

D & C Lesson 40

FINDING JOY IN TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, November 2001

1. **The Spirit of Elijah is prompting people to turn their hearts to their ancestors**

A. “We call it the Spirit of Elijah because Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood to Joseph Smith (D&C 110:13-16). Through this power, sealing ordinances can be performed that unite families for eternity. . . . It prompts us to receive temple ordinances for ourselves, do family history research, and attend the temple to receive priesthood ordinances for the dead.”
[*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 233]

B. “What are some things that the Spirit of Elijah is guiding people to do throughout the world? . . . Genealogy has become a popular hobby throughout the world and . . . technological advances are making genealogy easier and more accessible.” [*Ibid.*]

C. **President Gordon B. Hinckley**: “All of our vast family history endeavor is directed to temple work. There is no other purpose for it. The temple ordinances become the crowning blessings the Church has to offer.” [*Ensign*, May 1998, p. 88]

2. **Performing temple and family history work gives us increased spiritual refinement and power**

A. **President Boyd K. Packer**: “No work is more of a protection to this church than temple work and the genealogical research that supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power.” [“The Holy Temple,” *Ensign*, February 1995, p. 36]

3. **All family members can participate in temple and family history work throughout their lives**

A. **Elder Dallin H. Oaks**: “In the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and . . . all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances at a particular time. . . . Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something.” [“In Wisdom and Order,” *Ensign*, June 1989, p. 6]

B. “How can parents teach their children about the importance of the temple? . . . Parents can attend the temple regularly or actively work toward attending, teach children about the temple and testify of the blessings we receive through temples, and take children 12 years of age and older to the temple to be baptized for the dead.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 234]

4. **We should have a current temple recommend and attend the temple regularly**

A. **President Gordon B. Hinckley**: “I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein. I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman. There is need for constant improvement in all of our lives. There is need occasionally to leave the noise and the tumult of the world and step within the walls of a sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace.” [*Ensign*, November 1994, p. 8]

B. **President Howard B. Hunter**: “It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be

worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families.” [Ensign, November 1994, p. 8]

5. We should prepare to have ordinances performed for deceased relatives

Some suggestions:

A. We should acquire and learn to use the Church genealogical program, the *Personal Ancestral File* and related items. (To order, see pp. 100-109 of the *2001 Church Materials Catalog (United States and Canada) For Members*, available from the Bishopric.

B. We should become acquainted with, and learn how to use, the Church’s genealogical site on the internet: *Family Search Internet Genealogy Service* www.familysearch.org

C. We should visit our stake or area Family History Center, and find out what materials are available to us there.

D. We should take a class, or classes, in genealogical research.

E. We should get our personal and family records in order, find out what lines in our families should be researched first, and get to work researching them.

F. We should work closely with our ward family history consultants and have them help us shift into gear and get some genuine genealogical research accomplished.

G. We should organize our adult families, so research on our family lines is done on a systematic basis.

H. **Elder Richard G. Scott:** “Arrange to participate for deceased ancestors in the sealing and other ordinances. . . . I find it helpful when receiving ordinances for another to try to relate to that person specifically. I think of him and pray that he will accept the ordinance and benefit from it. Do these things with a prayer in your heart that the Holy Spirit will enhance your understanding and enrich your life. Those worthy prayers will be answered.” [Ensign, May 1999, p. 27]

6. Learn about your ancestors’ lives, and teach your family about them

A. **Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander:** “Not one of my children has any recollection of my grandparents. If I want my children and grandchildren to know those who still live in my memory, then I must build the bridge between them. I alone am the link to the generations that stand on the other side of me. It is my responsibility to knit their hearts together through love and respect, even though they may never have known each other personally. My grandchildren will have no knowledge of their family’s history if I do nothing to preserve it for them. That which I do not in some way record will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have. The work of gathering and sharing eternal family keepsakes is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another.” [Ensign, May 1999, pp. 83-84]

7. Keep a journal, and prepare a personal history for your family

A. Prepare for your family a well-prepared personal history of 75 to 150 pages, with lots of pictures and a careful record of your life, testimony, accomplishments and service. Reproduce copies for all your children and close family members.

8. Organize your family and focus their attention on genealogical and temple work.

A. Hold family reunions.

B. Work to keep the branches of your family united and in close touch with one another.

9. Pray that the Spirit of Elijah will inspire and motivate you and your family, and that

you can be a blessing to your forefathers who died without the blessings of the gospel in their lives.

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