



In body and spirit, humankind is both united and diverse. This is part of the genius of Heavenly Father’s plan.



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Every person is unique. Just look around. It’s hard to miss. Even identical twins have some differences—just ask them. So what causes all of this diversity, and what’s its purpose?

PHYSICAL DNA

As you probably learned in school, DNA is a molecule in all living organisms that carries the genetic code that helps them reproduce, grow, and function properly.

All humankind shares the same basic genetic makeup. But the specific genes you’ve inherited from your parents also give you the special blend of traits that make you biologically unique. It’s what gives you your hair, skin, and eye color, your height, body type, facial features, and a thousand other outward characteristics. It also has some influence on your personality and your emotional and psychological makeup.

So DNA helps make you unique, and it makes humankind diverse. This makes life more interesting, since it would be pretty boring if we were all the same. But the reason for this diversity goes well beyond just variety or adaptation in a healthy gene pool.

God makes people genetically diverse for His purposes. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, taught that it belongs to “the genius of God” that He “created every man different from his brother, every son different from his father” (“Four Titles,” Apr. 2013 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 59]).

Part of this genius has to do with the test of this life—our quest to follow Jesus Christ and become more like our Heavenly Father. Living among different people can be challenging and uncomfortable. Yet our different talents—physical, intellectual, and otherwise—allow us to benefit one another and appreciate one another in different ways. Most importantly, our differences can help us learn divine qualities of patience, compassion, and love.

The Lord has said: “Let every man esteem his brother as himself” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:24) and “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39). To see everyone as of equal worth and to possess a Christlike love are vital qualities for us to strive for. And Christlike love is a gift from God that will allow us to obtain eternal life (see Moroni 7:47–48).

So in a way, through our diversity, we can learn more about what connects us and strive to “be one,” as the Lord has commanded us to do (Doctrine and Covenants 38:27). His commandments remind us that we’re all part of the same family—the human family or, more significantly, God’s family.





SPIRITUAL DNA

Our Heavenly Parents also passed along to us what we might call a “spiritual DNA.” Among other things, we’ve inherited the ability to know good from evil, to choose good or evil and act for ourselves, to recognize light and truth, to love, and to feel the Holy Ghost.

Like our physical DNA, our spiritual inheritance unites us as a family. It also helps us to know that, regardless of our circumstances in this life, our “spiritual DNA is perfect because one’s true identity is as a son or daughter of God” (Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 50]).

As you recognize your true identity, you also recognize your true potential. You can become more like Heavenly Father. What’s more, every person around you has that same potential—yes, every single one. When this truth really sinks in, you get a richer, nobler feeling about your fellow human beings. And you feel an even greater oneness with your brothers and sisters.

But just as we see diversity in our biological traits, we also know that our spirits are diverse. Some part of us has always existed (see Abraham 3:18; Doctrine and Covenants 93:29), and our spirit birth meant that we became literal sons and daughters of God and were able to progress as spirits in meaningful ways.

“You have the spiritual DNA of God,” said President Uchtdorf. “You have unique gifts that originated in your spiritual creation and that were developed during the vast span of your premortal life” (“Three Sisters,” Oct. 2017 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 17]).

The uniqueness of our spirits is part of Heavenly Father’s plan. Each of us must choose, individually, to follow God’s plan by obeying His commandments, coming unto Jesus Christ, and making and keeping covenants. And each of us can make a unique contribution to God’s work by choosing to serve His children in ways that are individual to each of us—and to them.

As you use the unique gifts of your spiritual DNA to serve others, you can help them fulfill their true potential—a potential we all share as the spirit children of Heavenly Parents.

CONCLUSION

There’s much we still don’t know about how physical DNA really works to produce all of the novelty and variety we see in living things. But when it comes to the family of man, we know the most important things: Despite our differences, we are all connected. We are all of equal worth. And we need to love one another.

Likewise, the details of our spirit birth haven’t been revealed to us. But when it comes to our spiritual DNA, we know the most important things: We are children of Heavenly Parents. We are all part of God’s family. Each of us is a unique spirit. And if we follow His plan, each of us can become more like Him. **NE**

