

Tuesday is Prayer & Gospel Principles

"Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ"
-The Family Proclamation

Brigham Young University
Campus Education Week, August 2009



Tuesday

- Today I will focus on centering myself, my marriage, and my family on the Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Today, I will call my family together for prayer and scripture study.
- Today, I will set an example and live the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Our Godless Society

Recently, *USA Today* featured a front page article about civil marriage in our country. The article stated that "fewer American couples who marry today see the need for religion's approval."¹ Put another way; there is a trend in our country to be married by civil authority rather than the clergy. In fact, more than 40% of marriages today are performed civilly rather than religiously.² Marriage is becoming more of a bond between husband and wife, with no acknowledgment of God's presence or blessing.

#1: Center Marriage on Jesus Christ

- President Howard W. Hunter who declared "Please remember this one thing. If our [marriages] ...are centered upon Jesus Christ ... nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our [marriages and families] are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can be permanently right" (*Ensign*, April 1995, 21).



#2: Prayer

"I know of no single practice that **will have a more salutary effect upon your lives than the practice of kneeling together as you begin and close each day. Somehow the little storms that seem to afflict every marriage are dissipated when, kneeling before the Lord, you thank him for one another, in the presence of one another, and then together invoke his blessings upon your lives, your home, your loved ones, and your dreams.**

"**God then will be your partner, and your daily conversations with him will bring peace into your hearts and a joy into your lives that can come from no other source. Your companionship will sweeten through the years; your love will strengthen. Your appreciation for one another will grow"** (Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, June 1971, 72; emphasis added).

A Second Witness

President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency told of the day he and his wife, Frances, were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. Benjamin Bowring, the man who performed the ceremony, gave them the following counsel: "May I offer you newlyweds a formula which will ensure that any disagreement you may have will last no longer than one day? **Every night kneel by the side of your bed. One night, Brother Monson, you offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. The next night you, Sister Monson, offer the prayer, aloud, on bended knee. I can then assure you that any misunderstanding that develops during the day will vanish as you pray. You simply can't pray together and retain any but the best of feelings toward one another"** (President Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 70).

Three is a Charm



Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "If, as husband and wife, you are having serious misunderstandings or if you feel some strain or tension building up in your marriage, you should humbly get on your knees together and ask God our Father, with a sincere heart and real intent, to lift the darkness that is over your relationship, that you may receive the needed light, see your errors, repent of your wrongs, forgive each other, and receive each unto yourselves as you did in the beginning. I solemnly assure you that God lives and will answer your humble pleas" (David B. Haight, *Ensign*, May 1984, 14).

Why Not a 4th Witness?

"When we talk to young people facing marriage, we tell them of the great value that will come to their lives if, as husband and wife, they will kneel and pray together. When little ones join them in family prayer and take their turn as they grow old enough to speak, they will learn lessons that will stay with them all of their lives. What a great blessing we are passing by if we do not take the time to kneel with our families in family prayer" (President Howard W. Hunter, *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 146).

#3: Live the Gospel

"When a husband and wife go together frequently to the holy temple, kneel in prayer together in their home with their family, go hand in hand to their religious meetings, keep their lives wholly chaste, mentally and physically, ... and both are working together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God, then happiness is at its pinnacle" (President Spencer W. Kimball, *Marriage and Divorce* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 24).

They Heeded them Not

- As I have worked with many LDS couples over the years, I feel comfortable estimating that over 90% of the couples I have visited with did *not* follow President Kimball's counsel. They were *not* attending the temple; they were *not* attending their religious meetings, they were *not* living wholly chaste lives; they were *not* working together in building the kingdom as they served their families first, and then the Church. Consequently, they were *not* happy. Yes, initially the Savior was a part of their marriage; initially they were following President Kimball's counsel and living the gospel. But, for some reason, that all changed. For some reason, they shut off the flow of the Spirit, and subsequently, the life-blood of their marriage was gone. Such marriages need not be. The good news is that if your marriage is off track, you can change. You can put things back together. You can invite the Savior back into your lives and your marriage by doing that which He commands us to do. He can heal you and your marriage, and he can bless you again as He did in the beginning of your relationship.

#4: Practice Charity in the Home & Family

"Perhaps the greatest charity comes when we are kind to each other, when we don't judge or categorize someone else, when we simply give each other the benefit of the doubt or remain quiet. **Charity is accepting someone's differences, weaknesses, and shortcomings; having patience with someone who has let us down; or resisting the impulse to become offended when someone doesn't handle something the way we might have hoped.** Charity is refusing to take advantage of another's weakness and being willing to forgive someone who has hurt us. Charity is expecting the best of each other" (Marvin J. Ashton, "The Tongue Can Be a Sharp Sword," *Ensign*, May 1992, 19).

Example

"Husband (seventy-eight) has Parkinson's disease with its ceaseless tremor of arms and legs. Wife (two years younger) struggles with arthritis and insomnia. How do such seasoned mates cope? One way: At night, husband places hand under wife's neck while they lie in bed. Hand 'automatically' massages and soothes. He prays for her through his mobile 'laying on of hands.' Wife is relieved, released to sleep. Husband then falls asleep. The shaking ceases" (Truman G. Madsen & Stephen R. Covey, *Marriage & Family: Gospel Insights*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1983], 33).

Example

"Wife of a General Authority suffers stroke and extensive paralysis. For five years she is confined to bed. In the last year she is unable to speak. Husband moves her bed into the living room and surrounds her with bustling life, speaking to her in all their accumulated inside jokes and code phrases and love pats. She can only reply with her eyes. They are full of peace. Visitors say, 'How can one think evil of a gospel which has created a face like that?'" (Truman G. Madsen & Stephen R. Covey, *Marriage & Family: Gospel Insights*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1983], 34-35).

Treat Them Like Angels

"Let the father be the head of the family, the master of his own household; and let him treat them [his family] as an angel would treat them" (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 197-98).



#5: Put Christ at the Center of Your Marriage

"When a person has this map or frame of reference, the Lord and his work become the driving force of that person's life. It becomes the unifying and organizational principle, the center around which everything revolves.... In keeping with Christ's example, if the God/Christ-centered person is offended, he blesses in return. He returns kindness for unkindness, patience for impatience. If he is afflicted, he chooses a response which enables him to grow and learn from the affliction, to suffer with meaning and nobility, a response which will have a greater influence on others than perhaps any other value...

Put Christ at the Center of Your Marriage

"If the person is praised, he gives thanks. If he is blamed, he appraises the matter to see whether there may be some blameworthiness in him, and if there is he plans self-improvement. But he does not overreact and either accuse or blame in return, or condemn himself.... [Instead] he seeks to identify with Christ. Christ is his model. For instance, he studies scriptural accounts of the Savior's earthly life, and as he does so he visualizes each of the situations recorded. He empathizes with the people involved, sees himself as part of the action, feels himself in the more positive, disciple-type roles. He creates in his mind his response to present-day situations based on living by the principles represented by the scriptural accounts....

A Christ Centered Marriage



"Gradually, as he comes to see the Savior as the perfect model and mentor, he identifies with that mental image and vision. In this way he acquires "the mind of Christ" and thus gradually learns to respond to life situations as *He* would have responded (which is as His Father would have responded)" (Stephen R. Covey, *he Divine Center* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 148-149).

Developing Christlike Character Traits

- When couples fail to center their relationship on the teachings of the Master, they have no promise or guarantee that things will work out.
- In fact, they do not even have the resources to correct their course. Without the Lord's Spirit, the power to be kind and compassionate is almost impossible. The natural man takes over in most cases.
- Human kindness and charity wane when spiritual resources are ignored or forgotten and a relationship deteriorates. Individuals without the Spirit become sarcastic, angry, critical, defensive, and uncaring.

#6: Develop Christlike Character Traits

- When we understand the eternal purpose of marriage, the Savior is a part of the relationship, then we succeed. The more we understand the gospel, the more likely we will be to model our lives after Him. When we begin to think as He thinks, and behave as He behaves, it is amazing what we can accomplish as a married couple. When we take time to develop Christ-like character traits, the Holy Ghost will be with us to inspire us and teach us how to act and what to say.
- Doctrine & Covenants 4

#7: Live by His Spirit

- We must do more, however, than merely love our spouses. We must show Christ-like, unconditional, love. In fact, we must love our spouses as the Savior loves us. **The Holy Ghost is a key to Christ-like love. The more we tap into the Holy Ghost, the greater will be our ability to exercise charity.** It is the spirit of the Lord that allows us to love others as he loves us. Christ like love means to sacrifice and to love someone else more than you love yourself.
- Jacob 4:13

Let the Holy Spirit Guide

"Never cease a day of your life to have the Holy Ghost resting upon you; and never cease, fathers, to pray that your wives may enjoy this blessing, that their infants may be endowed with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb. If you want to see a nation rise up full of the Holy Ghost and power, this is the way to bring it about" (Brigham Young, *Brigham Young Papers: 1832-78*, Historical Department Archives. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 8 April 1852).

#8: Cultivate a Spirit of Sacrifice

- Elder Bruce C. Hafen further explained that showing charity to our spouses is a **fruit of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Loving our spouses as the Savior loves us comes from the strength and power of the atonement.** True charity involves sacrificing our own needs for that of our spouses (see *The Belonging Heart*, p. x; *emphasis added*).

Sacrifice Brings Blessings

President Ezra Taft Benson promised: **"As you sacrifice for each other and your children, the Lord will bless you, and your commitment to the Lord and your service in His kingdom will be enhanced"** (*Church News*, 7 July 1990, 16; as cited in Ezra Taft Benson, *Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990], 54).

Put Our Spouses Needs First

- "If there is forbearance, if there is forgiveness, if there is an anxious looking after the happiness of one's companion, then love will flourish and blossom" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Look to the Future," *Ensign*, November 1997, 69).
- "If you will make your first concern the comfort, the well-being, and the happiness of your companion, sublimating any personal concern to that loftier goal, you will be happy, and your marriage will go on through eternity" (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *The Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 329).

#9: Develop Mutual Respect

"The basis of a good marriage is mutual respect—respect for one another. That is the key. If a husband would think less of himself and more of his wife, we'd have happier homes throughout the Church and throughout the world" ("At home with the Hinckley's," *Ensign*, October 2003, 22).