

# Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing

## April 2019 General Conference

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Blessings will come as we strive to fulfill our individual responsibility to learn and love the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

The programs and activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are becoming ever more home centered and Church supported, as evidenced by the series of adjustments announced in recent general conferences. President Russell M. Nelson has counseled us: "There is much more to come. ... Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It's going to be exciting."<sup>1</sup>

I pray for and invite the help of the Holy Ghost as we consider together several basic implications of these ongoing adjustments in the Lord's restored Church.

### Home-Centered and Church-Supported Gospel Learning

Elder Craig C. Christensen and I were companions recently in a priesthood leadership conference, and he used two simple questions to emphasize the principle of becoming home centered and Church supported. He suggested that instead of returning to our homes after Church meetings on Sunday and asking, "What did you learn about the Savior and His gospel today at church?" we should ask in our Church meetings, "What did you learn about the Savior and His gospel this week in your home?" Proper Sabbath-day observance, the new curriculum, and the adjusted meeting schedule all help us to learn the gospel both in our homes and at church.

Each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an individual responsibility to learn and live the Lord's teachings and to receive by proper authority the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. We should not expect the Church as an organization to teach or tell us everything we need to know and do to become devoted disciples and endure valiantly to the end.<sup>2</sup> Rather, our personal responsibility is to learn what we should learn, to live as we know we should live, and to become who the Master would have us become. And our homes are the ultimate setting for learning, living, and becoming.

As a child, Joseph Smith learned of God from his family. His efforts to discover God's will for him caused Joseph to search for the truth among many different Christian denominations, ponder diligently the scriptures, and pray sincerely to God. As young Joseph Smith returned to his home from the Sacred Grove immediately after the appearance of the Father and the Son, he spoke first with his mother. As he "leaned up to the fireplace, [his] mother inquired what the matter was. [Joseph] replied, 'Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.' [He] then said to [his] mother, 'I have learned for myself.'"<sup>3</sup> Joseph's experience provides a powerful pattern of learning that each of us should emulate. We too need to learn for ourselves.

The overarching purpose of Heavenly Father's plan is for His children to become more like Him. Accordingly, He provides us with essential opportunities to grow and progress. Our commitment to learn and live according to truth is increasingly important in a world that is "in commotion"<sup>4</sup> and is ever more confused and wicked. We cannot expect simply to attend Church meetings and participate in programs and thereby receive all of the spiritual edification and protection that will enable us "to withstand in the evil day."<sup>5</sup>

"Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness."<sup>6</sup> Inspired Church leaders, teachers, and activities help individual and family efforts to grow spiritually. And though we all need help pressing forward on the covenant path, the ultimate responsibility for developing spiritual strength and stamina rests upon each one of us.

Recall how Nephi, son of the prophet Lehi, desired to see, hear, and know for himself by the power of the Holy Ghost the things his father had learned in the vision of the tree of life. Nephi clearly needed and was blessed in his youth by the example and teachings of his "goodly parents."<sup>7</sup> Yet, just like Joseph Smith, he yearned to learn and know for himself.

If all you or I know about Jesus Christ and His restored gospel is what other people teach or tell us, then the foundation of our testimony of Him and His glorious latter-day work is built upon sand.<sup>8</sup> We cannot rely exclusively upon or borrow gospel light and knowledge from other people—even those whom we love and trust.

Significantly, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that each Latter-day Saint needs to understand for himself or herself "the designs and purposes of God in our coming into the world."<sup>9</sup>

"Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to *them*, can never give *us* a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. *Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose.*"<sup>10</sup>

Enabling the accomplishment of this grand spiritual objective for individuals and families is one of the fundamental reasons the programs and activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are becoming more home centered and Church supported in this specific season of the dispensation of the fulness of times.

## Implications of Home-Centered and Church-Supported Learning

Let me summarize a few basic implications of gospel learning becoming increasingly home centered and Church supported.

The ultimate missionary training center is in our homes; secondary missionary training centers are located in Provo, Manila, Mexico City, and in other locations. Our most instructive Sunday School classes should be our individual and family study in our places of residence; helpful but secondary Sunday School classes are held in our meetinghouses.

Family history centers now are in our homes. Supplemental support for our family history research work also is available in our meetinghouses.

Vital temple preparation classes occur in our homes; important but secondary temple preparation classes also may be conducted periodically in our meetinghouses.

Making our homes sanctuaries wherein we can “stand in holy places”<sup>11</sup> is essential in these latter days. And as important as home-centered and Church-supported learning is for our spiritual strength and protection today, it will be even more vital in the future.

## Home-Centered and Church-Supported Learning and Temple Preparation

Please consider how the principle of “home centered and Church supported” applies to our individual preparation and worthiness to receive sacred ordinances and covenants in the house of the Lord.

Indeed, temple preparation is most effective in our homes. But many Church members are unsure about what appropriately can and cannot be said regarding the temple experience outside of the temple.

President Ezra Taft Benson described why this uncertainty exists:

“The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character. Because of its sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren.

“As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into.

“I believe *a proper understanding or background* will immeasurably help prepare our youth for the temple ... [and] will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his.”<sup>12</sup>

Two basic guidelines can help us achieve the proper understanding emphasized by President Benson.

*Guideline #1. Because we love the Lord, we always should speak about His holy house with reverence. We should not disclose or describe the special symbols associated with the covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies. Neither should we discuss the holy information that we specifically promise in the temple not to reveal.*

*Guideline #2. The temple is the house of the Lord. Everything in the temple points us to our Savior, Jesus Christ. We may discuss the basic purposes of and the doctrine and principles associated with temple ordinances and covenants.*

President Howard W. Hunter counseled: “Let us share with our children the spiritual feelings we have in the temple. And let us teach them more earnestly and more comfortably the things we can appropriately say about the purposes of the house of the Lord.”<sup>13</sup>

Across the generations, from the Prophet Joseph Smith to President Russell M. Nelson, the doctrinal purposes of temple ordinances and covenants have been taught extensively by Church leaders.<sup>14</sup> A rich reservoir of resources exists in print, audio, video, and other formats to help us learn about initiatory ordinances, endowments, marriages, and other sealing ordinances.<sup>15</sup> Information also is

available about following the Savior by receiving and honoring covenants to keep the law of obedience, the law of sacrifice, the law of the gospel, the law of chastity, and the law of consecration.<sup>16</sup> All Church members should become familiar with the excellent materials available at [temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

President Russell M. Nelson emphasized the vital balance between the sacred nature of temple ceremonies and the valuable information about temples published by the Church that is accurate, appropriate, and available publicly. He explained: "I recommend that members ... read entries in the Bible Dictionary that are related to the temple, such as 'Anoint,' 'Covenant,' 'Sacrifices,' and 'Temple.' One may also wish to read Exodus, chapters 26–29, and Leviticus, chapter 8. The Old Testament, as well as the books of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, underscores the antiquity of temple work and the enduring nature of its ordinances."<sup>17</sup>

So, imagine that your son or daughter asks, "Someone at school told me that strange clothing is worn in the temple. Is that right?" A short video is available on [temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) entitled "Sacred Temple Clothing." This excellent resource explains how from ancient times men and women have embraced sacred music, different forms of prayer, symbolic religious clothing, gestures, and rituals to express their innermost feelings of devotion to God. Thus, the Church supports home-centered preparation for the glorious blessings of the temple through basic instruction and remarkable resources such as this video. Much useful information is available to you.<sup>18</sup>

As we strive to walk in the meekness of the Lord's Spirit,<sup>19</sup> we will be blessed to understand and achieve in our homes the necessary balance between what is and what is not appropriate to discuss about sacred temple ordinances and covenants.

## Promise and Testimony

I suspect that some of you may be wondering if your gospel learning actually can become home centered and Church supported. Perhaps you are the only member of the Church in your home, or have an unsupportive spouse, or are a single parent, or live alone as a single or divorced Latter-day Saint, and you may have questions about how these principles apply to you. You may be a husband and a wife looking at each other and questioning, "Can we do this?"

Yes, you can do this! I promise that enabling blessings will flow into and be evident in your life. Doors will open. The light will shine. Your capacity will be increased to persevere diligently and patiently.

I joyfully witness that compensating blessings will come as we strive to fulfill our individual responsibility to learn and love the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We truly can "be prepared to obtain every needful thing."<sup>20</sup> I so promise and testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.