

YOUNG ADULTS



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Heavenly Father's plan  
provides the eternal  
companionship of a  
loving spouse and the  
divine companionship  
of the Holy Ghost.



# Fulfilling Our Eternal Destiny

**M**ore than 100 years ago, 18-year-old Robert Orson Gibson, who would become my grandfather, wrote the following for a college class:

“Some people want to become noble, others want to become wealthy, still others wise, and there are those who wish to become good. It would be very well to be any of these, but I would prefer, most of all, being known as good.”

This was the foundation for his plan for life. He truly was “known as good,” always striving to fulfill the will of Heavenly Father and treasuring his family.

## The Plan

Some of us may not have a life plan, as did my grandfather, or we may have a plan that differs from Heavenly Father’s plan for us. His plan is known as the “plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8, 16) because it is designed to bring us happiness in this

life and fulness of joy in the next life. It includes:

- The creation of a world on which we would live.
- A fall that would allow spirit children to be born into mortal families.
- A Savior who would break the bands of death and atone for all sin.
- Immortality for all of God’s children through the miracle of the Resurrection.
- The opportunity for families to return to our heavenly parents, prepared for exaltation and eternal life.

This plan was presented while we lived as spirit children with our heavenly parents. How we must have loved Them and wanted to be just like Them! Their perfect love for each other and for us is eternal, and They want us to have *all* They have.

Do you understand why “marriage

between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children”?<sup>1</sup> We are here to experience in a mortal and imperfect way what we may one day receive in a perfected and immortal realm! Family life prepares us for eternal life.

Our beloved Father is not just interested in our return. He also desires that we return prepared to be exalted. He knows we cannot achieve this supreme goal on our own. Let me highlight two vital companionships His plan provides to help us fulfill our eternal destiny: the eternal companionship of a loving spouse and the divine companionship of the Holy Ghost.

## An Eternal Companion

I vividly remember the night my eternal companion, Shirley, proposed to me. She might remember the conversation differently, but as I recall, she asked, “Larry, do you know why I love you?”

She had never used the word *love* before, so to me it was a proposal. I knew I must answer carefully.

“No, why do you love me?”

“I love you because I know you love the Lord more than you love me,” she said. “And with that love we can make it back to our heavenly home.”

That answer struck my heart. I could not imagine a girl of 19 wanting her future husband to love anything more than her. But she had a deep spiritual maturity.

I did not fully comprehend what she said that evening, but I wanted her to always feel that I loved the Lord above all else. I remember going home that night and pleading with the Lord to allow me to stand at her side as her eternal companion and promising that I would always strive to be the kind of man she hoped I was.

I believe that as we faithfully keep our sacred covenants, one day we will stand in awe of the great man or woman our eternal companion really is. In our marriage, Shirley and I have strived for a pattern of oneness and unity in all we do. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles beautifully described this pattern:

“The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation. . . .

“ . . . The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. . . .

“ . . . The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way.”<sup>2</sup>

If we are true and faithful to our covenants, keep the commandments, and love each other as Father loves us, one day we will be together eternally as one. We need to hasten this greatest “work of salvation” by forming our eternal family in the temple and then striving to bring about Father’s plan for each family member.

As husbands and wives, as mothers and fathers, as singles and siblings, we are working to bring to pass salvation for Heavenly Father’s spirit children and eternal life for our whole family. If we live worthily, this blessing will be afforded each of us in His due time.

### **A Divine Companion**

We cannot accomplish this work without revelation from God—to us individually and as companions in marriage. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “No man [or woman] can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations.”<sup>3</sup>

The Holy Ghost is necessary for revelation, and revelation is necessary

for Father’s plan to be fulfilled for us. Having this divine companion bestowed upon us is not enough. We must learn to *retain* the Holy Ghost, *rely* on Him, and appropriately *respond* to His promptings.

### **1. Retaining the Holy Ghost**

We must be worthy vessels in order to have this companionship. If we do not keep our covenant to “always remember [the Savior] and keep his commandments,” we cannot expect Heavenly Father to keep His part of the covenant whereby we “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77; Moroni 4:3). If we sincerely try to keep our covenants, we are entitled to this miraculous blessing.

The Holy Ghost is sensitive to the environment in which we place ourselves. Clearly the Spirit cannot remain with us while we are reading, listening to, or viewing anything that contains violence, inappropriate language, or any kind of immodest, vile, or immoral content. If we engage in any of these things, we withdraw from Him.

How often do we want the Holy Ghost to be with us? The Lord says always. Our worthiness to have this constant companionship is an excellent indicator of how well we are following Heavenly Father’s plan.

### **2. Relying on the Holy Ghost**

Sometimes we may not rely as we should on the Holy Ghost as our



guide. For example, do we remember that the Holy Ghost is a teacher? The Savior promised that “the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26). This is contingent, however, on our preparation and effort—He will not do our work for us.

The Holy Ghost is also a comforter. Occasionally we want things we should not have. We pray and then agonize when what seems to us to be a righteous desire is not realized or when the Lord says “no” or “not right now.” In these situations, if we submit ourselves to God’s will, the Holy Ghost can soften that answer.

If you develop the discipline to always rely on the Holy Ghost, you will find that when urgent moments arise, you will feel His comfort more readily and more deeply. No one can successfully fulfill Father’s plan, individually or in marriage, without relying consistently on the Holy Ghost.

### 3. Responding to the Holy Ghost

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled:

“If you are slipping into things that you should not slip into or if you are associating with people who are pulling you away in the wrong direction, that is the time to assert your independence, your agency. Listen to the voice of the Spirit, and you will not be led astray.

“. . . I promise that you will be protected and shielded from the attacks of the adversary *if* you will heed the promptings that come from the Holy Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Ghost prompts us to do good works. When impressions to serve come, do not push them aside. I have found that immediately acting on these impressions increases my ability to feel them more completely and helps Father change my life and the lives of those I love. Respond promptly to promptings.

I know that Heavenly Father is concerned about each of us. He is the great architect of the magnificent plan of salvation and happiness. In addition to giving us a Savior, He has provided a witness, companion, guide, and comforter in the Holy Ghost. And He has made eternal marriage essential to His plan for His sons and daughters so that we may work together to achieve our eternal destiny: the continuation of the family into eternity and the glory and power that our heavenly parents enjoy.

May we live and work to qualify for the promise of these blessings in this life and their fulness in the life to come. ■

*From a devotional address, “Following Heavenly Father’s Plan,” given at Brigham Young University on March 11, 2014. For the full address, visit [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

#### NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 18.