measure defines who we are, why we are here upon the earth, and what we are to do and become. For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary. . . . The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of

happiness” (“Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Liabona*, June 2006, 51; *Ensign*, June 2006, 83).



**Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president:** “As spirit daughters of God, women ‘received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth’ (D&C 138:56) on the earth. They were among the ‘noble and great ones’ (D&C 138:55) who ‘shouted for joy’ (Job 38:7) at the creation of the earth because they would be given a physical body with the opportunity to be proven in a mortal sphere (see Abraham 3:25). They wished to work side by side with righteous men to accomplish eternal goals that neither can attain independently. Female roles did not begin on earth, and they do not end here. A woman who treasures motherhood on earth will treasure motherhood

in the world to come” (“A ‘Mother Heart,’” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 76).

## What Can I Do Because of My Role in Heavenly Father’s Plan?

**Margaret D. Nadauld, former Young Women general president:** “Women of God can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. . . . We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith” (“The Joy of Womanhood,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 18; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 15).

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:** “The premortal and mortal natures of men and women were specified by God Himself. . . . [Sometimes women] ask: ‘Is a woman’s value dependent exclusively upon her role as a wife and mother?’ The answer is simple and obvious: No. . . . Every righteous man and woman has a significant role to play in the onward march of the kingdom of God. . . .

“. . . My dear sisters, we believe in you. We believe in and are counting on your goodness and your strength, . . . And we believe that God’s plan is for you to become queens and to receive the highest blessings any woman can receive in time or eternity” (“Women of Righteousness,” *Liabona*, Dec. 2002, 36–37; *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 66–69). ■