

THE BLESSING OF THE RESTORATION FOR YOU



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Because of the restored gospel, you can know who you really are and what God expects you to do.

IN THE MUSICAL *Fiddler on the Roof*, the lead character, Tevye, described one benefit of the traditions of his community, saying, “And because of our traditions, every one of us knows who he is, and what God expects him to do.”¹ You do not need to rely on tradition for this knowledge. Because of the Restoration, you can know who you are and what God expects you to do. If you are not sure yet, you have a right and an obligation to claim that knowledge.

It has been 200 years since 14-year-old Joseph Smith received the first heavenly vision that began the Restoration. Joseph entered those woods near his home in upstate New York, USA, because he was concerned about the welfare of his soul and wanted to know which church to join. He wanted to know who he was and what God expected of him. He received the answers he sought, but he learned so much more on that day and in the 24 years that followed. Because of restored truth, you can not only know why God created you, but you can also learn of your ultimate destiny. Like Joseph Smith, you can know for yourself.

WHO ARE YOU?

You are a beloved child of God, known to Him and loved by Him. Joseph learned this when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in 1820. Joseph recorded, “One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

God knew Joseph. The same is true for you. God knows you. He has known you for a long time and He has loved you for as long as He has known you. He knows your divine potential to progress and be exalted with Him. This means that you



have the potential to become like Him.²

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” declares this profound, restored truth: “All human beings . . . 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.”³ This truth might seem obvious to long-term members of the Church. Not so for many prominent Christian theologians who declare that your main purpose is to worship, adore, and venerate God and that God’s only motive to create you was so that you could praise, adore, and serve Him.

Through Joseph Smith, God revealed that His work and His glory is to glorify you, to bring to pass your immortality and eternal life.⁴ While glorifying you glorifies Him, God’s goal and purpose is to create the environment that allows you to progress. The ultimate end of your progression can be enduring joy. King Benjamin taught his people: “Consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness” (Mosiah 2:41).

God has your best interest in mind. He is kind and loving. He knows that for you to progress, you needed to come to earth, receive a body, and learn right from wrong by your own experience. He does not want you to remain a



child or adolescent forever, nor does He want to transform you into a blindly obediently trained pet. No, He wants you to choose to follow Him and mature through your experiences to grow up and become an heir to all He has.⁵ This is your divine destiny.

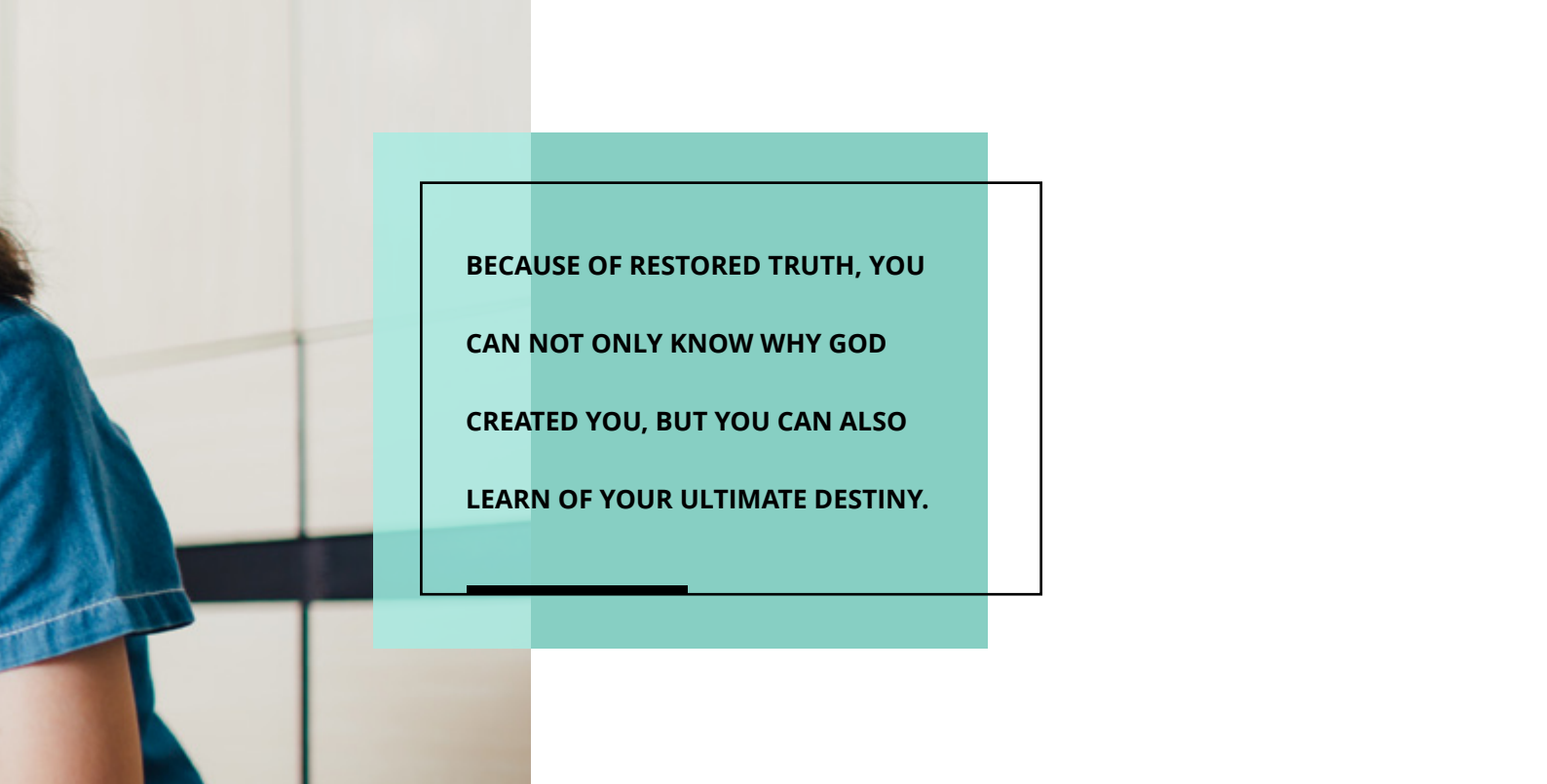
These truths are foundational to the restored doctrine that began with that simple prayer uttered by Joseph Smith.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT OF YOU?

God has two key expectations for you. First, He expects you to learn of and follow His plan. Second, He expects you to help others to learn and follow His plan.

You were taught God’s plan of salvation in premortal realms and accepted it. This may not have been an easy decision. One-third part of Heavenly Father’s children rejected the plan. But you desired to come to earth, receive a body, and use your agency to choose to follow the plan. God knew, and you knew too, that when on this earth you would make mistakes and commit sin. These sins would permanently prevent you from living in God’s presence unless you could be redeemed from your sins. God’s plan provided for Jesus Christ to be your Redeemer. Jesus Christ atoned for your sins and mistakes to allow God’s plan of salvation to work for you.⁶ He paid the ultimate price so that He could “claim of the Father his rights of mercy” for you (Moroni 7:27).

God’s plan also provided for you to have the gift of agency so that you can know “good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5). You are an “agent” unto yourself (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:28), capable of making decisions for yourself. But when you make poor decisions or mistakes, God expects you to use your agency to repent. Repentance is made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and is needed so you can be clean before God.⁷



**BECAUSE OF RESTORED TRUTH, YOU
CAN NOT ONLY KNOW WHY GOD
CREATED YOU, BUT YOU CAN ALSO
LEARN OF YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINY.**

You repent as you turn to God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Conditioned on repentance, Jesus Christ's Atonement enables you to be pardoned from the punishment you would otherwise receive. You show you have repented by being obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. And, as you repent, you become pure, clean, and holy.

As God declared to Adam, "This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten" (Moses 6:62). Because of our faith in Christ and in Heavenly Father's plan, we can "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The second key thing God expects of you is to help others learn His plan and help them follow it. Once you understand that God and His Son, Jesus Christ, love you, you naturally desire to share this truth with others. Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ is also referred to as the "gathering of Israel." President Russell M. Nelson affirmed:

"My dear extraordinary youth, you were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There is *nothing* happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is *nothing* of greater consequence. Absolutely *nothing*.

"This gathering should mean *everything* to you. This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth."⁸

Fulfilling this covenant obligation will bring you joy⁹ and contribute to your personal salvation.¹⁰

Because the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth, you may know who you are and what God expects of you. We celebrate the Restoration that began in the woods near the Smith farm in upstate New York 200 years ago because of the scope and significance it holds for you. Joseph's earnest prayer

opened a flood of revelation that continues to this day through His Apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ directs His Church and His work on the earth so that you can reach your divine potential to live again with your Heavenly Father. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Stein, Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), 3.
2. "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself . . . that they may be exalted with himself" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210).
3. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
4. See Moses 1:39.
5. See Dale G. Renlund, "Choose You This Day," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 104.
6. See Isaiah 53:3–12. Isaiah mentions 10 times Christ's vicarious suffering for sin.
7. God said, "[You] must repent, or [you] can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there." So, you "must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of [God's] Only Begotten; that [you] might be sanctified from all sin" (Moses 6:56, 59).
8. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 4:2, 4; 31:5; 36:1; 60:7; 62:3; and 84:61.