

2 Nephi 31:20). We manifest our love for Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments and serving His children. Our expressions of love for others may include being kind to them, listening to them, mourning with them, comforting them, serving them, praying for them, sharing the gospel with them, and being their friend.

Our love for those around us increases when we remember that we are all children of God—that we are spirit brothers and sisters. The love that results from this realization has the power to transcend all boundaries of nation, creed, and color.

Additional references: Leviticus 19:18, 34; Deuteronomy 6:5; Luke 6:31–36; John 15:9–15; 1 John 4:7–21, including footnote 12a; Mosiah 4:14–15; D&C 4:5; 12:8; 112:11; 121:41–45

See also Charity; Mercy; Obedience; Service

Marriage

In the world today, many people dismiss and even mock marriage and the family. Amid such confusing and destructive voices, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles provide the consistent voice of truth. They “solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children” (see “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” page 59 in this book).

Life’s greatest joys are found in the family. Strong family relationships require effort, but such effort brings great happiness in this life and throughout eternity. Even if you have not had a happy family life in the past, you can seek to have a happy, eternal marriage and a loving relationship with family members.

The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage

In our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness, a man and a woman can be sealed to one another for time and all eternity. Those who are sealed in the temple have the assurance that their relationship will continue forever if they are true to their covenants. They know that nothing, not even death, can permanently separate them.

The covenant of eternal marriage is necessary for exaltation. The Lord revealed through Joseph Smith: "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase" (D&C 131:1–4).

After receiving the sealing ordinance and making sacred covenants in the temple, a couple must continue in faithfulness in order to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and exaltation. The Lord said:

"If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; . . . and if [they] abide in my covenant, . . . it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world" (D&C 132:19; for an explanation of the Holy Spirit of Promise, see page 82).

Preparing for Marriage

If you are single, prepare yourself carefully for marriage. Remember that there is no substitute for marrying in the temple. Prepare to marry the right person in the right place

at the right time. Live worthy now of the kind of person you hope to marry.

Date only those who have high standards and in whose company you can maintain your high standards. Carefully plan positive and constructive activities so that you and your date are not left alone without anything to do. Stay in areas of safety where you can easily control yourself. Do not participate in conversations or activities that arouse sexual feelings.

Look for a companion of your own faith. Look for someone you can always honor and respect, someone who will complement you in your life. Before you marry, be sure you have found someone to whom you can give your entire heart, your entire love, your entire allegiance, your entire loyalty.

Counsel for Those Who Do Not Marry

Some members of the Church remain single through no fault of their own, even though they want to marry. If you find yourself in this situation, be assured that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). As you remain worthy, you will someday, in this life or the next, be given all the blessings of an eternal family relationship. The Lord has made this promise repeatedly through His latter-day prophets.

If you are single and desire to be married, do not give up hope. At the same time, do not allow yourself to become preoccupied with your goal. Instead, become anxiously engaged in worthwhile activities. Look for ways to serve in your extended family and in your community. Accept and magnify Church callings. Keep yourself clean, both physically and spiritually. Continue to learn and develop and progress in your personal life.

Achieving a Happy Marriage

If you are married, remember that the friendship and love between you and your spouse should be your most

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cherished earthly relationship. Your spouse is the only person other than the Lord whom you have been commanded to love with all your heart (see D&C 42:22).

Remember that marriage, in its truest sense, is a partnership of equals, with neither person exercising dominion over the other, but with each encouraging, comforting, and helping the other.

Because marriage is such an important relationship in life, it needs and deserves time. Do not give higher priority to less-important commitments. Take time to talk together and to listen to one another. Be thoughtful and respectful. Express tender feelings and affection often.

Determine that nothing will ever come between you and your spouse to disrupt your marriage. Resolve to make your marriage succeed, in spite of challenges that may arise.

Be loyal to one another. Be faithful in your marriage covenants in thought, word, and deed. Remember that the Lord has said, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else" (D&C 42:22). The phrase "none else" teaches that no person, activity, or possession should ever take precedence over your relationship with your spouse.

Stay away from anything that could lead you to be unfaithful in any way. Pornography, unwholesome fantasies, and flirtations will erode your character and strike at the foundation of your marriage.

Work together to manage your finances. Cooperate in establishing and following a budget. Discipline yourselves in your spending, and avoid the bondage of debt. Wise money management and freedom from debt contribute to peace in the home.

Center your lives in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Help one another keep the covenants you have made. Attend church and the temple together. Study the scriptures together. Kneel together in prayer at the beginning and end of each day to thank your Heavenly Father for one another and to unite in

asking for His blessings on your lives, your home, your loved ones, and your righteous desires. God will then guide you, and your daily conversations with Him will bring the peace and joy that can come from no other source. Your companionship will sweeten through the years; your love will strengthen. Your appreciation for one another will grow.

Additional references: Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18, 21–24; 1 Corinthians 11:11; Ephesians 5:22–33; Moses 2:27–28; 3:18, 21–24

See also Chastity; Divorce; Family; Temples; Unity

Melchizedek Priesthood

“There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic” (D&C 107:1). The Melchizedek Priesthood, which is “after the Order of the Son of God” (D&C 107:3), is the greater of these. It “holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church” (D&C 107:8). It also holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (D&C 107:18). It is named after a great high priest who lived during the time of the prophet Abraham (see D&C 107:2–4; see also Alma 13:14–19).

Through the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, Church leaders guide the Church and direct the preaching of the gospel throughout the world. In the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20).

This greater priesthood was given to Adam and has been on the earth whenever the Lord has revealed His gospel. It was taken from the earth during the Great Apostasy, but it was restored in May 1829, when the Apostles Peter, James, and John conferred it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

The offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood are Apostle, Seventy, patriarch, high priest, and elder. The President of the High Priesthood is the President of the Church (see D&C 107:64–66).