



Answers

to Seven Questions
from Young Married Adults

The best answer to any question that threatens faith is to work to increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By President Dallin H. Oaks

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Q:

1. “Does the leadership of the Church know what’s going on in the lives of Church members much younger than they are and in conditions much different than those in which they live?”

A:

We are constantly traveling to be with our members all over the world. Every week we receive reports from the most knowledgeable professionals in every field of concern in a worldwide Church—economics, politics, social sciences, law, diplomacy, and so forth.

But we are even more intensely informed about our own members—the challenges they face in medical care, mental health, public schools, higher education, employment, the marketplace, and retirement; in personal relations such as marriage, childbearing, adoption, and child-rearing; and in challenges to faith such as questions about Church history, same-sex attraction, transgender issues, and so on.

We struggle to be informed. We struggle to be close to our members. We pray for you, just as you pray for your leaders. Most of all, we pray for inspiration in what we teach and what we require by way of Church meetings and policies and programs. We seek to follow our Savior’s great teaching that we leaders should be the servants of all (see Mark 9:35).

Q:

2. “While the Church teaches that the most important thing is family, why are there so many meetings and activities that take us away from our families for a significant amount of time on a regular basis?”

A:

We have spent many hours talking about how we can simplify our Church programs to perform their essential function for a wide variety of family circumstances without posing the problem described in that excellent question. The two-hour Sunday meeting schedule came out of those discussions.

Many years ago, President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) told the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that in all of our meetings we should remember Church members who are in very poor economic circumstances. We should pretend that they are present in our councils and asking us to help them. That same reminder applies to young marrieds with children. We pray for you. We think of you. And we are mindful of your circumstances as we consider Church issues.

Q:

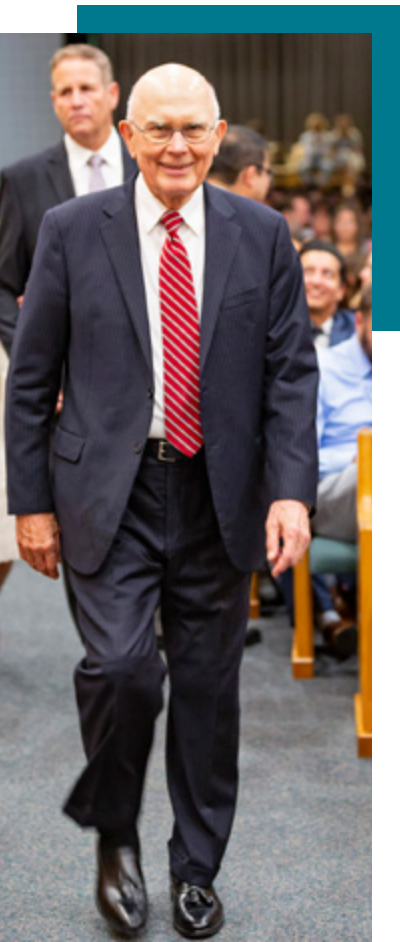
A:

3. “What counsel do you have for fathers?”

Recently, I joined several Church leaders in recording a multistake conference broadcast to our members in Chile—73 stakes. Elder D. Todd Christofferson’s talk had an important message about fathers, which I share with my strong endorsement:

“Unfortunately, in some homes it is always the wife and mother who has to suggest—even sometimes plead—that the family gather for prayer or for home evening. This should not be. The women in our lives have the right to look to their husbands to assume their duty and to take the lead. A husband should counsel continually with his wife about the welfare of each of their children. . . . Most sisters are willing and eager to counsel with their husbands and can provide many helpful insights and recommendations, but it will be easier for them if their husband takes the initiative to talk with them and to plan together.”¹

Brethren, rise up to your responsibilities to lead your families in righteousness.



Q:

A:

4. “In a busy world full of demands and distractions, what is our top priority?”

As has been true throughout history, in this life we must choose between Jesus’s way and the world’s way. Of course, we know that we must meet the requirements of the world in many ways, including the need to earn our daily bread and pursue the education and other activities that will allow us to do so. But we should never lose sight of our priority on the things of eternity—the bread of life—that the Savior and His Church will provide us.

Following the Lord’s way is not easy. The Lord has warned us, directly and through His servants, that the world will hate us for doing things differently—the Lord’s way. In the concluding days of His ministry, He told His Apostles, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).

The world will not only hate us but will also surround us with examples and influences that try to pull us down.²



Q:

5. “My spouse has gone inactive due to doubts regarding Church history and doctrinal issues. How should I go about researching and responding to these issues?”

A:

I suggest that research is not the answer. References to the Church’s many helps to answer familiar questions, such as the Gospel Topics Essays at ChurchofJesusChrist.org, may help one who is sincerely seeking, but the best answer to any question that threatens faith is to work to increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Conversion to the Lord precedes conversion to the Church. And conversion to the Lord comes through prayer and study and service, furthered by loving patience on the part of the spouse and other concerned family members.

Q:

6. “How can we give hope to those with same-sex attraction of living a happy and fulfilling life when they don’t see a traditional marriage while on earth, and how should we talk to our children as they learn about LGBT issues at school?”

A:

First, for those who experience same-sex attraction, consider these inspired assurances:

“You are a son or daughter of God, and our hearts reach out to you in warmth and affection.

Notwithstanding your present same-gender attractions, you can be happy during this life, lead a morally clean life, perform meaningful service in the Church, enjoy full fellowship with your fellow Saints, and ultimately receive all the blessings of eternal life.”³

Second, “God’s love is so great that He requires His children to obey His laws because only through that obedience can they progress toward the eternal destiny He desires for them. Thus, in the Final Judgment [which follows the universal Resurrection] we will all be assigned to the kingdom of glory that is commensurate with our obedience to His law.”⁴

Third, in my persistent prayerful ponderings, I have never found a better, shorter answer to the innumerable questions on this subject than a thorough knowledge of and total faith in the love of our Heavenly Father and the plan of salvation He has established for the blessing of all of His children. The central truth of that plan is the Atonement of His Only Begotten Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. If we trust in the Lord and

His plan, we will have the strength to resist the satanic imitations and satanic temptations to abandon our quest for eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

Children raise questions. Answering their questions in an appropriate way is one of the most important things parents can do. When you are asked a difficult question, such as a puzzler about Church history or doctrine, be honest and positive and tell what you know. If necessary, say you don’t know. But be sure to say what you do know: “I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.”⁵

Q:

A:

7. “Why is the family preeminent in the Church?”

Our relationship to God and the purpose of earth life are explained in terms of the family. We are the spirit children of heavenly parents. The gospel plan is implemented through earthly families, and our highest aspiration is to perpetuate those family relationships throughout eternity. The ultimate mission of the Church is to help us achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom, and that can only be accomplished in a family relationship.

Church leaders and teachers should use every possible opportunity to recognize the preeminence and strengthen the position of the home and family. As the First Presidency reminded us in 1999, “The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place or fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility.”⁶

We cannot have a strong Church whose leaders and members come mostly from weak families. Conversely, if most of the families in a ward or stake are strong, the ward or stake will also be strong. ■

From a devotional address given to young married couples at the Los Angeles California Santa Monica Stake Center on August 24, 2018. To learn what other counsel President Oaks shared, see the full version of his address (under the title “Keeping the Faith on the Front Line”) in the digital version of this issue in the Gospel Library app or at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “To the Brethren of the Priesthood: Your Spiritual Leadership,” Chile multi-stake conference address, Aug. 26, 2018.
2. From Dallin H. Oaks, Utah County multistake conference address, Sept. 16, 2012.
3. *God Loveth His Children* (2007), 1; see also “Same-Sex Attraction,” Gospel Topics, [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Fundamental to Our Faith,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 27.
5. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Be Wise” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Nov. 7, 2006), byui.edu.
6. First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999, in “Policies, Announcements, and Appointments,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.

