

### Until death comes

In conclusion may I leave you a story. It is fiction, but in principle it is true. Can you imagine two young people at a time when the moon is full and the roses are in bloom and a sacred love has matured between them? Johnny says to Mary, "Mary, I love you. I want you for my wife and the mother of our children. But I don't want you or them forever. Just for a season and then goodbye." And she, looking at him through tears in the moonlight, says, "Johnny, you're wonderful. There's nobody else in all the world like you. I love you, and I want you for my husband and the father of our children, but only for a time, and then farewell."

That sounds foolish, doesn't it? And yet isn't that in effect what a boy says to a girl and a girl says to a boy in a proposal of marriage when given the opportunity of eternal union under "the new and everlasting covenant," but, rather, they choose to set it aside for a substitute that can last only until death comes.

### Life eternal

Life is eternal. The God of heaven has also made possible eternal love and eternal family relationships.

God bless you, my dear young friends, that as you look forward to marriage, you may look not only for rewarding companionship and rich and fruitful family relationships through all of your mortal days, but to an even better estate where love and treasured associations may be felt and known under a promise given of God.

I bear witness of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ through whom this authority has come. I bear witness that his power, his priesthood, is among us and is exercised in his holy houses. Do not spurn that which he has offered. Live worthy of it and partake of it, and let the sanctifying power of his holy priesthood seal your companionship. For these blessings I humbly pray in your behalf, as I bear testimony and witness of these truths in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy.

## Elder ElRay L. Christiansen

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I'm grateful, my brothers and sisters, for the much-needed down-to-earth counsel given us this morning by the Lord's spokesman, President Spencer W. Kimball, as well as for the timely and helpful remarks of the other speakers who have preceded me. Timely, because the Lord has said, "For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness." (D&C 100: 16.) "Purge ye out the iniquity which

is among you; sanctify yourselves before me, . . . and ye shall be endowed with power." (D&C 43:11, 16.)

### Three important questions

Brothers and sisters, you will soon see that our subjects are not assigned.

All I can say, since I will talk about the same things Elder Hinckley has talked about, is somebody here needs a

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double dose. On that premise, I shall proceed. And in what I shall say I also have in mind those of your particularly who have yet to answer and resolve three important questions:

- Whom shall I marry?
- Where shall I marry?
- By whom shall I be married?

There are different ways of doing things, but surely, in anything we do, there's no better way than the right way—and the Lord's way is the right way. Fortunately, his way has been made plain and is plainly revealed. Seldom is the problem one of knowing what to do; it's a matter rather of having the wisdom and the will to do what we know is right.

Probably the most consequential event in your lives takes place when you are united in marriage. It will have a far-reaching effect upon your future. Like the ripples caused by a pebble cast upon a placid pool, the decision you make in regard to where, with whom, and by whom this event will take place will affect not only you, but the lives of many others, especially your children. In fact, it will likely affect generations to come!

### Designed for divine purpose

In a matter of such vast importance, it is imperative that sober thought be given to marriage long before it takes place.

We must realize that marriage is designed by the Lord for a divine purpose, whereby a servant and handmaiden of the Lord may prepare themselves in righteousness to receive chosen spirits coming from our Eternal Father, and give them bodies of flesh for their mortal probation, and then undertake with all the power at their command to lead these spirit children entrusted into their care back into the presence of God from whence they came. Such “. . . children are legal heirs

to the Kingdom and to all its blessings and promises. . . .” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 195.)

### Love not earthbound

True love is not earthbound. It is as eternal as our spirits, which never die. A continuing association in this life, as well as in the next, with those we love, should be the great desire of every person. It is the ultimate. It is the great purpose of mortality.

Persons who are satisfied with a temporary legal arrangement which terminates at death, when it could be an everlasting contract, are basing their marriage on shallow and fleeting love. Such a marriage looks to the moment, not to the future. Under the stress of life, it is more likely to crumble and fall. True love pleads for endless association of those we love.

But an eternal relationship of families does not come about automatically, as some suppose. It must not only be planned for; it must be earned. We must realize that only when we have lived in complete harmony with all the laws and ordinances of the priesthood, including those received in holy temples, should we expect to find ourselves prepared to dwell in what I sometimes refer to as the “kingdom of families”—the celestial world.

### Fulness of joy

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has said:

“And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given unto you, even the law of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a testial kingdom.

“For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.” (D&C 88:21, 22.) He would just not feel at home.

Surely then our desire and our goal should be to prepare ourselves, not for

a fragment of joy but for the fullness thereof, which is to be found only in the celestial world.

### **Eternal marriage**

How fortunate it is that, after its absence from the earth for hundreds of years, the Lord has revealed anew the principle of eternal marriage and has restored the divine authority to administer it. It is here. It is ours to embrace. And it is disappointing to see that in too many instances those who live close to these holy places pass them by and go the way of the world when it comes to the most momentous event in their lives. With the knowledge that it is the Lord's way and, therefore, the right way, no Latter-day Saint with a concordant spirit would deviate from it. Some may say, "Why not try a civil marriage first, and then if it works out, we will go to the temple later?"

Well, in my opinion, the time to be married right is when you're married. Can we consign the Lord's prescribed way to a secondary position? We cannot! When you consider the incomparable blessings and promises that may be realized in a marriage that may be perpetuated through the eternities ahead of you, as compared with a temporary association, your desire, your determination, should be to take hold of and ensure these blessings and promises. If ever there is a time to be realistic and to act in the light of things as they really are, if ever there is a time to use your heads, so to speak, and plan wisely, it is when the thought of marriage first enters your minds.

When two souls have a true love for each other, a genuine, tender affection (not merely physical attraction), when they are really united in spirit, having the same lofty ideals, the same beliefs and standards, trusting each other, confiding in each other; when there is sincere respect one for the other along with virtue and purity of life; when such people are joined together through the

sealing ordinances, their marriage (if continued on such a basis) should give them the assurance and comfort in the thought that even though death may separate them, yet in the resurrection shall they come forth and live in the family relationship forever.

### **Your future destiny**

It is your earthly life that you are now living, my young friends. You will live it but once. There will be no reruns, no repeat performances. What you are in this life determines where you will be throughout eternity.

It is your future, your destiny that you are now molding.

You made good in that pre-earth life. You were valiant there. You must not now "fumble the ball" on the 20-year line. When you do take the wrong course, you are undoing the work of your prior existence, for there you struggled for ages to prepare for mortality where you now are.

I urge you to carefully consider these things as you make preparations for the future.

### **Sealing by right authority**

You who stand on the threshold of marriage, you who have been taught the eternity of life should strive with all your might to be worthy of entering a temple of the Lord there to be sealed to your companion for endless time in the right way, in the right place, by the right authority. I testify to the truths and the reality that these powers to seal on earth and to have them binding in heaven are with us. They have been restored by heavenly messengers and we have the power amongst us. Let us not pass it by. I testify to my knowledge that God lives, that he is our Father, that Jesus is the Savior of the world, and that the gospel has been restored in the fulfillment of prophecy, both of the Old and the New Testament prophets. And I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.