**Temple and Family History Work**

*President Russell M. Nelson & his wife Wendy W. Nelson, RootsTech 2017:*

“I entreat you to make a sacrifice of time to the Lord by increasing the time you spend doing temple and family history work, and then watch what happens. It is my testimony that **when we show the Lord we are serious about helping our ancestors, the heavens will open and we will receive all that we need.”**

“We can be inspired all day long about temple and family history experiences others have had. But we must do something to actually experience the joy ourselves. **I would like to extend a challenge to each one of us** so that the wonderful feeling of this work can continue and even increase. **I invite you to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice—preferably a sacrifice of time—you can make in order to do more temple and family history work this year.”**

*President Russell M. Nelson, CR, April 2018:*

**“Nothing opens the heavens quite like** the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon and **regular time committed to temple and family history work.”**

*President Russell M. Nelson, CR, April 2018:*

“My dear brothers and sisters, construction of these temples may not change your life, but your time in the temple surely will. In that spirit, **I bless you to identify those things you can set aside so you can spend more time in the temple.”**

*Elder Dale G. Renlund, CR, April 2018:*

“As Church members, **we do have a divinely appointed responsibility to seek out our ancestors** and compile family histories. This is far more than an encouraged hobby, because the ordinances of salvation are necessary for all of God’s children.**We are to identify our own ancestors who died without receiving the ordinances of salvation. We can perform the ordinances vicariously in temples, and our ancestors may choose to accept the ordinances.** We are also encouraged to help ward and stake members with their family names. It is breathtakingly amazing that, through family history and temple work, we can help to redeem the dead. **But as we participate in family history and temple work today, we also lay claim to “healing” blessings promised by prophets and apostles.These blessings are also breathtakingly amazing because of their scope, specificity, and consequence in mortality.** This long list includes these blessings:

* Increased understanding of the Savior and His atoning sacrifice;
* Increased influence of the Holy Ghost to feel strength and direction for our own lives;
* Increased faith, so that conversion to the Savior becomes deep and abiding;
* Increased ability and motivation to learn and repent8 because of an understanding of who we are, where we come from, and a clearer vision of where we are going;
* Increased refining, sanctifying, and moderating influences in our hearts;
* Increased joy through an increased ability to feel the love of the Lord;
* Increased family blessings, no matter our current, past, or future family situation or how imperfect our family tree may be;
* Increased love and appreciation for ancestors and living relatives, so we no longer feel alone;
* Increased power to discern that which needs healing and thus, with the Lord’s help, serve others;
* Increased protection from temptations and the intensifying influence of the adversary; and
* Increased assistance to mend troubled, broken, or anxious hearts and make the wounded whole.

**If you have prayed for any of these blessings, participate in family history and temple work. As you do so, your prayers will be answered.** When ordinances are performed on behalf of the deceased, God’s children on earth are healed.”

*President Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6:313:*

“**The greatest responsibility** in this world that God has laid upon us **is to seek after our dead**…Those saints who neglect it, in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation”

*Elder Quinton L. Cook, CR, April 2018:*

**“For those of us alive at this time, the increase in temples and family history work is phenomenal. This pace will continue and accelerate until the Second Coming of the Savior,** lest the whole earth “be utterly wasted at his coming.

Family history work, heaven-blessed by technology, has dramatically increased in the past few years. **We would be unwise to become complacent about this divinely appointed responsibility** and expect that Aunt Jane or some other committed relative will take care of it. Let me share President Joseph Fielding Smith’s jarring comments: **“None is exempt from this great obligation.** It is required of the apostle as well as the humblest elder [or sister]. Place, or distinction, or long service in the Church … will not entitle one to disregard the salvation of one’s dead.

**As individuals, we would do well to evaluate our effort in pursuing missionary work, temple and family history work, and preparations to meet God.”**

*Elder Dale G. Renlund, February 2016:*

“Brothers and sisters, I promise you ***protection*** for you and your family as you take this challenge to ***find as many names to take to the temple as ordinances you perform in the temple and teach others to do the same***. And if you accept this challenge, ***blessings will begin to flow to you and your family*** like the power of the river spoken of by Ezekiel. And the river will grow as you continue to perform this work and teach others to do the same. You'll find not only ***protection*** from the temptation and ills of this world, but you'll also find ***personal power***, ***power to change***, ***power to repent***, ***power to learn***, ***power to be sanctified***, and ***power to turn the hearts of your family together and heal that which needs healing.***”

*Elder Quentin L. Cook, CR, April 2012:*

**“The leadership of the Church has issued a clarion call to the rising generation** to lead the way in the use of technology to experience the spirit of Elijah, to search out their ancestors, and to perform temple ordinances for them. Much of the heavy lifting in hastening the work of salvation for both the living and the dead will be done by you young people. If the youth in each ward will not only go to the temple and do baptisms for their dead but also work with their families and other ward members to provide the family names for the ordinance work they perform, both they and the Church will be greatly blessed. **Don’t underestimate the influence of the deceased in assisting your efforts and the joy of ultimately meeting those you serve**. The eternally significant blessing of uniting our own families is almost beyond comprehension”

*Elder David A. Bednar, CR, Oct. 2011:*

“Family history work is a vital part of the work of salvation and exaltation. **You have been prepared for this day** and to build up the kingdom of God. **You are here on the earth now to assist in this glorious work**”

*President Boyd K. Packer, Ensign, Oct. 2010:*

“No work is more of a **protection** to this Church than temple work and the family history research that supports it. No work is more **spiritually refining**. No work we do gives us more **power”**

*Elder Richard G. Scott, CR, Oct. 2012:*

“Do you young people want **a sure way to eliminate the influence of the adversary** in your life? Immerse yourself in searching for your ancestors”

*President Gordon B. Hinckley, CR, April 1983:*

“The work of redemption of the dead…**more nearly approaches the divine work of the Son of God**, who gave his life for others, than does any other work of which I know”

*Elder Dale G. Renlund, CR, April 2018:*

“When God directs us to do one thing, He often has many purposes in mind. **Family history and temple work is not only for the dead but blesses the living as well**.”

*President Henry B. Eyring, CR, April 2017:*

“To gather and unite God’s family requires more than just warm feelings. It requires sacred covenants made in connection with priesthood ordinances.

**Many of your ancestors did not receive those ordinances. But in the providence of God, you did. And** God knew that you would feel drawn to your ancestors in love and that **you would have the technology necessary to identify them.** He also knew that **you would live in a time when access to holy temples**, where the ordinances can be performed, would be greater than ever in history. And He knew that He could trust you to accomplish this work in behalf of your ancestors.

Of course, all of us have many pressing and important responsibilities that need our attention and time. All of us find parts of what the Lord expects us to do beyond our abilities. Fortunately, the Lord provides a way for each of us to gain confidence and satisfaction in all our service, including family history service. **We gain strength to do what He asks through our faith** that the Savior gives no commandment “save he shall prepare a way for [us] that [we] may accomplish the thing which he commandeth”

E*lder David A. Bednar, CR, Oct. 2011:*

“I invite the young people of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah…As you respond in faith to this invitation…**your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep** and abiding. And I promise **you will be protected against the intensifying influence of the adversary**. As you participate in and love this holy work, **you will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives**”

*President Spencer W. Kimball, Ensign, January 1977:*

“Missionary work is not limited to proclaiming the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people now living on the earth. Missionary work is also continuing beyond the veil…Our great part in this aspect of missionary work is to perform on this earth the ordinances required for those who accept the gospel over there. **The spirit world is full of Spirits who are anxiously awaiting the performance of these earthly ordinances for them***.* I hope to see us **dissolve the artificial boundary line we so often place between missionary work and temple and genealogical work**, because it is the same great redemptive work”

*President Howard W. Hunter, Ensign, February, 1995:*

“There are some members who engage in temple work but fail to do family history research on their own family lines. Although they perform a divine service in assisting others, they lose a blessing by not seeking their own kindred dead as divinely directed by latter-day prophets…I have learned that **those who engage in family history research and then perform the temple ordinance work for those whose names they have found will know the additional joy of receiving both halves of the blessing**…All of us should find joy in this magnificent labor of love”

*Elder Richard G. Scott, CR, November 1990:*

**“This is a spiritual work, a monumental effort of cooperation on both sides of the veil where help is given in both directions.** It begins with love. Anywhere you are in the world, with prayer, faith, determination, diligence, and some sacrifice, **you can make a powerful contribution**. Begin now. I promise you that the Lord will help you find a way. And **it will make you feel wonderful**”

*President Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, Mar. 1995:*

“I am confident that the Lord will permit us and direct us to go on building these sacred structures as we become worthy of them. **Our important test of that worthiness will lie in doing the research that becomes the foundation for the major work to be carried on in them**”

*Elder John A. Widtsoe, Utah Genealogical & Historical Magazine, July 1931:*

“**Whoever seeks to help those on the other side receives help in return** in all the affairs of life…Help comes to us from the other side as we give help to those who have passed beyond the veil”

*Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Ensign, June 1989:*

“We should understand that in the work of redeeming the dead there are many tasks to be performed, and that **all members should participate by prayerfully selecting those ways that fit their personal circumstances** at a particular time...Our effort is not to compel everyone to do everything, but to encourage everyone to do something”

*President Henry B. Eyring, CR, April 2005:*

“You will be tempted to stop and leave the hard work of finding to others who are more expert or to another time in your life. But you will also feel a tug on your heart to go on in the work, hard as it will be. As you decide, **remember that the names which will be so difficult to find are of real people to whom you owe your existence** in this world and whom you will meet again in the spirit world. When you were baptized, your ancestors looked down on you with hope. Perhaps after centuries, they rejoiced to see one of their descendants make a covenant to find them and to offer them freedom. **In your reunion, you will see in their eyes either gratitude or terrible disappointment**. Their hearts are bound to you. Their hope is in your hands. **You will have more than your own strength as you choose to labor on to find them**”

*Wilford Woodruff, The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p. 152:*

“Oh, I wish many times that the veil were lifted off the face of the Latter-day Saints. **I wish we could see** and know the things of God as they do who are laboring for the salvation of the human family who are in the spirit world; **for if this were so**, **this whole people**, with very few, if any, exceptions, **would lose all interest in the riches of the world**, and instead thereof their whole desires and labors would be directed to redeem their dead”

*President Thomas S. Monson, June 2014, Ensign:*

“**We**, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, **were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work**. The Lord has never, to my knowledge, indicated that His work is confined to mortality. Rather, His work embraces eternity. I believe He is hastening His work in the spirit world. I also believe that the Lord, through His servants there, is preparing many spirits to receive the gospel. **Our job is to search out our dead and then go to the temple and perform the sacred ordinances** that will bring to those beyond the veil the same opportunities we have…

The Lord expects you and me to perform our family history work well…We are going to make mistakes, but none of us can become an expert in family history work without first being a novice. Therefore, **we must plunge into this work**, and we must prepare for some uphill climbing. This is not an easy task, but the Lord has placed it upon you, and He has placed it upon me…As you pursue family history work, you are going to find yourself running into roadblocks, and you are going to say to yourself, “There is nothing else I can do.” When you come to that point, **get down on your knees and ask the Lord to open the way, and He will open the way for you**. I testify that this is true…

**There are millions upon millions of spirit children of our Heavenly Father who never heard the name of Christ before dying and going into the spirit world.** But now **they have been taught the gospel and are awaiting the day when you and I will do the research necessary to clear the way so that we can go into the house of the Lord and perform for them the work that they themselves cannot perform**. My brothers and sisters, **I testify that the Lord will bless us as we accept and respond to this challenge”**