

# GD Lesson 40: Finding Joy in Temple and Family History Work

**LESSON GOAL:** To help us see the many different ways we can participate in temple and family history work and to encourage us to prayerfully determine the ways we should participate now.

## #1 – Be Centered in Christ and His Atonement; Live That Commitment

**Luke 10:27:** Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

**John 16:35:** By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, IF ye have love one to another.

### Brother Robert Norman on Temples:

1. It is important to understand holy sites and holy places. **Sometimes we as mortals have trouble seeing light. We must look in holy places.**
2. **Part of learning how to live celestially is learning how to treat holy things sacredly:** our bodies, our fellow men. **We must realize that every life is holy and sacred.**
3. **We have the temples to make us sacred and holy.** When we are in the temple, we feel the Lord's spirit. Then we look inward and take that spirit with us. We go to the temple and leave knowing our relationship to him. **We then are temples.**
4. **The scriptures scream out, BE HOLY. Leviticus 11:44:** For I am the Lord your God: **ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy;** for I am holy.
5. Understand deeply that your body is a temple. **Become the temple of God within your own heart.**

## SEVEN COMMON MISTAKES WHEN APPLYING THE ATONEMENT IN OUR LIVES

(Taken from Elder Neal A. Maxwell's talk, "Glorify Christ," to CES Personnel, 2 Feb. 2001)

**"God leaves us free to make these very mistakes." Each mistake reflects a greater need for our personal submissiveness.**

### WE MAKE A MISTAKE WHEN:

1. **We think we own ourselves and blocks of time.** Our faith in God includes faith in God's timing, enough to be able to say in effect, "Thy timing be done."
2. **We fail to realize how much of serious discipleship consists of downsizing our egos and diminishing our selfishness!** The bloated natural man will resist any downsizing. But...meekness is what has to happen. If we are meek, being tried means being developed.
3. **We maybe don't take life's little quizzes seriously enough.** We think we will cram and pass the final exam! The infinite atonement is there for our finite mistakes, including the daily mistakes we tend to make.
4. **We fail to focus on and to develop patience as well as faith.** These two attributes are in tandem; they go together. We don't look at impatience in terms of its downside. Impatience puts us at risk.
5. **We may feel put upon by events and circumstances.** Yet "these things" that we feel put upon by actually constitute the customized curricula needed for personal development.
6. **We foolishly think we are free to choose but without wanting the consequences of those choices!**
7. **We play to the mortal galleries! We listen too much to the wrong peers.** Some people are anxious to be politically correct and to conform to the fashions of the world! Worse, however, is when we see members of the Church try to conform eternal truths to the ways and thinking of the world, so that somehow they think they can please the world.

Now these mistakes are but a few we make; they keep us from fully applying the Atonement to our lives. They are not worthy of Jesus and what He accomplished in Gethsemane and on Calvary. **To understand and have faith, therefore, in the character and the purposes of God, it means instead of complaining, that we accept, more than we do, the menu of life and what is allotted to us.**

## #2 – Be Spiritually Committed to Perform Temple Work and Family History Work

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

**President Joseph Fielding Smith:** "The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, 'The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.' The reason for this is that all the dead must be redeemed from their sins through obedience to the gospel just as the living are. It is required of us to perform this labor in their behalf. "Moreover, we cannot be made perfect without our faithful dead who are also heirs of celestial exaltation. **There must be a welding, or joining together of generations, from Adam down.** Parents must be sealed to each other and children to parents, in order to receive the blessings of the celestial kingdom. Therefore **our salvation and progression depends upon the salvation of our worthy dead** with whom we must be joined in family ties. **This can only be accomplished in our temples.**

"The Prophet further declared that the doctrine of salvation for the dead is the 'most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel.' The reasons for this are the great magnitude of the labor, and the fact that we **have the privilege of officiating for the dead and assisting in giving to them the privileges that we also enjoy, through our obedience to the gospel**" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:146-147).

2. Each member of the Church can participate in temple and family history work.

- Have a current temple recommend and attend the temple regularly
- Prepare to have ordinances performed for deceased relatives
- Learn about ancestors' lives
- Keep a journal or prepare a personal history or family history

**President Boyd K. Packer:** "No work is more of a protection to this church than temple work and the genealogical research that supports it. **No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power**" ("The Holy Temple," *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 36).

**President Gordon B. Hinckley:** "I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to **make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein. I am satisfied that every man or woman who goes to the temple in a spirit of sincerity and faith leaves the house of the Lord a better man or woman.** There is need for constant improvement in all of our lives. There is need occasionally to leave the noise and the tumult of the world and step within the walls of a sacred house of God, there to feel His spirit in an environment of holiness and peace" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 72; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53)

3. The Church provides many resources to help us participate in temple and family history work.

- a. *A Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (34697).
- b. Family history forms (such as pedigree charts and family group records).
- c. Computer programs.
- d. Information on the Internet.
- e. Family History Centers (you may want to find out where the nearest one is located).

## #3 – Recommit to Finding and Keeping Family Histories

**Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy:** "Not one of my children has any recollection of my grandparents. If I want my children and grandchildren to know those who still live in my memory, then I must build the bridge between them. I alone am the link to the generations that stand on either side of me. It is my responsibility to knit their hearts together through love and respect, even though they may never have known each other personally. My grandchildren will have no knowledge of their family's history if I do nothing to preserve it for them. That which I do not in some way record will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have. **THE WORK OF GATHERING AND SHARING ETERNAL FAMILY KEEPSAKES IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. It cannot be passed off or given to another.**

"A life that is not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory. What a tragedy this can be in the history of a family. **Knowledge of our ancestors shapes us and instills within us values that give direction and meaning to our lives.** . . . "Family history and temple work are the eternal family keepsakes that build bridges. They build bridges between the generations of our families, bridges to activity in the Church, and bridges to the temple. It is my desire that **each of us will recognize the great keepsakes we have received from those who preceded us and our own personal responsibility to pass them on to future generations.**"

(*Conference Report*, Apr. 1999).

# The Stories That Bind Us

By BRUCE FEILER---March 15, 2013

I hit the breaking point as a parent a few years ago. It was the week of my extended family's annual gathering in August, and we were struggling with assorted crises. My parents were aging; my wife and I were straining under the chaos of young children; my sister was bracing to prepare her preteens for bullying, sex and cyberstalking. Sure enough, one night all the tensions boiled over. At dinner, I noticed my nephew texting under the table. I knew I shouldn't say anything, but I couldn't help myself and asked him to stop.

Ka-boom! My sister snapped at me to not discipline her child. My dad pointed out that my girls were the ones balancing spoons on their noses. My mom said none of the grandchildren had manners. Within minutes, everyone had fled to separate corners. Later, my dad called me to his bedside. There was a palpable sense of fear I couldn't remember hearing before.

"Our family's falling apart," he said. "No it's not," I said instinctively. "It's stronger than ever."

But lying in bed afterward, I began to wonder: Was he right? **What is the secret sauce that holds a family together? What are the ingredients that make some families effective, resilient, happy?**

I've spent the last few years trying to uncover that information, meeting families, scholars and experts. After a while, a surprising theme emerged. **The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative.**

I first heard this idea from Marshall Duke, a colorful psychologist at Emory University. In the mid-1990s, "There was a lot of research at the time into the dissipation of the family," he told me. **"But we were more interested in what families could do to counteract those forces."**

Around that time, Dr. Duke's wife, Sara, a psychologist who works with children with learning disabilities, noticed something about her students. **"The ones who know a lot about their families tend to do better when they face challenges," she said.**

Her husband was intrigued, and set out to test her hypothesis. They developed a measure called the **"Do You Know?" scale** that asked children to answer 20 questions. Examples included: Do you know where your grandparents grew up? Do you know where your mom and dad went to high school? Do you know where your parents met? Do you know an illness or something really terrible that happened in your family? Do you know the story of your birth?

Dr. Duke asked those questions of four dozen families in the summer of 2001, and then compared the children's results to a battery of psychological tests the children had taken, and reached an overwhelming conclusion. **The more children knew about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their families functioned.** The "Do You Know?" scale turned out to be the best single predictor of children's emotional health and happiness. "We were blown away," Dr. Duke said.

Why does knowing where your grandmother went to school help a child overcome something as minor as a skinned knee or as major as a terrorist attack? **The answers have to do with a child's sense of being part of a larger family.**

**Psychologists have found that every family has a unifying narrative, Dr. Duke explained, and those narratives take one of three shapes:**

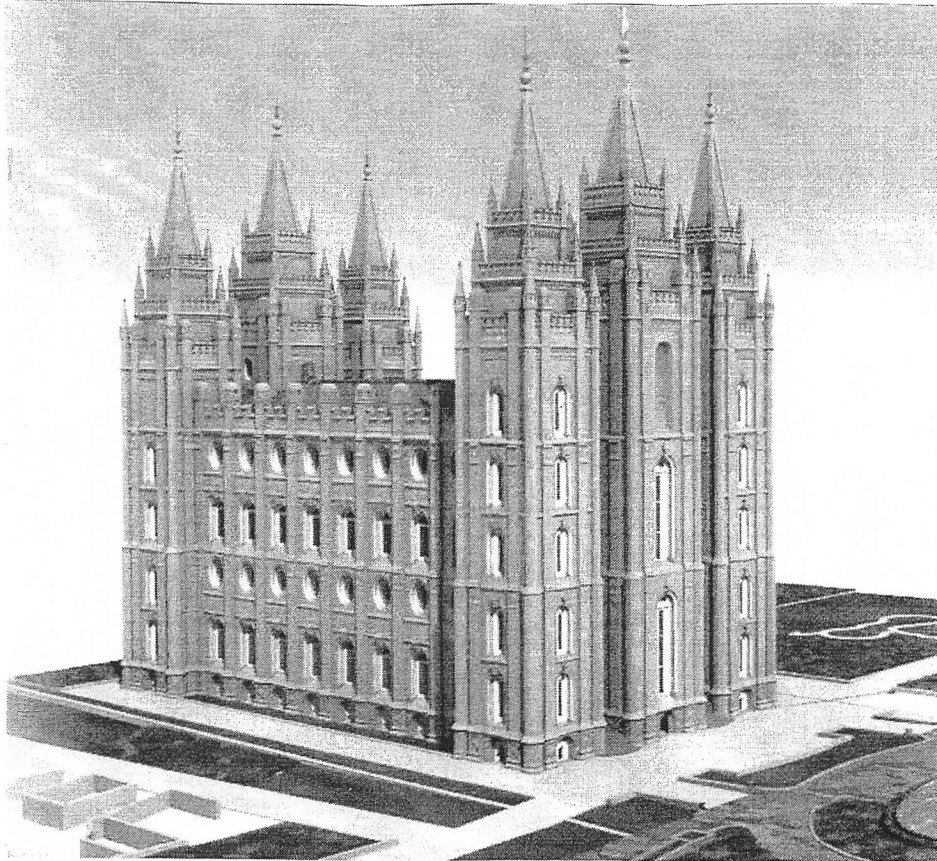
- 1) The **ascending family narrative**: "Son, when we came to this country, we had nothing. Our family worked. We opened a store. Your grandfather went to high school. Your father went to college. And now you. ..."
- 2) The **descending narrative**: "Sweetheart, we used to have it all. Then we lost everything."
- 3) The **most healthful narrative**, Dr. Duke continued, "is called the **oscillating family narrative**: 'Dear, let me tell you, we've had ups and downs in our family. We built a family business. Your grandfather was a pillar of the community. Your mother was on the board of the hospital. But we also had setbacks. You had an uncle who was once arrested. We had a house burn down. Your father lost a job. But no matter what happened, we always stuck together as a family.'" **Children who have the most self-confidence know they belong to something bigger than themselves.**

Most happy families communicate effectively. But talking doesn't mean simply "talking through problems," as important as that is. **Talking also means telling a positive story about yourselves.** When faced with a challenge, happy families, like happy people, just add a new chapter to their life story that shows them overcoming the hardship. This skill is particularly important for children, whose identity tends to get locked in during adolescence.

**The bottom line: if you want a happier family, create, refine and retell the story of your family's positive moments and your ability to bounce back from the difficult ones. That act alone may increase the odds that your family will thrive for many generations to come.**



**Ezra Taft Benson:** "No honor that will ever come to any of us conferred by men of the world, or any man-made honorable body, will ever approach in importance the great honor and blessing which came to us the day we were ordained to the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This is a priceless blessing, an eternal blessing, and I hope and pray that we will honor it all the days of our lives. **Wealth, power, position are as nothing, by comparison, to the honor and blessing which come through the priesthood of the Living God**" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft*, 223).



The spires on the east end of the Salt Lake temple are higher than those on the west end. Note also that there are five sets of windows on the east spires and four sets of windows on the west spires. This design was intended to represent the priesthood, with the Melchizedek Priesthood and its five offices (elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle) represented by the east spires and the Aaronic Priesthood and its four offices (deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop) represented by the west spires.