

toward establishing an eternal family relationship. If a successful marriage is unlikely, they should place the child for adoption, preferably through LDS Family Services (see “Adoption,” pages 7–8).

Abrahamic Covenant

Abraham received the gospel and was ordained a high priest (see D&C 84:14; Abraham 1:2). He later entered into celestial marriage, which is the covenant of exaltation (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:19, 29). In connection with the covenants he made, he received great promises from the Lord concerning his family. Among these promises were the following:

- His posterity would be numerous (see Genesis 17:5–6; Abraham 2:9; 3:14).
- His seed, or descendants, would receive the gospel and bear the priesthood (see Abraham 2:9).
- Through the ministry of his seed, “all the families of the earth [would] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:11).

Together, all the covenants and promises that Abraham received from the Lord are called the Abrahamic covenant. It is an everlasting covenant that extends to all of Abraham’s seed (see Genesis 17:7). To be counted as Abraham’s seed, an individual must obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Then that person can receive all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, even if he or she is not a literal descendant of Abraham (see Galatians 3:26–29; 4:1–7; D&C 84:33–40).

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you are a child of the covenant (see 3 Nephi 20:25–26). You have received the everlasting gospel and inherited the same promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You have the right to the blessings of the priesthood and to eternal life, according to your faithfulness in receiving the ordinances of

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salvation and keeping the associated covenants. Nations of the earth will be blessed by your efforts and by the labors of your posterity.

See also Covenant; Eternal Life; Ordinances; Patriarchal Blessings; Priesthood

Abuse

Abuse is the treatment of others or self in a way that causes injury or offense. It harms the mind and the spirit and often injures the body as well. It can cause confusion, doubt, mistrust, and fear. It is a violation of the laws of society and is in total opposition to the teachings of the Savior. The Lord condemns abusive behavior in any form—physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional. Abusive behavior may lead to Church discipline.

Counsel for the Abuser

If you have been abusive in any relationship, you must repent of your sin. Plead with the Lord to forgive you. Ask for forgiveness from those you have harmed. Speak with your bishop or branch president so he can help you through the repentance process and, if necessary, help you receive additional counseling or other assistance.

If feelings of anger have fueled your abusive behavior, learn to master your temper. Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to help you. With an eternal perspective, you will see that your anger has almost always come in response to things that are not very important.

If you have been guilty of sexual abuse, seek to discipline your mind. Remember that your thoughts have a powerful impact on your life—“as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Stay away from pornography and anything else that could stimulate immoral sexual desire. Pray for the ability to “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” (D&C 121:45).