



Joseph Smith's *Key of Knowledge*

One key teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith affects your life every day.

What does Joseph Smith have to do with your everyday life?

That might seem like an odd question, but it can lead to some interesting discoveries if you think about it. For instance, do you study the Book of Mormon every day? Do you go to church and partake of the sacrament every week? Do you regularly go to the temple to do baptisms for the dead? Joseph Smith was instrumental in restoring all of those things to the earth during his life.

The list could go on, of course, and you might consider writing down a list like that in order to gain a greater appreciation for the Prophet Joseph Smith. But let's focus on just one way Joseph Smith affects your life every day: your prayers.

In 1845, the year after Joseph Smith was killed, Eliza R. Snow wrote the lyrics of the hymn "O My Father" (*Hymns*, no. 292), in which she said:

*I had learned to call thee Father,
Thru thy Spirit from on high,
But, until the key of knowledge
Was restored, I knew not why.*

The “key of knowledge” she wrote about is the fulness of the gospel, and the song particularly refers to Joseph Smith’s teaching about our relationship to God—that He is literally the Father of our spirits and that we are literally His children.

Joseph Smith taught that God “looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard” and that “if men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 39, 40).

This particular “key of knowledge” unlocks the door to understanding what we are doing when we pray. When we address God as “Father,” it is not just a metaphor for a bodiless force that created us but is utterly different from us. It is a real relationship—one that we can understand and that predates our mortal birth. Sensing the reality of this relationship, we regard our prayers differently. They become more intimate and personal, as do the answers we receive.

As Joseph Smith said, “Having a knowledge of God, we begin to know how to approach Him, and how to ask so as to receive an answer” (*Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 40).

So, what does Joseph Smith have to do with your everyday life?

Well, do you pray to Heavenly Father every day? Do you feel close to Him because you know He is your Father? Do you feel that He answers your prayers in a personal way? Do you sense deeply that He loves you because you are His child?

If so, then it is in part because of this “key of knowledge” brought back to us through Joseph Smith. And that’s just one of many reasons to thank your Father in Heaven for what Joseph did as the Prophet of the Restoration. **NE**

TO KNOW GOD AND COME TO HIM

“When we understand the character of God, and know how to come to Him, He begins to unfold the heavens to us, and to tell us all about it. When we are ready to come to Him, He is ready to come to us.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 40–41.