

EXPANDED CHAPTER NOTES (some chapters are not found in Abundant Paths)

SEE Epilogue: “MORE THAN 2 PATHS TO RELATING WITH A GAY LOVED ONE – For Families of LGBTQIA Persons.”

Trailhead/Jump in Here (intro)

1. Richard Weissbourd et al., “Loneliness in America: How the Pandemic Has Deepened an Epidemic of Loneliness and What We Can Do about It,” Making Caring Common Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, last modified February 2021, <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>. Prior to COVID-19, a Cigna survey said 3 of 5 people are lonely. Elena Renken, “Most Americans Are Lonely, And Our Workplace Culture May Not Be Helping,” National Public Radio, January 23, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/01/23/798676465/most-americans-are-lonely-and-our-workplace-culture-may-not-be-helping>. See also “Why Men Are Lonelier in America Than Elsewhere,” The Economist, January 1, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/01/01/why-men-are-lonelier-in-america-than-elsewhere>; “Donate: Help the Foundation for Male Studies Meet Its Objective,” Foundation for Male Studies, <https://www.malestudies.org/donate>.
2. Most of us delicately try to hold both truth and love (I doubt any of us do it perfectly)—one virtue without the other can be a vice. I did write a book, the subtitle of which is *Communication Guaranteed Not to Offend*. This is not that book—and that book was a gag, since such communication seems to elude us mortals.
 3. Isa. 55:8; 1 Sam. 16:7.
4. Some people tell me they have explored the kind of connectedness I discuss in this book without seeing a payoff. When I probe, they acknowledge that they tried to combine two inadequate ways of relating (or never truly let go of old ways of relating). To truly experience profound and resilient connection, some things are best let go or avoided.
5. All biblical references are to the King James Version. I include references to books of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sections and verses of the Doctrine and Covenants are shown in the format “D&C 19:23,” while abbreviations in the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price are as follows:
 - 1 Nephi.....1 Ne.
 - 2 Nephi.....2 Ne.

Jacob.....Jac.
Jarom.....Jar.
Mosiah.....Mos.
Helaman.....Hel.
Moroni.....Moro.
Abraham.....Abr.

Fiona and TerryL Givens in their book, *All Things New: Rethinking Sin, Salvation, and Everything In Between* (Meridian: Faith Matters Publishing, 2020), offer new ideas on traditional terminology. The chapter titles alone give a wealth of new perspectives on old language:

- Salvation: From Rescue to Realization
 - Heaven: From “Where” to “with Whom”
 - Fall: From Corruption to Ascension
 - Obedience: From Subject to Heir
 - Sin: From Guilt to Woundedness
 - Justice: From Punishment to Restoration
 - Forgiveness: From Transactional Love to Absolute Love
 - Atonement: From Penal-Substitution to Radical Healing
 - Worthiness: From Merit to Miracle
 - Church: From Reservoir of the Righteous to Collaborators with Christ.
- See also “Big Question #6: What about Our LGBT Brothers and Sisters?” Faith Matters, n.d., <https://faithmatters.org/big-question-6-what-about-our-lgbt-brothers-and-sisters/>; Garrett R. Maxwell, “The Good God Hermeneutic: A Reconsideration of Religious Vocabulary,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 47 (2021): 151–58, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/good-god-hermeneutic-reconsideration-religious-vocabulary>.
6. Sally Hogshead, Quotss.com, SoftCopy IT Services Pvt. Ltd., accessed August 17, 2022, <http://www.quotss.com/quote/The-goal-is-not-to-change-who-you-are-but-to-become-more-of-who-you-are-at>.
7. As not everyone is comfortable with the world knowing their personal situations or status, I have changed nearly all friends’ names in this book, and I sometimes use the vague reference “personal social media post” (with the “names” and permission of the authors) where applicable.

Chapter 1 – OUT OF BOUNDS

1. The following is written by Blake Fisher, inclusion advisor at Brigham Young University:

I’m curious if celibate, Buddhist monks [ever hear] the following:

- It's so sad that your [tradition] "forces" you to give up sex and "makes" you live this way.
- A loving God would never ask you to sacrifice anything that feels good or could make you happy.
- Your life is going to be so sad and meaningless without a romantic, sexual relationship.
- I can't believe your church tells you what to eat, what to wear, and how to live . . . so controlling.
- Do you wonder if you're living this way because of fear . . . fear of rejection, of your own desires, of hell, the unknown?
- I once knew someone who was a celibate monk, they were so much happier after they left, you should leave too.
 - Don't worry, your church is eventually going to change (catch up with the times) . . . and then you'll be happy.
- Even if you've found peace and joy on your journey, it's probably best that you keep it to yourself so others don't feel pressured to live the same way.

(Personal social media post, 2022)

2. John 3:17; Mark 12:30.

Chapter 2 – EITHER/OR?

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Greatest Possession," Liahona, November 2021, 9, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/10/12holland?lang=ase>. Deut. 30:6; Luke 10:27; Mark 12:30; Matt. 22:37; D&C 4:2, 59:5; Alma 39:13.
 2. Rom. 3:23; Eph. 4.
 3. 1 Cor. 12:21.
4. Meghan Decker, Tender Leaves of Hope: Finding Belonging as LGBTQ Latter-day Saint Women (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2022), introduction, <https://meghandecker.com/blog>.
 5. Gen. 3:6–11; Moses 4:5–19.
6. I nearly drowned three times as a child. My father once tried to teach me to swim without communicating that to me. As he took me into the deep end of a pool with no explanation, I panicked and fought wildly to get back into the shallow. Because of my previous experiences with water, I experienced real terror. My father experienced huge rejection: His own son didn't trust him with his safety. I imagine this cemented his defensive rejection of me that began with me pushing him away years earlier as a baby. All I anticipated from him was a volatile temperament (mostly just his raised voice). I eventually taught myself to swim when I was about ten.

7. Job 21:22; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 42:9, 46:9, 48:3; Jer. 1:5; Acts 2:23, 17:26; Rom. 8:29, 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2; Abr. 2:8.
8. Fredrik Böök, Hans Christian Andersen: A Biography (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1962).
9. Based on what he knew at such a young age, I later concluded that the boy who introduced me to sex had previously been molested. I make no declarations about a connection between molestation and sexual orientation here. Many kids who are molested by someone of their sex never become gay, and many who aren't molested do. (Parents: Six or seven years is not too early an age to begin to discuss sex and boundaries with your child, so long as you tailor the conversation to a child's understanding.) See Gregory M. Herek, "Facts about Homosexuality and Child Molestation," LGBPsychology.org, n.d., https://lgbpsychology.org/html/facts_molestation.html; "Recognizing the Gift of Being Same-Sex Attracted: An Interview with SSA Women," Leading Saints, February 22, 2020, <https://leadingsaints.org/recognizing-the-gift-of-being-same-sex-attracted-an-interview-with-ssa-women/>; Kurt Freund, Robin Watson, and Robert Dickey, "Does Sexual Abuse in Childhood Cause Pedophilia: An Exploratory Study," Archives of Sexual Behavior 19 (1990): 557–68, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2082860/>; "Same-Sex Attraction is Real," My Chosen Road (blog), February 16, 2020, <http://mychosenroad.com/ssa-is-real/>.
10. See "Overview," The Asexual Visibility & Education Network, n.d., <https://www.asexuality.org/?q=overview.html>.
11. Most choices involve multiple options, though we sometimes need practice seeing them. See Chip Heath and Dan Heath, Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work (New York: Crown Business, 2013).
12. Gen. 50:20.
13. Neither the scriptures nor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints condemn same-sex love (same-sex love is a gift), only sexual relationships between anyone not in wife-husband marriage. My church doesn't base its stance on homosexuality on Bible verses alone. See Amos 3:7. You might be surprised to learn how involved God is in your life. See <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe?lang=eng> and <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/gay?lang=eng>.
14. You may not serve a mission, but if you have the opportunity to travel—take it! It may be the best education a person can receive. I've been privileged to visit many places—and I value those experiences over all advanced degrees.

Chapter 3 – THE BEATEN PATH

1. See Colleen Harrison, *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage* (Hyrum, UT: Windhaven, 2006), <https://colleenharrison.com/books/he-did-deliver-me-from-bondage/>. Harrison's book about overcoming addiction is based on principles of Christian discipleship in the Book of Mormon. See also <https://www.bookofmormoncentral.org/>.
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (Boston, New York: Mariner Books, 2012), 121.
3. While a wholly inadequate bandage, addiction is a sign that a legitimate need is not being met. "Jesus saw sin as wrong but also was able to see sin as springing from deep and unmet needs on the part of the sinner." Spencer W. Kimball, "Jesus: The Perfect Leader," *Ensign*, August 1979, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1979/08/jesus-the-perfect-leader?lang=eng>.
4. Matt. 15:22; Mark 7:26; 2 Ne. 2:14, 18, 27. Satan cannot force us to do evil (or anything else), but we can give away our agency by doing as he suggests.
5. "God, as it seems to me, bestows two other gifts; a supernatural Need-love of Himself and a supernatural Need-love of one another." Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 129. "Heterosexual men commonly prefer the company of other men, in preference to the women with whom they may be romantically involved. This phenomenon is readily visible in the work environment, and graphically illustrated in recreational pursuits like drinking, gambling, and especially sports. Men's preference for men is based on a combination of positive identifications with [males]. . . . An almost universal fear of confrontation with inherent bisexuality dictates indirect expression of male-to-male intimacy. This is frequently in the form of activities culturally associated with masculinity and that affirm an often fragile sense of heterosexuality." Irwin Hirsch, "On Men's Preference for Men," *Gender and Psychoanalysis* 2, no. 4 (1997): 469–486, <https://pep-web.org/browse/document/gap.002.0469a>. See also Kira Asatryan, "3 Surprising Truths About Gender and Loneliness," posted January 4, 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-art-closeness/201601/3-surprising-truths-about-gender-and-loneliness>; Elwood David Watson, "Men Need Other Men in Their Lives!" *The Good Men Project*, October 26, 2016, <https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/men-need-men-lives-wcz/>; Sarah K. McKenzie et al., "Masculinity, Social Connectedness, and Mental Health: Men's Diverse Patterns of Practice," *American Journal of Men's Health* 12, no. 5 (September 2018): 1247–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988318772732>.
6. Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:9; Moro. 10:32.
7. "[Christ] could feed 5,000 and there were leftovers. 'My grace is sufficient for all men' (Ether 12:27). The Savior's redeeming and healing power can cover any sin, wound, or trial—no matter how large or how difficult—and there are

leftovers. His grace is sufficient.” Brent H. Nielson, “Is There No Balm in Gilead?” Liahona, November 2021, 58.

8. God loves queer persons! John 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:22; Luke 4:18. “The truth shall make you free.” John 8:32. I have not condemned queerness (I celebrate it); I don’t believe gays are defective or that queerness is a compulsion or a choice.

Chapter 4 – IS IT ALL ABOUT SEX?

1. “No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (London: Vintage, 1623) Ch. 17. See Jesse Johnson, “Why Men Need Other Men to Prosper,” Vital Collective, n.d., <https://vitalcollective.com/why-men-need-other-men-to-prosper/>; Paul Friesen, “4 Things Men Need from Other Men (That They Can’t Get from Women,” Biola University Center for Marriage and Relationships, January 29, 2019, <https://cmr.biola.edu/blog/2019/jan/29/4-things-men-need-other-men-they-cant-get-women/>; Wednesday Lee Friday, “Women Are Often More Lonely Than We Let On,” The Roots of Loneliness Project, 2022, accessed August 21,

2022, <https://www.rootsofaloneliness.com/lonely-women>.

2. My sense is that the invention of the word homosexual has done severe damage to individuals and to society as a whole; it narrows all same-sex love down to one definition that denotes sexual expression. However, simple attraction to—a desire to be with—those of one’s own sex has historically had an abundance of meanings and feelings for most people. Even when there has been intense love expressed between persons of the same sex, not all of them desired or expressed that love sexually. Most healthy people have some kind of attraction to their own sex, and these attractions have a variety of impetuses and manifestations. Linking sexual expression to the entire spectrum of same-sex attractions can cause bewilderment and self-doubt while also bringing outsider condemnation on “moral” grounds. See “How and When the Word Homosexual Was First Introduced into the Bible,” Canyon Walker Connections (blog), November 25,

2017, <https://canyonwalkerconnections.com/word-homosexual-first-introduced-bible/>; Robert P. George, “The Philosophical Basis of Biblical Marriage,” Public Square Magazine, January 6,

2022, <https://publicsquaremag.org/faith/gospel-fare/the-philosophical-basis-of-biblical-marriage/>. See also <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-man-who-invented-homo b 8143560>

3. Cultural norms can hold us back or inform us. I remember standing next to one of the “Lost Boys” (Sudanese refugee) for some photographs to be taken;

though we had barely met, he instinctively took my hand. Such behavior—including men kissing or walking arm in arm with men in some countries—has nothing to do with homosexuality but with natural affection. (A kiss between men in many cultures signifies neither an exclusive nor a sexual pairing.)

4. While important, fasting, prayer, scripture study—even willpower—were never enough to free me of compulsion, and nothing would take away my God-given need to connect healthfully with men.

5. Rather than take (or threaten to take) what brings an addict joy and connection, increase healthful versions of it! See American Addiction Institute, “Understanding the Root Cause of Addiction,” American Institute of Mind and Medicine, 2020, <https://american-addiction.com/lapse-vs-relapse/>.

6. Kinsey Institute, “The Kinsey Scale,” Indiana University, 2020, <https://kinseyinstitute.org/research/publications/kinsey-scale.php>. Newer, more detailed sexual orientation scales exist; this book uses Kinsey’s for simplicity and familiarity. I acknowledge that even gender identity has complex biological and psychological nuances, but for simplicity in describing sexual orientation, I use basic male/female attractions here. Some people confuse same-sex attraction with pedophilia. I and most LGBTQIA and heterosexual people are not attracted to children. See Ian Johnston, “Pedophilia a ‘Sexual Orientation—Like Being Straight or Gay,’” Independent, April 3, 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/paedophilia-sexual-orientation-straight-gay-criminal-psychologist-child-sex-abuse-a6965956.html>. See also <https://hornet.com/stories/pedophiles-are-mostly-heterosexual/> and https://www.huffpost.com/entry/homosexuality-and-pedophi_b_1932622. Regarding options, David A. Bednar says, “When we define ourselves by the labels of the world, we limit our divine potential and, in so doing, limit our ability to choose.” “And Nothing Shall Offend Them,” Ensign, November 2006, 89–92.

7. See chapter 10; Nazanin Moali, “Men, Arousal, and Erections: Why They Don’t Always Come Together,” Oasis2Care, last updated December 18, 2019, <https://oasis2care.com/sexuality/men-arousal-and-erections-why-they-dont-always-come-together/>; “Sexual Arousal vs. Sexual Desire,” Husband Material, last accessed September 23, 2022, <https://podcast.husbandmaterial.com/713910/10616077-sexual-arousal-vs-sexual-desire-with-dr-doug-carpenter>; Go Ask Alice, “Can Erections Happen When You’re Not Sexually Aroused,” Columbia University, last updated April 30, 2015, <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/can-erections-happen-when-youre-not-sexually-aroused>; McGill, “I May Have an Erection but I’m Just Not That Into It,” McGill University News

- and Events, last updated July 23, 2013, <https://www.mcgill.ca/channels/news/i-may-have-erection-i%E2%80%99m-just-not-it-229207>; “Is an Erection Always an Indication of a Sexual Arousal or Attraction? Why or Why Not?” Quora, n.d., <https://www.quora.com/Is-an-erection-always-an-indication-of-a-sexual-arousal-or-attraction-Why-or-why-not>.
8. See Morton Hunt, “About Men; The Comfort of Pals,” *The New York Times*, January 18, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/18/magazine/about-men-the-comfort-of-pals.html>.
9. See Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 57–91.
10. I must state that, at least for an addict, no rule, no boundary—no risk of jail, HIV, death by a psychopath, public humiliation, family destruction, loss of employment and everything and everyone—is sufficient deterrent to acting out or “using.” To quote the experts, addiction is “cunning, baffling, and powerful.” Sexaholics Anonymous (“White Book,” Brentwood, TN: Sexaholics Anonymous, 1984), 2. It’s no fiction that the astounding intellect of Dr. Arthur C. Doyle’s fictional character Sherlock Holmes was no match against his own opioid addiction (you likely know real-life examples). How is it that I don’t want my “drug of choice” today? Grace and the superior connections that actually meet my needs (see chapters 10–11).
11. See Chantelle Pattemore, “How to Set Boundaries in Your Relationships,” *Psych Central* (blog), last updated June 3, 2021, <https://psychcentral.com/blog/why-healthy-relationships-always-have-boundaries-how-to-set-boundaries-in-yours>. On ongoing emotional need: “She does not realise that the husband whom she succeeds in isolating from his own kind will not be very well worth having.” Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 15, 76. See also Matt Walsh, “The Most Effective Way to Destroy Your Husband, Ruin Your Marriage, and Encourage Infidelity,” *The Daily Wire*, n.d., <https://www.dailywire.com/news/walsh-most-effective-way-destroy-your-husband-ruin-matt-walsh>.

Chapter 5 – FREEDOM & OPTIONS—BEYOND EITHER/OR (complete chapter w/extras)

Why can’t there be gay marriages in the Church of Jesus Christ?
Are the only options for believing LGBTQIA people to let feelings override convictions or to live lonely?

You may or may not have doubts about God, but I hope you'll indulge me in answering the above questions (questions that you've likely asked yourself or others). They're more than just interesting points related to sexuality; these questions are crucial to getting the most out of relationships.

The benefits of premarital chastity and marital fidelity have been studied and documented significantly, mostly in heterosexual pairings.¹ Still, gay living doesn't cause unwanted pregnancies or create single parent homes (at least, not instantly). What possible harm can come from it? Do the disadvantages of premarital sexual activity and infidelity apply to gays? Why might God hold gays to the same chastity standards as heterosexual people?

In attempting to answer the above questions here and in earlier chapters, I share some concepts which have persuaded me that God's moral standards are not about inequity but about lasting joy for everyone. This point may seem like a tangent, but it is quite important to answering the enormous questions above. If a person rules out God as a rational belief, they can only view His standards as baseless and those who follow them as foolish. Additionally, ruling out God as a reasonable source of insight leaves people with incomplete information—and fewer options.

Two traditionally “Judeo-Christian” ideas have caused countless people distress and alienation from God:

1. God invented justice (false)
2. God is omnipotent (true)

Some people feel Christianity lacks credibility, presuming that both of the above statements are doctrine. They ask (validly), “Why would an all-powerful God make laws and consequences, then send His Son to suffer consequences so we could get around the rules?” To phrase it differently, “If God is omnipotent, why doesn't He just get rid of rules, consequences, and evil?”

Is it possible that some things simply can't be eliminated? Unlike some religions, my faith teaches that some things were not created but have always existed. These include the following:

Intelligences (us)
Matter
Good and evil

Agency (free will) and justice (consequence)

We are older than the stars! Creation ex nihilo—that is, from nothing—flies in the face of physical law. God is a being of reason and logic. The Hebrew word used for create in Genesis means “to organize.”²

God not only organizes extant matter, but He also organized the hosts of heaven (us). Each of us is an eternal intelligence who (before coming to earth) was born voluntarily to Heavenly Parents into bodies of spirit, some male, some female. God is literally the “Father of [our] spirits.”³

When we grasp that every one of us is (to modify Catholic phraseology) of the “same substance” as God—that the substance that makes up your spirit literally comes from God’s very essence—we see that no one is a mere creation or product. In other words, you are not a building an architect designed; you are a child of the Architect—with the potential to grow to be like Him and enjoy all that He knows, all that He has, and all that He can do (with His blessing!). Ask a child, and they can tell you a calf doesn’t grow to be a horse, but a cow or bull; a kitten becomes an adult cat; and a child of God can grow to be and “inherit all things.” You belong! God’s feelings for you are truly familial; we are all literally siblings, and your potential is unlimited.⁴

GOOD & EVIL

If you’re unsure about the existence of good and evil, here’s a simple definition: Good is voluntarily giving of self for the benefit of others; evil is putting personal gratification or gain above that of others. (Goodness doesn’t ignore self-care, which everyone must do or die.) I’m not sure I’ve met anyone, atheist or believer, who hasn’t found satisfaction in doing something kind for another person or emptiness in putting self before others or using them. These results are so consistent that we alter our behavior to avoid the emptiness of selfishness. One might loosely associate good and evil with yin and yang or with order and chaos.⁵

While God isn’t the author of evil, evil has always existed, and it affects us all. Some people, in their minds, still hold omnipotent God responsible for evil because He allows opposition (for His purposes).⁶

Because we are children of a benevolent God who loves us, I’m confident that we exist to attain joy—lasting, jump-up-and-down kind of joy.⁷ Why would a loving parent allow painful things to happen to beloved children? That is a question worth pondering very carefully.⁸

AGENCY & JUSTICE

This concept is vital to understanding the character of God: Independent of God's judgment, independent of mortal courts, eternal justice exacts compensation for any and all loss or harm, whether or not harm was intended. There must be equilibrium, regardless of the cost of restoring that balance (recall science's universal law that every action has an "equal and opposite reaction"). Every choice has always been attached to a natural, equal and opposite, consequence. When we know that consequence is not a construct but occurs naturally; that each of us makes mistakes and breaks eternal laws with fixed consequences, the cost of which we cannot possibly pay; that we need a willing Redeemer—able to pay the price for us, then we can grasp that God did not send his Son to die to get around His own made-up demand for justice!⁹

God is omnipotent because He knows all laws and is bound to follow them. He is one hundred percent true, sincere, and accurate; there is nothing mistaken, dishonest, or inequitable in Him.

If God didn't work within the parameters of justice and the eternal principle of action and reaction, He would not be God; matter would not conform to His will because He would be trying to make it behave contrary to the laws of physics or truth. He would not be omnipotent, and all would be chaos—because order comes from Him. We would likewise never benefit from the order God offers. Order is highly underrated! Law and order actually maximize freedom and options overall.¹⁰

An important aspect of God's omnipotence and order is that we have free will and that God honors it. Unlike matter, which always conforms to law, intelligences have agency—while subject to physical laws, we mostly do as we please; God knows that the only way for free agents to gain long-term happiness is to choose it freely. That is, we choose to act for good (or evil; free agents are not typically compelled or acted on).¹¹ God commands us, but He will not force us. (God has never forced me to pray—has He forced you?)¹² God will never cease to be God because He loves and lives according to law, and that eternal law includes allowing us our agency. God's perfect plan for our happiness includes opportunities to learn how to use agency wisely. Our mortal bodies are a priceless gift that we can use to learn discipline and self-control, including learning to control and channel our physical desires.

This life is a test, a chance for us to learn what we value above other options. During mortality, equity is scarce, and justice is often significantly delayed. In

this test, we get some things wrong; just as moths are attracted both to food and to lethal flame, we are enticed by things that are good for us and by things that are bad for us—all with the intent that we learn to choose what brings long-term joy. In this fallen state, none of us is able to do good without help.¹³ We learn essential lessons from our mistakes, but once we've broken even one eternal law, we are stranded outside our Heavenly Parents' perfect, happy presence, unfit to bear their brilliance and perfection.¹⁴ How do we reconcile necessary eternal education with a now-unattainable goal? (My faith doesn't believe in a permanent hell, except maybe for a small number of individuals who don't want any part of God's glory.)¹⁵

Though He didn't invent justice, God can be credited for a spectacular innovation: mercy. God knew of a condition under which all of justice's demands could be met by one rare and specific kind of person, someone who had never broken a law and who could also endure all consequences without being extinguished. Christ's atoning sacrifice overcomes all obstacles to lasting joy—including broken laws (and bones and promises and homes). Perfect Christ was able to pay for all broken laws because He never broke a law (was never obligated to justice) and His Father is immortal; as "God," Jesus could endure and absorb all consequences. Yet, as a mortal son of Mary, He could voluntarily suffer pain and death (the price required by justice for some actions).¹⁶

Christ's atoning sacrifice not only restores equilibrium to the universe by compensating for our errors; if we want, it also strengthens and perfects us. The benefits of this atoning sacrifice are sometimes immediate and sometimes gradual, but they are sufficient to eventually make us flawless, if we want that. Having satisfied justice completely via His sufferings and death, God now holds the destinies of all acquitted offenders; that is, all of us.¹⁷

Like any loving parent, God doesn't want us staying home from school every day eating and viewing whatever we want, even if it's what would make us happy now. No parent wants their child miserable; most understand that the best and most lasting joys come by way of some struggle—even difficulty. Still, this life isn't meant to be all sacrifice for postponed rewards, neither is it all cartoons and Cocoa Puffs™ from birth until death; even as a test, life has both pain and happiness. Opposition is good for us. Achieving any goal requires planning, work, learning new information or skills, sacrifice, and prioritization. Our greatest growth comes from work and from struggle; extract a butterfly from its cocoon and it will likely miss the individual exit labor needed to

strengthen it for survival. It's not possible or even desirable to avoid all the pains of life, but by making wise choices, we can reduce suffering.

Our test isn't that we'll "be good" (which is impossible on our own) but that we'll choose Christ's goodness to be our goodness, to let His transformative power work with our sincere desires. ("Conversion" of a soul doesn't necessarily mean changing who you're attracted to. Everyone must acquire God's attributes to enjoy His kind of existence.) If we can trust Him, and try to follow Him, we will live not only with God but also like Him.¹⁸ These are God's requirements, and such steps are our choices rather than justice's dispassionate or lethal consequences. Choosing God and His path will bring joy plus "all that [God] hath" as "joint heirs with Christ." Technically, inheriting everything means we will inherit God's perfection, if we choose.¹⁹

By remembering our accountability for our own choices as well as God's sincere desire for our success and joy, we're less inclined to doubt or to ask, "Why me?" when we are in difficulty. Even death will not be a terror. There will always be opposition, and we'll have to struggle to gain insights, but we will have the perspective of our faith and, hopefully, a peace that transcends even in the worst circumstances of mortality.

Are LGBTQIA people and those who never desire a heterosexual union consigned to misery by God?¹² Are gays condemned to never have a "soulmate"?¹³ If the person closest to you in all eternity is the same sex as you, will that bar you from eternal joy? Not at all! Still, God knows the way to make such relationships deep and lasting (and we can miss out on such connections until we pay attention to what He has said on the subject).

Knowing our identity is important. Because we have a perfectly generous, loving heavenly parent, our options are limitless. Because He can see everything at once, God is able to guide us, even in our mistakes, and turn our differences into opportunities for growth and joy, even lasting joy. There are no dead ends or last chances if God, and sharing everything that is His, is your goal.²⁰

POINTS TO PONDER

We have always existed; agency and opposition have always existed. What would life be like without options and free will?

God, our loving Heavenly Parent, won't take our free will (though we can lose it to compulsions via poor choices). Likewise, consequences for choices are not

a construct that God can waive (or wave away). How do you reconcile God's love for us and His respect for both free will and natural consequences? Everything God does is to maximize our freedom and happiness. How does this idea affect your perception of God or of your choices and your situation?

NOTES:

1. Nathaniel M. Lambert and David C. Dollahite, "Forsaking All Others: Marital Fidelity in Religious Couples," *BYU Journal of Undergraduate Research* (September 2013), <http://jur.byu.edu/?p=6130>. See also Matthew D. Bramlett and Laura F. Radel, "Adverse Family Experiences among Children in Nonparental Care, 2011–2012," *National Health Statistics Reports* 74 (May 2014), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr074.pdf>; Paul Amato, "The Impact of Family Formation Change on the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Well-Being of the Next Generation," *The Future of Children*, Volume 15, Number 2, (Fall 2005): 75–96, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/188645>; Marissa A. Fye and Grace A. Mims, "Preventing Infidelity: A Theory of Protective Factors," *The Family Journal* 27, no. 1 (January 2019), 22–30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480718809428>; Marvin Daguplo, "Marital Fidelity," ResearchGate, January 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312460727_Marital_Fidelity; Mallory Mosner, "Why I'm Breaking Up with Non-Monogamy," Medium (blog), February 3, 2020, <https://mmosner.medium.com/why-im-breaking-up-with-non-monogamy-324c393c6d03>.
2. "Creation from Chaos," Pearl of Great Price Central, Last modified November 12, 2019, <https://www.pearlofgreatpricecentral.org/creation-from-chaos/>. The Hebrew word for God in Genesis connotes plurality; when the Bible says "male and female" were created "in the image" of "God," logic indicates there is a male God to pattern after, Gen. 1:27 (why does infinite God ask to be called "Father"?)—and there must be someone in whose image Eve was formed (you can't have a "father" and "children" without a mother). The Apostle Erastus Snow said, "Deity consists of man and woman. . . . There never was a God, and there never will be in all eternities, except they are made of these two . . . parts: . . . the male and the female." Fiona Givens and Terryl Givens, *All Things New*, 27.
3. On pre-earth life and the fatherhood of God: "Moses [said]: 'When the most High . . . separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel' (Deuteronomy 32:8), this is a . . . reference to *pre-earth* assignments. . . . The Septuagint has a variant reading . . . 'sons of God,' from fragments of Deuteronomy 32 discovered in cave 4 of Qumran sustain . . . 'ben Elohim.'" (Joseph F. McConkie, "Premortal Existence,

Foreordinations, and Heavenly Councils” in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs [West Valley City: Bookcraft, 1986], <https://rsc.byu.edu/apocryphal-writings-latter-day-saints/premortal-existence-foreordinations-heavenly-councils>; Stephen O. Smoot, “The Divine Council in the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Mormon,” *Studia Antiqua* 12, no. 2 [2013]: 1–18, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/divine-council-hebrew-bible-and-book-mormon>. See also Bokovoy, “Ye Really Are Gods: A Response to Michael Heiser Concerning the LDS Use of Psalm 82 and the Gospel of John,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 1989–2011 19, no. 1 (2007), <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1702&context=msr>;

- “When God laid the foundations of the earth, *all* the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:4–7.
- “They fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh.” Num. 16:22.
- We are the “offspring” of God. Acts 17:28–29; Deut. 14:1; Hosea 1:10. See Ps. 82:6.
- “The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Eccl. 12:7.
- “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.” Jer. 1:4–5.
- Disciples ask Jesus whether the parents or the child—born blind—had sinned. John 9:2.
- The Spirit itself bears witness that “we are the children of God.” Rom. 8:16.
- Though He was born after many people, see the many references to Christ as the “firstborn” (makes sense in light of spirit bodies coming before mortal ones). See Topical Guide, “[Beginning](#),” “[Council in Heaven](#),” “[Man, Men](#),” “[War in Heaven](#).”
- “All things work . . . for good. . . . To them that love God. . . . For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many.” Rom. 8:29.
- God chose and called us before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1:3–5 (the entire chapter is on the premortal council in heaven).
- “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief.” 2 Thess. 2:13.
- We are to be in subjection to the “Father of spirits.” Heb. 12:9. See Mal. 2:10.
- “The angels [spirits] which kept not their first estate, he hath reserved in everlasting chains.” Jude 1:6. See Abr. 3:26.
- “Michael and angels fought” the dragon. The devil and his angels (spirits) were cast out; these are God’s children who did not want the risk of a body with a test. Rev. 12:7–9. See Rev. 5:3, 10, 12:10–11.

- They were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world.” [Alma 13:3](#).
- Christ looked upon the “expanse of eternity” and hosts of heaven “before the world was made.” [D&C 38:1](#), emphasis added.
- “Man was also in the beginning with God.” [D&C 93:29](#). See also D&C 49:17, 93:23–38; [Hel. 14:17](#).
- Noble spirits were “chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church.” [D&C 138:53–55](#).
- Many “received their first lessons in the world of spirits.” [D&C 138:56](#).
- All things were created “spiritually before they were” on earth. [Moses 3:5](#).
- “I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh.” [Moses 6:51](#).
- Abraham saw “the intelligences that were organized before the world was.” [Abr. 3:21–24](#)

See LDS Topical Guide, “Beginning,” “Council in Heaven,” “Man, Men,” “War in Heaven.”

4. Omniscience does not equate to adoration. I believe that only the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) will be worshipped in eternity. We may attain perfection, but man is not the Architect or Atoning Hero or Sanctifier of humanity. 2 Pet. 1:4; Gen. 17:1; Matt. 5:48; John 3:2, 10:32–34, 17:22–23. See also Boyd K. Packer, *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 289; C. S. Lewis, “Counting the Cost” in *Mere Christianity* (New York: Harper One, 2015); C. S. Lewis, “Love Thy Neighbor” in *The Joyful Christian* (New York: Scribner, 1996).

5. While John Calvin gave us valuable insights, he also introduced serious problems into modern Christian theology:

Because John Calvin did not believe in a premortal existence, he assumed that God created people at the time of their mortal birth. That assumption presented . . . a theological dilemma: . . . (1) God is perfect, therefore his creations are . . . perfect; (2) However, some of his creations are bad and are going to go to hell; (3) Therefore, either God messed up when he created them (not an acceptable conclusion), or he did not err; (4) If he did not err, then he created them exactly the way he wanted them to be; (5) Therefore, he created the bad people with the intent that they should go to hell; (6) Conclusion: God created some people to go to heaven, and other people to go to hell. That [erroneous idea] is called predestination.

Stephen D. Ricks and LeGrand L. Baker, *Alma 14: The Origins of Good & Evil* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2011), 586–

606, https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/baker/2015-12-30/baker_alma_14_2011.pdf. “How can a God intent on saving His children and desirous to ‘wipe away all tears from their eyes’

(Rev. 21:4) also damn them to eternal punishment?” Garrett R. Maxwell, “The Good God Hermeneutic: A Reconsideration of Religious Vocabulary,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 47 (2021), 151–58, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/good-god-hermeneutic-reconsideration-religious-vocabulary>. Instances where the Bible indicates that God caused evil or temptation or hardened someone’s heart are mistranslations.

6. 2 Ne. 2:25.

7. 2 Ne. 2:11.

8. God didn’t invent justice, but God is just. Alma 42:13. See “Newton’s Laws of Motion,” Glenn Research Center, last updated June 30, 2022, <https://www1.grc.nasa.gov/beginners-guide-to-aeronautics/newtons-laws-of-motion/>; H. Donl Peterson, “The Law of Justice and the Law of Mercy” in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, the Testimony of the Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 211–22, <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-alma-testimony-word/law-justice-law-mercy>.

9. See Harrison P. Frye, “Freedom without Law,” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 17, no. 3 (August 2018), 298–316, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X17742746>; “How Does the Rule of Law Promote Freedom?” Brainly question, August 12, 2020, <https://brainly.in/question/30559573>; and John A. Bruegger, “Freedom, Legality, and the Rule of Law,” *Washington University Jurisprudence Review* 9, no. 1 (2016), https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1151&context=law_jurisprudence.

10. 2 Ne. 2:14, 25; Jac. 4:6. See W. Cleon Skousen, “The Atonement,” *Spiritual Thoughts and Genealogy*, n.d., <https://www.emogan.com/blog/spiritual-thoughts/atonement-cleon-skousen>.

11. God did not force us to be born on earth (many of His spirit children chose not to receive physical bodies). God’s plan of happiness requires opposition and options from which to choose. Gen. 2:16; Josh. 24:15. Yet, our first parents had to voluntarily choose opposition (required for development); choice was always the plan, and only possible in temporal bodies with minds that understood right and wrong. The tree of knowledge facilitated that—that is why God included it in the garden. God is never surprised. Christ was never the backup plan; He is the Lamb already “slain from before the foundation of the world.” Rev. 13:8; Isa. 53:4; 2 Ne. 31; Alma 7:11–12.

Our coming into [earth] would have been counterproductive if a way had not been provided for us to . . . return home in . . . cognizance . . . so we could

escape . . . greater chaos—the natural consequence of mortal sin . . . death and hell. . . [Prophets] explained, . . . “God, commanded. . . of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat . . . nevertheless, thou mayest choose.” . . . The laws of justice and mercy insist that [God not proclaim free access. Had] God . . . [told] them to eat that fruit . . . He would have been responsible for their expulsion from the Garden [our separation from Him] and . . . for getting us back. That would have left us without . . . agency . . . or . . . freedom. . . We . . . [left] the premortal spirit world . . . because we understood [God’s] plan and trusted in the Savior’s Atonement. We . . . chose to come. . . Ricks and Baker, *Alma* 14.

Read of the . . . first covenant that [God] made with his earthly children: . . . “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” . . . Those words are usually read as a curse. . . But they are . . . one of the greatest *blessings* of the Atonement. They say, “If you choose to go” . . . into that . . . dreary world, then, after you have learned what you are supposed to learn . . . the Lord has provided a way for us to come home . . . the promise is, “thou shalt surely die.” . . . Alma added: “as they had become carnal . . . and devilish . . . this probationary state became . . . a preparatory state” (Alma 42:8-10). The fullness of the creation . . . could not be accomplished until death and hell are defeated by the Savior’s Atonement. Ricks and Baker, *Alma* 14.

There would be no free will if everyone automatically returned to live with God without *choosing* it. “Since the success of the entire plan of salvation has always rested upon the Savior’s providing an opportunity for people to come to this earth where they can define themselves [what sphere of glory they’ll gravitate to] in an environment away from the overriding influence of the presence of our Father in Heaven, a path had to be provided so that people could leave his presence and then return again. But it was to enter this world’s chaos.” Ricks and Baker, *Alma* 14, 596.

12. Gen. 3:22; Job 1:12, 2:6, 7:18, 36:11; 2 Cor. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:6; Abr. 3:25; Moses 4:28; 2 Ne. 9:27, 33:9; Alma 12:24, 42:4.

13. Thomas Edison gave details about what happens to matter that is unsuitable to bear pure light. See “Edison’s Lightbulb,” The Franklin Institute, n.d., <https://www.fi.edu/history-resources/edisons-lightbulb>; D&C 133:41.

14. Heb. 12:2; Moro. 10:32. See also Brad Wilcox, *The Continuous Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009) for more on satisfying justice.

15. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Mark 16:16. “Believeth” implies ongoing belief. “Saved” means in God’s presence. Joseph Smith, “The Articles of Faith” in the Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902) 60; 2 Ne. 31:17–21. “We believe that [people] will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.... We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Joseph Smith, “The Articles of Faith,” Articles 2–4.) While the Bible doesn’t designate the age for baptism, it is clear that those baptized were old enough to exercise faith and have some grasp of what they were doing (Mark 16:16). In latter-day revelation, God specifies that baptismal candidates be at least eight years of age (and accountable for their own choices to some degree. See Bible Dictionary, “Baptism”; D&C 20:71, 68:25–28). Those who die before age eight have no sins they are responsible for and are automatically perfected in celestial glory via Christ’s atoning sacrifice. “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 19:14. See Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16.) “Little children are alive in Christ . . . if not so, God is a partial God, and also a changeable . . . respecter to persons; for how many little children have died without baptism!” (Moroni 8:12.) Some people lived and died without knowing of Christ (we forget Him at birth) but get enough experience with good and bad to know they want good; when they see Christ again (the author of good), most will embrace all He offers. I know of only one organization that can demonstrate that God is not a liar or capricious in declaring that all accountable people must be baptized to enter His (celestial) glory (John 3:3). Christ has authorized His prophets to seal in heaven what is sealed on earth (this means ordinances and sacraments). Vicarious baptisms performed in temples enable everyone who has ever lived to choose life with God.

16. Rev. 21:7. “Joint heirs” enjoy all blessings the Father has. See Luke 12:44, 15:31–32; Rom. 8:16–17; 1 Cor. 2:9, 3:21–23; D&C 84:38, 78:5–7, 132:20. See also David E. Bokovoy, “Ye Really Are Gods.”

17. “However late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have not traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.” Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” Ensign, May 2012, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2012/04/the-laborers-in-the-vineyard?lang=eng>. “Each of us is a ‘beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.’ Our spiritual identity is enhanced as we understand our . . . mortal identities, including ethnic, cultural, or national heritage.” (M. Russel Ballard, “Hope in Christ,” *Liahona*, May 2021.

See also Tad Callister, “Our Identity and Our Destiny,” *BYU Magazine*, Winter 2013, 46–52, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/tad-r-callister/our-identity-and-our-destiny/>.

18. I obtained these insights by studying, pondering, and praying about the words of past and living prophets and the confirming impressions of the Holy Spirit—seeking corroboration in the scriptures. My faith doesn’t ask me to accept mysteries but to seek answers. If you find the scriptures or spiritual concepts difficult to digest or believe, consider experimenting on God’s promise in James 1:5–6: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith.” (See also Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” Liahona, May 2018, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2018/05/sunday-morning-session/revelation-for-the-church-revelation-for-our-lives?lang=eng>; Num. 11:29; Joel 2:28–29.) Additionally, acting on truth confirms personal conviction. See Amos 3:7; Matt. 7:16; John 7:17; Eph. 4:11–16.

Chapter 6 (chapter 5 in Abundant) Notes – IS FLUIDITY REAL?—ARE FEELINGS FOREVER?

1. See Denise Cummins, “The Myth and Reality of Free Will: The Case of Addiction,” *Psychology Today* (blog), February 9, 2014, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/good-thinking/201402/the-myth-and-reality-free-will-the-case-addiction>.

2. I was never addicted to alcohol, but when I first moved to Utah, I had trouble locating a twelve-step meeting for sex addicts, so I attended AA. (My responses to inquiries about my “drug of choice” were entertaining!)

3. “What Does Sexually Fluid Mean?” Web MD, November 27, 2021, <https://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/what-does-sexually-fluid-mean>. See also “Can Sexuality Change? What Sexual Fluidity Is and Is Not,” *Good Therapy* (blog), June 24, 2018, <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/can-sexuality-change-what-sexual-fluidity-is-and-is-not-0624187/amp/>.

4. Some cite the ancient American leader Alma: The “same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life . . . will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.” Alma 34:34. Yet, this passage doesn’t say “eternally” (it says “in that eternal world”)—the next sphere is eternal, not a spirit’s hold on a person! (See D&C 19.) My experience with fluid attraction informs me that people are creatures of change—especially when God is involved—though no change will be forced on anyone. As a side note,

over my lifetime, my attraction to women and men has evolved in satisfying ways.

5. (I think people's grasp of some fluidity in their own lives is at the heart of much homophobia.) Evaluate your own changes—and those of people you know. While you personally may never have experienced changes in attraction, you likely know someone like me—and you likely have experienced other kinds of changes. What do Christians believe about change? Will a person eternally want to be with someone else's spouse? I used to hate pumpkin pie; I love it now! I used to love board games; not much now. I thought I didn't like sci-fi movies—then I saw Star Wars. As a young man, I believed I could never be a physical threat to anyone; but just observe me if someone puts my loved ones in peril. We are all on a spectrum, a continuum of metamorphoses. No one is static or cemented into a slot. As children of God, we've already gone from eternal intelligences to having spirit bodies to having physical bodies, and we will change again—back to spirit bodies (at death), then with a physical body again, only perfected. See 1 Cor. 15:40; 2 Cor. 12:2; D&C 76, 93:33–37; Alma 34.

6. Matt. 5:48. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, "People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other." Understanding one's self (and God) well can also eliminate much fear. "Referring to our brothers and sisters in a way that conveys disbelief in their capacity to change would also convey disbelief in the power of the Savior and His Atonement." Joni L. Koch, "To Be or Have Been; That Is the Question," *Ensign*, October 2019, 52.

7. "God is the author of diversity and the source of unity. As we come closer to Him and to His Son, Jesus Christ, we will advance both powerful principles in a synergistic way. As we embrace our true primary identity as children of God and act as disciples of Christ, they will magnify our individual gifts while also making us more united." Kevin J. Worthen, "Persevere in Unity," BYU devotional, January 12, 2021, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/unity/>. See also 2 Cor. 5:17.

8. Rom. 8:16–17.

9. "Joint heirs" enjoy all blessings the Father has. See Luke 12:44, 15:31–32; 1 Cor. 2:9, 3:21–23; Rev. 21:7; D&C 84:38, 78:5–7, 132:20.

10. Note the denotation (direct implications) of the word restoration in Acts 3:19–21 and Alma 40 and 41. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed February 18, 2022, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world?lang=eng>.

11. Gen. 2:18, 2:24, 22:17, 25:8, 32:12, 35:29, 49:33; Exod. 32:13; Eccl. 3:14; Isa. 51:2, 65:23; Jer. 31:1; Mal. 4:6; Matt. 16:19, 18:18, 19:5, 19:8, 19:29; Mark 10:9, 10:30; 1 Cor. 2:9, 11:11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 3:14–15, 5:31; 1 Pet. 3:7; Moses 3:18, 3:24, 7:63; Abr. 5:18; 3 Ne. 25:6; D&C 131:2, 132:19, 132:55. “And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us [in heaven], only it will be coupled with eternal glory,” D&C 130:2. Perhaps you feel left out not being married; you’re certainly not alone. Still, the same prophets that have taught the benefits of eternal marriages have also taught that vicariously performed sacraments/ordinances, like marriage, are available to anyone in the next life who desires them and whose current quest is to keep covenants—not that spirits of the dead or resurrected people are “given in marriage” in the next life. Marriage, and other ordinances/sacraments, can only be performed by those with mortal bodies, but they can be done vicariously by mortals, to be accepted or rejected by the dead (like Christ’s vicarious sacrifice). See Mark 10:30; 1 Cor. 15:29; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 2:24–25; 1 John 2:12, 4:10. None of this means we won’t enjoy eternal relationships with people of our own sex. Those who keep covenants with God will not be denied any blessing. See “Church Policies & Guidelines,” General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 38.1.4, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/38-church-policies-and-guidelines?lang=eng>. See also “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”

12. Ps. 23:5; Jer. 31:14; 1 Cor. 2:9; D&C 84:38, 78:5–7, 132:20. See also Luke 12:44, 15:31–32; Rev. 21:7.

13. I don’t believe it’s healthful to hide one’s feelings, nor do I believe that becoming heterosexual is likely in this life. When I speak of God’s love for and acceptance of queer persons, I’m not saying it’s merely tolerance—neither am I saying it’s acceptance of gay sex as a positive expression of gayness.

Chapter 7 (chapter 6 in Abundant) – THE PARADOX OF SEX

1. “Love ceases to be a demon only when it ceases to be a god.” M. Denis de Rougemont, RightWords.eu, YourCHOICE, accessed August 19, 2022, <https://rightwords.eu/quotes/love-ceases-to-be-a-demon-only-when-it-ceases-to-be-a-god--31669>.
2. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 6.
3. God has given scriptural guidelines on successful relating to save us time and heartache on painful paths. Read these verses in the context of one another. (I acknowledge that some Bible verses historically thought to be against homosexuality in fact speak against pedophilia; yet, there are many scriptures that warn—for our own fulfillment—against sexual acts between

adults of the same sex.) See Gen. 1:22, 1:27–28, 2:24, 19, 37–38, 39:1–18; Exod. 20:14; Lev. 18:20–22, 20:10–13; Num. 25:1; Deut. 5:18; 1 Kings 14:24; 2 Kings 23:7; Ps. 51:10, 119:9; Prov. 31:10; Matt. 5:27–28, 15:19, 19:4–9; Mark 10:2–12; Acts 15:19–20; Rom. 1:18–32, 2:22, 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:2–9, 5:9–11, 6:9–11, 6:18–20, 10:8; Eph. 5:3, 28–31; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:8–11; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 2:4–12; 1 Pet. 2:11; Jude 7; Rev. 2:14, 9:21, 14:1–5; Jacob 2:28; Alma 13:28, Alma 39; D&C 121:45.

4. Euphoria is a sense of pleasure—even temporary joy—like a drug high. Because it is chemically induced, it cannot last. I’ve lost count of the sexually partnered gay men I’ve met who are no longer experiencing the euphoria they called “love.” See also Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “euphoria,” accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/euphoria>.

5. “And all the time the grim joke is that this Eros whose voice seems to speak from the eternal realm is not himself necessarily even permanent. He is notoriously the most mortal of our loves. . . . Our natural loves [are] rivals to the love of God. . . . When God arrives (and only then) the half-gods can [take their proper places]. Left to themselves they either vanish or become demons. Only in His name can they with beauty and security ‘wield their little tridents.’ The rebellious slogan ‘All for love’ is really love’s death warrant.” Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 92, 110–15, 118–19.

6. Please see Epilogue.

7. Could it be possible that oxytocin, the feel-good/bonding hormone released in cuddling and sex, doesn’t seem to affect same-sex couples in the same ways it affects heterosexual couples? My experience is that feeling good happens for both, but bonding, not so much with same-sex sex. I believe that something other than chemical reaction is going on. See also Stephanie Watson, “Oxytocin: The Love Hormone,” Harvard Health Publishing, July 20, 2021, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/oxytocin-the-love-hormone>.

8. One definition of intimacy is “belonging to or characterizing one’s deepest nature.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “intimacy,” accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intimate>.

9. Family life professor Stephen F. Duncan cites the National Health and Social Life Survey: “About 20 percent of [heterosexual] couples at any age have a nonsexual marriage.” M. Sue Bergin, “Don’t Let Your Marriage Go Cold,” *BYU Magazine*, March 2020, <https://magazine.byu.edu/article/dont-let-your-marriage-go-cold/>. And it’s not necessarily a bad thing: See Jennifer Harbutt, “I Don’t Think We’ll Ever Have Sex Again’: Our Happy, Cuddly, Celibate Marriage,” *The Guardian*, April 15,

2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/apr/15/celebrate-marriage-sex-sexless-relationship>. See also Edward O. Laumann et al., “National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992: [United States],” Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (April 17, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR06647.v2>.

10. Ask several people about the person they were or are closest to and (if they’re comfortable saying) whether it was a sexual relationship. This can be an illuminating exercise.

11. Jails and hospitals have a number of people in them who at some point presumed that any expression of love in any scenario is only a positive thing. Many people are hooked on the idea of sex with a particular person. Real life, films, and fiction are filled with examples of relationship tragedy—not because society created the consequences but because mistrust, neglect, depression, and jealousy are natural consequences of infidelity. See David A. Bednar, “Watchful unto Prayer Continually,” Ensign, November 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/22bednar?lang=eng>.

12. Why might some people suppose they might be tested in any area except when it comes to love—or if their test has to do with relationships, they are being singled out? It’s easy to feel isolated in a struggle with unwanted or unsatisfied desire, to look inward without recognizing that many people have similar or parallel frustrations. Some people mistakenly believe those with physical or mental limitations, the widowed, or the aged may not have a sex drive. It’s also untrue that every married person is content, with all their sexual and intimate needs met. I’m not saying same-sex attraction is no worse or somehow better than another situation, only that each of us has unique circumstances that might cause us difficulty, cause us to question God’s concern for our needs and desires. Without worrying whether our varied difficulties are more or less or equally painful, our discipleship to Christ leads us to be compassionate to each other’s pain. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some [isolated] thing happened unto you: But rejoice.” 1 Pet. 4:12–13.

13. “I’m not sure anyone lives in that perfect, ideal family. . . . My own experiences have sometimes brought me bright pain and concentrated loneliness. It’s easy to blame that pain on the category of my life circumstances, but I’ve come to see that everyone is dealing with pain. . . . It’s the state of mortality. The best we can do is try to help bear each other’s pain.” Sharon Eubank, “A Letter to a Single Sister,” Ensign, March 2020, 40–41.

14. Jer. 31:3; John 3:16–17; Rom. 8:31–39.

15. Mark 16:16. If you want children in eternity, and you continue to look to Christ, you will have them—and you will be pleased with the means by which they come to you. See Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:30. “In the Lord’s own way and time, no blessing will be withheld from His faithful Saints. The Lord will judge and reward each individual according to heartfelt desire as well as deed.” Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” Ensign, October 2008, 94. Please see endnote 5 in chapter 6.

16. Nelson, 94. Some people’s decisions are harder than others; still, I think everyone will, in the end, acknowledge that their circumstances were suited to them and facilitated the best opportunities for growth and self-discovery (unfolding happiness). Being true to one’s heart should never mean abandoning facts. Relationships (simply) based on emotion tend to be disjointed, dysfunctional, and fragile, as opposed to those based on character and commitment, where devotion is to the union, not necessarily to the partner (more disciplined, yet with a better success rate; unwavering commitment to the partner may not be possible on all days).

Chapter 8 (chapter 7 in Abundant) – BEYOND GRIEF—WHAT IF I DON’T HAVE SUPPORT?

1. Gen. 2:18. See Appendixes A – C.

2. “Many people today . . . are either unable to see things as they truly are or are unsatisfied with the truth. Moreover, there are forces at play today designed to deliberately lead us away from absolute truth. These deceptions and lies . . . often have dire, not minor, consequences.” Gary E. Stevenson, “Deceive Me Not,” Ensign, October 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/45stevenson?lang=eng>.

Chapter 9 (chapter 8 in Abundant) – THE BEST NEWS— HOW TO CREATE DEEP SAME-SEX CONNECTION

1. Marshal Burtcher (personal social media post, 2022).

2. Addicts know that eliminating something from one’s life requires that it be replaced (hopefully with something more beneficial). If you simply stop something and don’t start something positive in its place, you’re likely to go back to previous habits. Matt. 12:43–45; Luke 11:24–26.

3. <https://CuddleComfort.com> (or search “ACE” or platonic groups. No site can guarantee that their members will behave in platonic ways).

4. See Vivian Manning-Schaffel, “The Health Benefits of Hugging,” Better by Today, October 25, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/pop-culture/health-benefits-hugging-ncna920751>; Ashley Uzer, “10 Health

Benefits of Hugging, Backed by Science” MindBodyGreen, March 26, 2020, <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/hugging-health-benefits>; Francis McGlone and Susannah Walker, “Four Ways Hugs Are Good for your Health,” Greater Good Magazine, June 22, 2021, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four_ways_hugs_are_good_for_your_health; Erica Cirino, “What Are the Benefits of Hugging?” Healthline, last updated April 11, 2018, <https://www.healthline.com/health/hugging-benefits#1.-Hugs-reduce-stress-by-showing-your-support>.

5. Same-sex public nudity (bathing) was once common and can be healthful (generally, society has sexualized even this, so boundaries are needed here too). Yet, I believe nudity and cuddling do not go well together and should be separate activities. “Eros will have naked bodies; friendship naked personalities.” Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 71. Russ Peterson, “Inoculating Children Against Pornography” in *Faith in the Fire: An Outside Perspective on Latter-Day Families* (self-pub., Kindle Direct Publishing, 2021), Kindle.

6. See RiShawn Bittle, “How to Say No When it Counts,” *Full Focus*, accessed August 21, 2022, <https://fullfocus.co/say-no/>.

7. Full body holding isn’t necessarily unhealthy, but it can put one’s focus on bodies rather than on soul connecting. Lingering on top of someone may be counterproductive in your goal to meet emotional needs and not be driven by physical urges. You’ll need to understand yourself very well to be successful. If you desire to kiss, ask yourself: “Will kissing shift my focus away from healthfully meeting same-sex needs?” That’s a personal question only you can answer.

8. While there might be natural consequences, God will not condemn you for breaking a bad commitment.

9. Some boundary guidance: Chantelle Pattemore, “How to Set Boundaries in Your Relationships,” *Psych Central* (blog), June 3, 2021, <https://psychcentral.com/blog/why-healthy-relationships-always-have-boundaries-how-to-set-boundaries-in-yours>.

10. Our focus often determines our reality. Please see endnote 7 in chapter 4

11. See Marc DiJulio, “Male Sexuality and Emotional Needs,” *Innovative Men’s Health* (blog), n.d., <https://innovativemen.com/blog/male-sexuality-and-emotional-needs>; Wikipedia, s.v. “Sexual desire,” last modified August 10, 2022, 10:24, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_desire.

12. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 92, 67, 58–59, 72–73, emphasis added.

13. Ganel-Lyn Condie, *You Are More Than Enough—You Are Magnificent* (American Fork: Covenant Communications, 2018), 84. We would do well to forsake the “good” for the “better” or “best.” Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better,

Best,” Ensign, November

2018, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2007/10/good-better-best?lang=eng>.

14. On prayer: Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church.”

15. A 24-hour technique addicts use that might enable a sex-focused person to attain appreciation for nonsexual touch is to say to sexual impulses, “Not today.” James 4:7. “Lust only yields to the slow, patient working of the program” (or steps of surrender to God). Sexaholics Anonymous (“White Book”), 157. See also “Coming from AA, He Worked the Steps All Over Again in SA (Lawrence M., Virginia, USA),” Sexaholics Anonymous, n.d., <https://www.sa.org/essay/coming-from-aa-he-worked-the-steps-all-over-again-in-sa-lawrence-m-virginia-usa/>.

16. “Sharing becomes a liberating and life giving experience.” Sexaholics Anonymous, 87.

17. Gary Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* (Winston-Salem: Northfield Publishing, 2014).

18. Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages*.

19. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 15

20. “Jesus saw sin as wrong but also was able to see sin as springing from deep and unmet needs on the part of the sinner.” Spencer W. Kimball, “Jesus: The Perfect Leader,” *Ensign*, August 1978.

21. 2 Ne. 9:51. While my libido remains strong, my urges for sex are barely noticeable because my real needs are emotional. Since establishing especially deep and lasting connections, I almost never experience an impulse to self-stimulate.

22. 1 Sam. 20:41–42; John 13:23, 19:25–27. See also Alma 53:2.

23. The following are musts for any successful friendship or relationship: honesty, accountability, forgiveness, love, respect, openness, loyalty, gentleness, acceptance, appreciation, trust, commitment, patience, recreation, sensitivity, and fascination. Of course, a person is most likely to find relationship happiness if they are already happy with self and with God. See Karl W. Beckstrand, *The Joys of Male Connection* (Midvale, UT: Paths Press, November 2022).

Chapter 10 (chapter 9 in Abundant) – THE KEY TO LASTING SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

1. Chef Brad, Facebook, winter

2022, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=754211589>.

2. “And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us [in Heaven], only it will be coupled with eternal glory.” D&C 130:2; Moses 7:63.

3. Eph. 3:17–19.

4. “Putting the weight of all our deepest hopes and longings on the person we ‘love’ will crush him or her with our expectations.” Timothy Keller, Facebook, spring 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/TimKellerNYC>.

5. See Ty Mansfield (quoting Robert Millet on theological [and cultural] viruses), “Balancing the Tensions of Our Latter-day Saint and LGBTQ Conversations,” Deseret News, October 21, 2021, <https://www.deseret.com/opinion/2021/10/21/22717022/balancing-the-tensions-of-our-latter-day-saint-and-lgbtq-conversations-mormon-truth-love>.

See also The School of Life, “How Romanticism Ruined Love,” YouTube video, May 30,

2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jltM5qYn25w>; Mark Manson, “A Brief History of Romantic Love and Why It Kind of Sucks,” Mark Manson: Life Advice That Doesn’t Suck (blog), n.d., <https://markmanson.net/romantic-love>; and Mark Manson, “Romance Is Like Alcohol,” Mark Manson: Life Advice That Doesn’t Suck (blog), n.d., <https://markmanson.net/romance>.

6. Nonsexual “love, free from instinct, free from all duties but those which love has freely assumed, almost wholly free from jealousy, and free without qualification from the need to be needed, is eminently spiritual. It. . . is the sort of love one can imagine between angels. Have we found the natural love which is Love itself?” Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 61, 77.

7. Lewis, 57.

8. I have held women, heterosexual and gay men, asexuals, and a transgendered person—each has been satisfying.

9. Life coach Brad Petersen says boyfriends get jealous and possessive; brothers don’t:

Another falsehood is . . . I am told that my love has limits, “Only so much to go around.” If I were looking for [a boyfriend] perhaps that might be true, but in the search for brothers I have learned this very important lesson: The human heart, my heart and your heart, has an unlimited capacity to love as many as deeply as we want. There are no limits to the amount of brothers one can love and enjoy. . . . The more I love the greater my heart expands. After all we are created in God’s image and Christ is our example in all things. His love knew and knows no limits. It is limitless. We have the same gift as Christ has: To love as many as deeply as we want, in other words, why limit how [deeply/many] we love? . . . “I don’t need a boyfriend, I need brothers that respect me and help me to be closer to Christ, my dearest brother. I need men that love deeply and are aware, in the process, we . . . have to come to understand and control our mortal bodies.” Chef Brad, Facebook, winter 2022.

10. See Jett Stone, “Why Men Need to Prioritize, and Celebrate, Their Friendships,” Psychology Today (blog), February 8, 2022, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-souls-men/202202/why-men-need-prioritize-and-celebrate-their-friendships>.
11. Lindsay Holmes, “8 Ways to Tell if You’re a Truly Compassionate Person,” Huffington Post, last updated December 7, 2017, emphasis added, https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/habits-of-compassionate-people_n_5522941.
12. Mark 12:31.
13. John 15:12–13.
14. John 13:34. “Love is what you’ve been through with somebody.” James Thurber, James Thurber Quotes. BrainyQuote.com, BrainyMedia Inc, accessed August 17, 2022, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/james_thurber_106549.

Chapter 11 (chapter 10 in Abundant) – AUTHENTIC IDENTITY—THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

1. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 92.
2. Russ Peterson, *The Technology of Survival* (not yet published).
3. “To any who are tempted to walk or talk or behave in these ways—‘as the world giveth’ . . . don’t expect it to lead to peaceful experience; I promise you in the name of the Lord that it won’t.” Jeffrey R. Holland, “Not as the World Giveth,” *Ensign*, May 2021, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/23holland?lang=eng>. See also Hel. 13:38; Alma 41:10, 42:25–30.
4. God wanted the doctrine on hell clarified even before the restoration of the Church (it was explained in *March* of 1830!). Except for fear of lost blessings with Him, fear is *not* God’s MO. We now know that all but a handful who do not want it will be saved forever in a kingdom of glory. “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” (John 14:2. See D&C 19:4–13, 76; Bible Dictionary, “Hell” and “Damnation.”)
According to D&C 19:6–12, Endless and Eternal are appellations, applied to anything originating from our Eternal Father. We now know that all but a handful who do not want it will be saved forever in a kingdom of glory. Even those who don’t want God’s glory may not suffer torment forever: “Anglican church leader and academically credentialed classical scholar, Frederic W. Farrar, who wrote *The Life of Christ*, asserted that the definition of [eternal] damnation in the King James Version of the Bible was the result of translation errors from Hebrew and Greek to English. . . . Farrar . . . strongly proclaimed. . .

. The verb ‘to damn’ and its cognates does not once occur in the Old Testament. No word conveying any such meaning occurs in the Greek of the New Testament. . . . The word damnation is a grievous mistranslation . . . [and] perverts and obscures the real meaning of our Lord’s utterances.” Farrar also pointed out the overwhelming demonstration of a loving Father in Heaven throughout the Bible as additional evidence that the definitions of *hell* and *damnation* used in the English translation were incorrect. Quentin L. Cook, “Conversion to the Will of God,” Liahona, May 2022, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/29cook?lang=eng>; Frederic W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1877) xiv–xv, xxxiv, 93; see also Appendix E.

5. Neither the scriptures nor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints condemn same-sex love (it’s a gift), only sexual relationships between anyone not in wife-husband marriage.

6. “Feelings . . . are part of our God-given nature and serve a useful purpose. . . . We don’t feel ashamed or guilty for feeling hungry!” “Fostering a Positive Perspective of Sexuality,” *Ensign*, August 2020, 72, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/08/young-adults/fostering-a-positive-perspective-of-sexuality?lang=eng>.

7. Scott Cone (personal social media post, 2022).

8. See McKell A. Jorgensen, “Shame versus Guilt: Help for Discerning God’s Voice from Satan’s Lies,” *Ensign*, January 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/01/young-adults/shame-versus-guilt-help-for-discerning-gods-voice-from-satans-lies?lang=eng>; Wendy Ulrich, “3 Ways to Combat Shame and the Difference between Guilt and Shame and Why It Matters,” *LDS Living*, December 27, 2018, <https://www.ldsliving.com/3-ways-to-combat-shame-the-difference-between-guilt-and-shame-and-why-it-matters/s/89594>.

9. “With the gift of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we can improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for trying, even if we don’t always succeed.” Jeffrey R. Holland, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders Among You,” *Ensign*, May 2016, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/04/tomorrow-the-lord-will-do-wonders-among-you?lang=eng>.

10. Maria Shanley, “Learning What Authenticity Means to You,” LinkedIn Pulse, April 1, 2022, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-authenticity-means-you-maria-marie-shanley/?trackingId=L14KI5jfQuu5YE7wVHLiiQ%3D%3D>.

11. 2 Cor. 4:17. God's presence can't be endured if we don't resonate at His frequency of light and love (i.e., we must change and become in sync with Him). For Christ to fulfill His divine mission on earth, He absolutely had to know 100 percent who He was.

12. Von Keetch traveled to a bay in Australia renowned for its surfing. He met some American surfers who were upset that a heavy mesh barrier had been stretched across the mouth of the bay, right where the best waves were breaking. According to the surfers, the barrier went all the way to the ocean floor, ruining their "once-in-a-lifetime" surfing trip. An older, local man had them each look through his binoculars. What they saw were the dorsal fins of large sharks feeding near the reef on the other side of the barrier. "The old surfer . . . said: 'Don't be too critical of the barrier. . . . It's the only thing that's keeping you from being devoured.' Our perspective . . . changed. A barrier that had seemed . . . to curtail the fun and excitement . . . had become . . .

protection. . . . God's commands and standards . . . can sometimes be difficult to understand. . . . We often cannot comprehend the great dangers hidden . . . below the surface. But He who 'comprehends all things' knows exactly where those dangers lie. He gives us . . . loving guidance, so that we may avoid [much pain]." Von G. Keetch, "Blessed and Happy Are Those Who Keep the Commandments of God," Ensign, October

2015, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/video/2016-09-0009-blessed-and-happy-are-those-who-keep-the-commandments-of-god?lang=eng>.

13. Please allow my experiences (and those you've observed around you) to serve in place of any you might not yet have, and let my cautionary example help you have increased options via positive choices.

14. See Helen Yu and Alison Guernsey, "What is the Rule of Law?" Freedom School, last updated February 22, 2022, <https://freedom-school.com/law/what-is-the-rule-of-law.html>.

15. Mos. 7:33; 2 Ne. 26:22, 28:22. See Dan Peterson, "Is Morality Merely an Illusion?" Sic et Non (blog), Patheos, August 14,

2022, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/danpeterson/2019/07/is-morality-merely-an-illusion.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=share_bar#Yd8jylqXChXQHPCB.01.

16. Matt. 15:19; 2 Peter 2:14, 18–19. How long can a relativist retain values if everything is equally valueless to them? I've seen trust and families crushed by people who claim they are simply being authentic or honest. Yes, life inflicts enormous pressures, but can a person be satisfied with the response, "It was either them or me"? That idea comes from limited either/or thinking.

17. “Coming out” may be only with oneself (whom one is attracted to is not everyone’s business). “A man who lies to himself, and believes his own lies becomes unable to recognize truth, either in himself or in anyone else, and he ends up losing respect for himself and for others. When he has no respect for anyone, he can no longer love, and, in order to divert himself, having no love in him, he yields to his impulses, indulges in the lowest forms of pleasure, and behaves in the end like an animal. And it all comes from lying—lying to others and to yourself.” Fyodor Dostoevsky, AZQuotes, AZQuotes.com, 2022, accessed August 17, 2022, <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/588022>.

18. See Nicole Howell, “A Link Between Single Parent Families and Crime (PhD diss., Olivet Nazarene University, 2015), https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1078&context=edd_diss; Vanessa Hemovich and William D. Crano, “Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use: An Exploration of Single-Parent Families,” *Substance Use & Misuse* 44, no. 14 (December 14, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.3109/10826080902858375>; R. L. Maginnis, “Single-Parent Families Cause Juvenile Crime” in *Juvenile Crime: Opposing Viewpoints* (Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 1997), 62–66, <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/single-parent-families-cause-juvenile-crime-juvenile-crime-opposing>; Kay Hymowitz, “The Real, Complex Connection between Single-Parent Families and Crime,” *The Atlantic*, December 3, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2012/12/the-real-complex-connection-between-single-parent-families-and-crime/265860/>; “Effects of Fatherless Families on Crime Rates,” *MARRIpedia*, n.d., http://marripedia.org/effects_of_fatherless_families_on_crime_rates. For more information on societal disintegration via non-God-approved sex (individual and societal), see Kirk Durston, “Why Sexual Morality May Be Far More Important Than You Ever Thought,” *Thoughts About God, Truth, and Beauty* (blog), n.d., <https://www.kirkdurston.com/blog/unwin>.

19. *Jac.* 4:13.

20. *Eph.* 5:25. Eleanor Cain Adams and Allisa White, “Living the Law of Chastity in a Dating World Full of Gray Areas,” *Ensign*, August 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/08/young-adults/living-the-law-of-chastity-in-a-dating-world-full-of-gray-areas?lang=eng>; David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 42. Note how Alma indicates to his son that charity (pure love) may require [purity]: “Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.” *Alma* 38:12. See also Juli Slattery, *God, Sex, and Your Marriage* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2022).

21. Emily Madsen Reynolds, "Virtue and Abundant Life," BYU Magazine, Summer 2011, 47, <https://magazine-dev.byu.edu/article/virtue-abundant-life/>.

22. The human race (male and female)—is more than the instincts and appetites accorded it by nature. . . . [a prophet has said]: "God . . . hath created all things . . . both things to act and things to be acted upon" (2 Ne. 2:14). In teaching the seriousness of [sexual] sins, Alma also made certain his son understood that a person's actions have . . . impact on others as well: "Suffer . . . not the devil to lead away your heart again after . . . harlots. Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11). Perhaps . . . some . . . [try] to minimize the damage . . . sin would cause [via] . . . the frequently used . . . excuse, "It's okay for me to sin. . . . It's my life, and I'm hurting only myself." . . . When individuals use their agency in such a way as to place their [glory] in jeopardy, [those closest to them] are affected by those choices. Sin of any kind—especially immorality—has serious consequences not only for ourselves but also for others." Terry B. Ball, "Alma 39: A Model for Teaching Morality," *The Religious Educator* 2, no. 2 (2001), <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-2-no-2-2001/alma-39-model-teaching-morality>.

Mos. 26:30.

23. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," Isa. 1:18. "And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. "Thou art angry, O Lord, with this people, because they will not understand thy mercies which thou hast bestowed upon them because of thy Son." Alma 33:16. See Mosiah 7:33; 2 Ne. 26:22, 28:22.

24. 2 Cor. 5:17.

25. Job 28:28.

26. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 111, 128.

27. Eph. 4:11–14. See also "The Articles of Faith," Article 11.

ON OUR ETERNAL NATURE

Our most authentic self—our true identity—is that we are all children of a loving Father and Mother in Heaven. Knowing that our Heavenly Parents love us all, regardless of choices, is important. It's also important to know why we are here and where we are going.

We are eternal. Genesis depicts God conversing with others in the creation (and not only with Jehovah/Christ John 1:1. If we are not the same kind of being as God, why is Jesus Christ distinguished as God's *firstborn*?)

"The writer of Genesis employed the name Adam to refer to a fully collaborative couple (Gen. 5:2; Moses 6:9).... Just as Adam can refer to both

Adam and Eve, there will...be instances when 'God' is rightly followed by the pronoun They (Gen. 1:26–27).” Fiona Givens and Terryl Givens, *All Things New*, (Meridian: Faith Matters Publishing, 2020), 27. The end of the following article discusses evidences that Hebrews believed in a Heavenly Mother anciently: (<https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/not-josephs-and-not-modern>)

If you feel overwhelmed—not just with the idea of perfection, but of living forever—consider the almost numberless ancestors, friends, and family members with whom you’ll associate—and swap stories (and the boring alternative of no rigor, no stimulation, nothing to challenge your intellect for eternity)! Also recall that God rests!

It might be disheartening to think that even God suffers, now, for the sorrows of His children. You will likely feel similar pain in eternity—even if saved in glory! If you love any person who exercises free will, suffering in connection with their growing pains is unavoidable. Still, it’s consoling to know that God doesn’t suffer from fear or regret or loneliness (or stubbed toes or allergies), and the joy He has far outweighs any sadness.

“The ultimate rectitude of the Atonement’s powers enables intelligences to seek and achieve perfection according to their own sense of fulfillment, wholeness, and cosmos. It can only come as the fruition of their own agencies—the product of their individual self-identification and the ultimate maturation of the laws of their own beings...

“For intelligences who define their sense of self in terms different from “the pure love of Christ,” there is a state of perfection and glory that is compatible with their self-definition. But for those who love as the Savior loves, the perfection of that compatibility is equivalent to eternal life. For the intelligences who receive celestial resurrected bodies, cosmos is perfect symmetry and harmony—in their physical persons, their personal sense of Self, and also in their celestial social environment...

‘40 For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course and claimeth its own; judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne and governeth and executeth all things.’ (D&C 88:40-41).

David E. Bokovoy, “Ye Really Are Gods’: A Response to Michael Heiser concerning the LDS Use of Psalm 82 and the Gospel of John,” *The FARMS Review* 19/1 (2007) p. 294.

**Chapter 12 (chapter 11 in Abundant) – HOW TO NOT MISS OUT—
COVENANTS & GRACE**

1. Hank Smith, 2022, (Facebook, April 11, 2022), <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=559296005557989&set=pb.100044327834890.-2207520000.&type=3>.
2. “You’re not a hypocrite because you have a bad habit you are trying to break. You are a hypocrite if you hide it, lie about it, or try to convince yourself the Church has the problem for maintaining such high standards. Being honest about your actions and taking steps to move forward is not being a hypocrite. It is being a disciple. . . . [Spend] . . . less time hating [self] for what [you’ve] done and a lot more time loving Jesus for what He has done.” Bradley R. Wilcox, “Worthiness Is Not Flawlessness,” Liahona, November 2021, 62.
3. Ether 12:27.
4. 2 Cor. 4:17, 12:9. A family story my mother used to tell about her great-grandmother demonstrates how rather than removing difficulty, Christ’s grace often gets us through it one day at a time. Karl Beckstrand, *Agnes’s Rescue* (Midvale, UT: Premio Publishing, 2021).
5. 2 Ne. 2:11.
6. Gal. 3:11.
7. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1997), 223–224. Ultimately, no one will demand justice; it would mean a pound of flesh from each of us for harm we’ve caused, and none of us is without fault. See also Brad Wilcox, *The Continuous Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009) for details on how Christ satisfies justice.
8. Though you may yet be waiting for satisfaction for all harm and loss you’ve suffered, it is inevitable for those who look to Christ. So, how do the faithful get everything and everyone back that we’ve ever lost plus more than we can dream of? God’s resources are limitless. Any worthy child of His will have access to everything (not just temporal things). Christ is worthy—and He’s handing out treasures from God’s infinite stores to us, who have lost prizes and persons and passion over the course of our lives. He does this because His happiness comes from giving of self to bless others. This is our recipe for long-term happiness, too. To gain by giving might appear counterintuitive, but our spiritual self is infinite (consider our Source); it will never run out. We actually increase in glory by giving of ourselves to others (again, in this life, we should also practice self-care). Note the use of the word restoration in Acts 3:21, 1 Cor. 15:22 (“shall all be made alive”), and Alma 40 and 41. Some deficiencies “of mortality will be set right in the Millennium . . . the time for fulfilling all that is incomplete in the great plan of happiness for all of . . . Father’s worthy children.” Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, November 1993, 94. “That doesn’t mean that every blessing is deferred until the Millennium; some have already been received, and others will continue to be

received until that day.” M. Russell Ballard, “Hope in Christ,” Ensign, May 2021, emphasis added, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/28ballard?lang=eng>. See D&C 98:3.

9. “In the Lord’s own way and time, no blessing will be withheld from His faithful Saints. The Lord will judge and reward each individual according to heartfelt desire as well as deed.” Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” Ensign, November 2008, 94.

10. Luke 7:30; Mos. 18:8–10; Ether 12:27. See Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” Ensign, November 2013, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2013/10/the-power-joy-and-love-of-covenant-keeping?lang=eng>. See also Brad Wilcox, The Continuous Atonement.

11. D&C 58:27–28.

12. Matt. 28:18. “I am the vine . . . without me you can do nothing.” John 15:5. See also 2 Ne. 2:27–29.

13. “If we love God enough to try to be fully faithful to Him, He will [eventually] give us the ability, the capacity, the will, and the way to love our neighbor and ourselves.” Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Greatest Possession,” Liahona, November 2021, 9. Alma 37:16.

14. 2 Cor. 4:17; D&C 84:20. It’s not the putting of the bread or wafer in one’s mouth each Sunday that activates covenants; the act alone could be considered as hollow as offering food to idols without sincere reaching to God. We succeed when we sincerely show and say to Him, in essence, “I know nothing I do is sufficient to improve anything, yet I know you have all power. I open my hands to receive the only power that can make me whole.”

15. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Yearning for Home,” Ensign, November 2017, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2017/10/a-yearning-for-home?lang=eng>.

16. Luke 4:18.

17. D. Todd Christofferson, “Free Forever, to Act for Themselves,” Ensign, October 2014, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/10/free-forever-to-act-for-themselves?lang=eng>.

18. Hay official covenants God wants us to make with Him.

Chapter 13 – WHAT IF I’VE NEVER EXPERIENCED GRACE?

1. Minnie Louise Haskins, “The Gate of the Year” (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940).

2. Because God’s love is all-embracing, some speak of it as “unconditional,” and in their minds they may project that thought to mean that God’s blessings . . . and . . . salvation [are] “unconditional.” They are not. Some are wont to say,

“The Savior loves me just as I am,” and that is certainly true. But He cannot take any of us into His kingdom just as we are, “for no unclean thing can . . . dwell in his presence” (Moses 6:5–7). Our sins must first be resolved. Professor Hugh Nibley . . . noted that the kingdom of God cannot endure if it indulges even the smallest sin: “The slightest taint of corruption means that the other world would be neither incorruptible nor eternal. The tiniest flaw in a building, institution, code, or character will inevitably prove fatal in the long run of eternity.” (Don E. Norton, ed., *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 61.) “While everyone has access to Christ’s total transformative and enabling power, remember: The commandments of God are ‘strict’ because His kingdom and its citizens can stand only if they consistently reject evil and choose good, without exception.” D. Todd Christofferson, “The Love of God,” *Liahona*, November 2021, 16–17. “Jesus clearly understood . . . that there is a crucial difference between the commandment to forgive sin (which He had an infinite capacity to do) and the warning against condoning it (which He never ever did even once).” Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Cost—and Blessings—of Discipleship,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 8.

3. “The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s.” Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1989/05/beware-of-pride?lang=eng>.

4. Clearly, there are people who show little tolerance (and sometimes hatred) for differences. (I believe this is a fear of the unknown and that if we knew how enriching differences can be, we’d seek out people different from us daily—and love sharing with them.) “Imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with. This must be terribly frustrating to Him, but He deals with it.” Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2013, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2013/04/lord-i-believe?lang=eng>. See Appendix F.

5. See endnote 5 in chapter 6.

6. Jer. 29:11. God can and does make good come from even tragic events (ever know an athlete who, due to an injury, ended up in their ideal career?). Still, His power and genius don’t equate to license on our part (why choose unnecessary pain and consequences?). Take heart; most choices are a matter of individual taste and are not governed by law or commandment. I’m finally realizing there are no totally negative experiences; even the worst circumstances teach me and make me wiser. How you live affects—for good or bad—your beliefs. Some people fail to follow God’s will; then, because blessings don’t come as

anticipated, they condemn His work as false. The Lord has addressed this. See D&C 3:3, 58:32–33, 130:20–21, 136:42.

7. D. Todd Christofferson, “Our Relationship with God,” Ensign, May 2022, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/41christofferson?lang=eng>. Jer. 29:11; Rom. 8:28; Ps. 32:8, 33:11; Prov. 3:5–6, 16:3–4, 16:9; 1 Cor. 2:9.

8. “Christ’s version of unity is about togetherness, not sameness.” John K. Carmack, “Unity in Diversity,” Ensign, March 1991, 7–9.

9. “God’s intent is not to break us but to redeem us. He does not want us to be brokenhearted but to have broke hearts and contrite spirits so that He can take the reins of our lives and guide us with His love to receive all of His promised blessings.” L. Todd Budge, “‘Broke’ Hearts and Contrite Spirits,” BYU devotional, February 2, 2021, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/l-todd-budge/broke-hearts-contrite-spirits/>; Isa. 1:18; Micah 7:19; Alma 33:16. See Mos. 7:33; 2 Ne. 26:22, 28:22.

10. “Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.” Matt. 28:18. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” Eph. 6:10. See also Isa. 40:29; Luke 5:17; 1 Cor. 2:5; Eph. 1:19–21, 2:8–9; Phil. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:3–5; 2 Ne. 2: 8–9; Mos. 2:21; “30 Bible Verses about the Power of Christ,” Knowing Jesus, n.d., <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/The-Power-Of-Christ>.

11. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Your Great Adventure,” Ensign, December 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/43uchtdorf?lang=eng>.

12. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Greatest Possession,” Liahona, November 2021, 9.

13. Ulisses Soares, “Take Up Our Cross,” Ensign, November 2019, 115, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/55soares?lang=eng>. “The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives. When the focus of our lives is on . . . Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him.” Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” Liahona, November 2016, 82–84.

Chapter 14 (chapter 12 in Abundant) – IS MIXED-ORIENTATION MARRIAGE A HAPPY OPTION FOR SOME ATTRACTED TO THEIR OWN SEX?

1. Brett Croche (personal social media post, 2022).

2. Mark 16:16; Ether 5:5. While faithful covenant marriage between a man and a woman might be necessary to have offspring in eternity, it has never been a requirement to live happily with God. Any person who follows Christ once

they learn of His plan, and for whom a temple marriage was not feasible in this life, will have the option to receive eternal marriage and posterity—if they want those blessings. Spirits of the dead or resurrected people are not “given in marriage” in the next life; marriage and other ordinances/sacraments, like baptism, can only be performed by those with mortal bodies, but they can be done vicariously by mortals, to be accepted or rejected by the dead (as Christ’s atoning sacrifice was vicariously done for living and dead while He was in His mortal body). See 1 Cor. 15:29; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 2:24–25; 1 John 2:12, 4:10. See also D&C 131, 132; D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 50–53.

3. “All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful.” Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph F. Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 84. “All that is unfair about life can be made right through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.” “Lesson 2: The Plan of Salvation” in *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), 52. Isa. 61:2–3; Rev. 21:4. “Jesus Christ overcame the world and ‘absorbed’ all unfairness. Because of Him, we can have peace in this world and . . . good cheer (John 16:33). If we let Him, Jesus Christ will consecrate the unfairness for our gain (2 Ne. 2:2). He will not just console us and restore what was lost (Job 45:10, 12–13; Jacob 3:1); He will use the unfairness for our benefit (Alma 40:5).” Dale G. Renlund, “Infuriating Unfairness,” *Liahona*, May 2021, emphasis added, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/25renlund?lang=eng>. “If we endure our challenges faithfully, they will have no eternal negative consequences for us.” Paul V. Johnson, “Free to Choose,” *Ensign*, February 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2019/02/free-to-choose?lang=eng>.

4. Exod. 2:11–15; Matt. 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72.

5. “Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve [differences].” Gordon B. Hinckley, “Reverence and Morality,” *Ensign*, May 1987, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/04/reverence-and-morality?lang=eng>. See also Gospel Topics, “Same Sex Attraction,” <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/same-sex-attraction?lang=eng>. Church of Jesus Christ leaders are typically unpaid. Regarding “conversion therapy”: while I am opposed to promising a gay person that they will become heterosexual, most people are on a spectrum; why would anyone deny someone who is a 3 on the Kinsey

scale resources and counseling to enjoy “traditional” marriage if that’s what they want?

6. Chapter 11 has more insights on why gay men are often promiscuous, generally speaking.

7. According to the CDC, the “percentage of marriages that end in divorce in the US varies between 40% and 50%,” and that number is falling (yet, so is the marriage rate). “The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law did publish data which suggested that the same-sex divorce rate was approximately half of the different-sex divorce rate. However, this was later retracted due to an error in the calculation¹ of the data.” Note that “as same-sex marriages were only recognized on a federal level in the USA in 2013, there is still a lack of data regarding the rate of same-sex divorces.” Branka Vuleta, “Divorce Rate in America (35 Stunning Stats for 2022),” Legal Jobs (blog), January 28, 2021, emphasis added, <https://legaljobs.io/blog/divorce-rate-in-america/>. Some studies show greater satisfaction in gay marriages (than heterosexual) but greater longevity in heterosexual marriages; causation will likely be debated long-term. Theresa E. DiDonato, “Are Same-Sex or Heterosexual Relationships More Stable?” Psychology Today (blog), October 11,

2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/meet-catch-and-keep/201710/are-same-sex-or-heterosexual-relationships-more-stable>. See also Benjamin R. Karney and Thomas N. Bradbury, “Research on Marital Satisfaction and Stability in the 2010s: Challenging Conventional Wisdom,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82, no. 1 (January 2020): 100–116, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12635>; Lois M. Cochran, “A Religious Upbringing May Reduce Divorce Risk—But Probably Not for the Reason You Think,” *Deseret News*, December 18, 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/ff6xxtb3>.

8. 1 Sam. 18:1–5, 20:16–17, 20:41–42, 23:16–18.

9. John 13:23, 19:25–27. See also Alma 53:2.

10. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Band of Brothers,” *Ensign*, February 2008, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2008/02/band-of-brothers?lang=eng>. “I testify that there is a spirit of oneness and of love in the quorum of the twelve, and existing also between them and the presidency of the church, such as you will hardly find among any other men upon earth; a love for one another that almost exceeds the love of a man for his wife.”

Rudger Clawson, in Conference Report, October 1902, 59, <https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1902sa>.

11. D&C 130:2.

Chapter 15 (chapter 13 in Abundant) – WHAT’S GOOD ABOUT ATTRACTION TO ONE’S OWN SEX?

1. 1 Cor. 6:20; Matt. 20:28.
2. Knowledge is indeed power. See Luke 12:44, 13:28, 16:19–31. These verses (along with the meaning of Abraham’s name) imply that Abraham is now in a glorified, omnipotent state (though not necessarily worshipped. Again, I know of no doctrine that says any but the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will be worshipped). See also Rom. 8:17; Phil. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 3:21, 21:7.
3. Susan H. Porter, “God’s Love: The Most Joyous to the Soul,” Ensign, November 2021, 34.
4. Our differences make us beautiful. Anomalies like the Dead Sea or the Grand Canyon attract intense interest and wonder. The world would be very boring if everyone were the same.
5. See note 5 in Chapter 8.
6. 2 Ne. 9:25. I still struggle with binary thinking!
7. James Taylor and Tim Mayer. “Home by Another Way.” Track 8 on Never Die Young. Country Roads Music/Manor House Music, 1988, compact disc.
8. Matt. 2:12.
9. Michelle Craig, “Spiritual Capacity,” Ensign, October 2019, 21. See also Alma 24:27.
10. Craig, “Spiritual Capacity,” 21.
11. Jer. 29:11; Ps. 32:8, 33:11; Prov. 3:5–6, 16:3–4, 16:9; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 2:9.