

Fatherhood—Our Eternal Destiny

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May we each enjoy the fulness of Father’s blessings in this life and the fulfillment of His work and His glory by becoming fathers to our families for eternity.

My father taught me a significant lesson when I was young. He sensed that I was becoming too enamored with temporal things. When I had money, I immediately spent it—almost always on myself.



One afternoon he took me to purchase some new shoes. On the second floor of the department store, he invited me to look out the window with him.

“What do you see?” he asked.

“Buildings, sky, people” was my response.

“How many?”

“A lot!”

He then pulled this coin from his pocket. As he handed it to me, he asked, “What is this?”

I immediately knew: “A silver dollar!”

Drawing on his knowledge of chemistry, he said, “If you melt that silver dollar and mix it with the right ingredients,

you would have silver nitrate. If we coated this window with silver nitrate, what would you see?”

I had no idea, so he escorted me to a full-length mirror and asked, “Now what do you see?”



“I see me.”

“No,” he replied, “what you see is silver reflecting you. If you focus on the silver, all you will see is yourself, and like a veil, it will keep you from seeing clearly the eternal destiny Heavenly Father has prepared just for you.”

“Larry,” he continued, “seek not the things of this world but seek ... first ... the kingdom of God, and to establish [*His*] righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38 [in Matthew 6:33, footnote *a*]).

He told me to keep the dollar and never lose it. Each time I looked at it, I was to think about the eternal destiny that Heavenly Father has for me.

I loved my father and how he taught. I wanted to be like him. He planted in my heart the desire to be a good father, and my deepest hope is that I am living up to his example.

Our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has often said that our decisions determine our destiny and have eternal consequences (see “Decisions Determine Destiny” [Church Educational System fireside, Nov. 6, 2005], 2; [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts)).

Should we not, then, develop a clear vision of our *eternal destiny*, particularly the one that Heavenly Father wants us to achieve—eternal fatherhood? Let our *eternal destiny* drive *all* of our decisions. Regardless of how difficult those decisions may be, Father will sustain us.

I learned about the power of such a vision when I joined my 12- and 13-year-old sons for a 50/20 competition. A 50/20 consists of walking 50 miles (80 km) in less than 20 hours. We started at 9:00 p.m. and walked all that night and most of the next day. It was an excruciating 19 hours, but we succeeded.

Upon returning home, we literally crawled into the house, where a wonderful wife and mother had prepared a lovely

dinner, which we didn't touch. My younger son collapsed, totally exhausted, on the couch, while my older son crawled downstairs to his bedroom.

After some painful rest of my own, I went to my younger son to make sure he was still alive.

"Are you OK?" I asked.

"Dad, that was the hardest thing I have ever done, and I never want to do it again."

I wasn't about to tell him that I would never do it again either. Instead, I told him how proud I was that he had accomplished such a hard thing. I knew it would prepare him for other hard things he would face in his future. With that thought, I said, "Son, let me make you this promise. When you go on your mission, you will never have to walk 50 miles in one day."

"Good, Dad! Then I'm going."

Those simple words filled my soul with gratitude and joy.

I then went downstairs to my oldest son. I lay by him—then touched him. "Son, are you all right?"

"Dad, that was the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life, and I will never, ever do it again." His eyes closed—then opened—and he said, "Unless my son wants me to."

Tears came as I expressed how grateful I was for him. I told him I knew he was going to be a much better father than I was. My heart was full because at his young and tender age he already recognized that one of his most sacred priesthood duties was to be a father. He had no fear of that role and title—the very title that God Himself wants us to use when we speak to Him. I knew I had the responsibility to nurture the embers of fatherhood that were burning within my son.

These words of the Savior took on a much deeper meaning to me as a father:

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for [whatsoever things He] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19).

"I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me" (John 8:28).

I love being a husband and father—married to a chosen daughter of heavenly parents. I love her. It is one of the most fulfilling parts of my life. My hope that night was that my five sons and their sister would always see in me the joy that comes from eternal marriage, fatherhood, and family.

Fathers, I am sure you have heard the saying "Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words" (attributed to Francis of Assisi). Every day you are teaching your children what it means to be a father. You are laying a foundation for the next generation. Your sons will learn how to be husbands and fathers by observing the way you fulfill these roles. For example:

Do they know how much you love and cherish their mother and how much you love being their father?

They will learn how to treat their future wife and children as they watch you treat *each one of them* just as Heavenly Father would.

Through your example, they can learn how to respect, honor, and protect womanhood.

In your home, they can learn to preside over their family in love and righteousness. They can learn to provide the necessities of life and protection for their family—temporally and spiritually (see “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

Brethren, with all the energy of my soul, I ask you to consider this question: Do your sons see you striving to do what Heavenly Father would have *them* do?

I pray the answer is yes. If the answer is no, it’s not too late to change, but you must begin today. And I testify that Heavenly Father will help you.

Now, you young men, whom I dearly love, you know you are preparing to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, receive sacred temple ordinances, fulfill your *duty* and *obligation* to serve a full-time mission, and then, without waiting too long, get married in the temple to a daughter of God and have a family. You are then to lead your family in spiritual things as guided by the Holy Ghost (see D&C 20:44; 46:2; 107:12).

I have asked many young men around the world, “Why are you here?”

So far, not one has responded, “To learn to be a father, that I might be prepared and qualified to receive all that Heavenly Father has.”

Let’s examine *your* Aaronic Priesthood duties as described in section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Be sensitive to what *you* feel as I apply these duties to your service in your family.

“Invite all [of your family] to come unto Christ” (verse 59).

“Watch over [them] always, and be with and strengthen them” (verse 53).

“Preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize” members of your family (verse 46).

“Exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties” (verse 47).

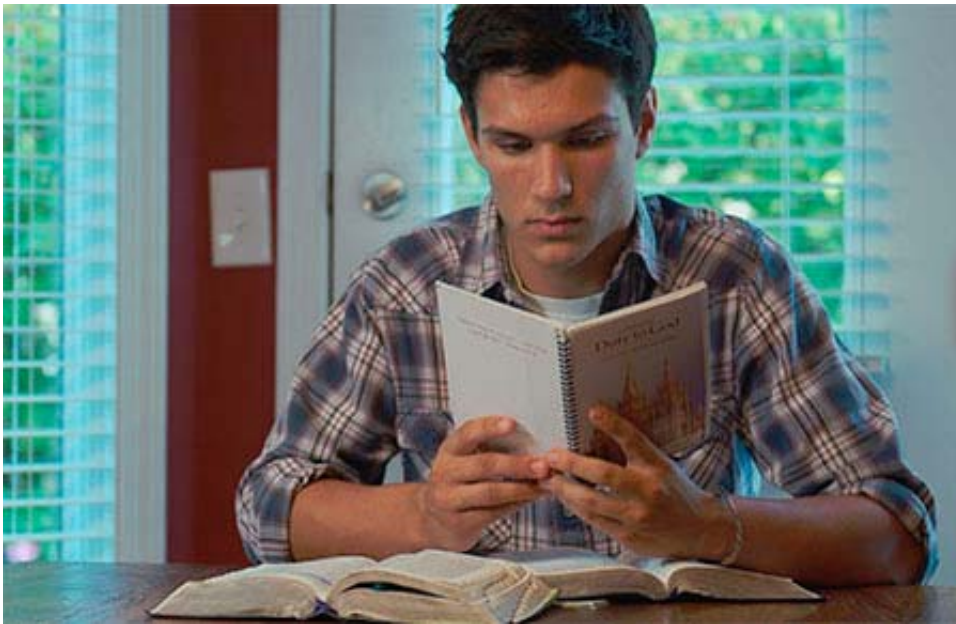
“See that there is no iniquity in [your family], neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking” (verse 54).

“See that [your family meets] together often” (verse 55).

Assist your father in his duties as patriarch. Support your mother with priesthood strength when a father is not present (see verses 52, 56).

When asked, “ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons” in your family (verse 48).

Doesn’t this sound like *the work and role of a father* ?



Fulfilling your Aaronic Priesthood duties is preparing you young men for *fatherhood*. The *Duty to God* resource can help you learn about and make specific plans to fulfill your duties. It can serve as a guide and assistance as you seek Heavenly Father's will and set goals to accomplish it.

Father in Heaven has brought you here at this particular time for a special work and eternal purpose. He wants you to see clearly and understand what that purpose is. He is your Father, and you can always turn to Him for guidance.

I know that Heavenly Father is concerned about each of us individually and has a personal plan for us to achieve our eternal destiny. He has sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to help us overcome our imperfections through the Atonement. He has blessed us with the Holy Ghost to be a witness, companion, and guide *to our eternal destination* if we will rely on Him. May we each enjoy the fulness of Father's blessings in this life and the fulfillment of *His work* and *His glory* by becoming fathers to our families for eternity (see Moses 1:39). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.