

FOLLOWING THE COVENANT PATH

REPENTING OUR WAY TO THE TEMPLE

OVERVIEW

- ▶ Why Covenants?
- ▶ The Temple
- ▶ The Covenant Path
- ▶ Barriers to progression
- ▶ Defining repentance
- ▶ Applying repentance

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS OF REVEALED RELIGION IS THAT OF A SACRED COVENANT. (...) IT IS A SACRED PROMISE WITH GOD. HE FIXES THE TERMS. EACH PERSON MAY CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THOSE TERMS. IF ONE ACCEPTS THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT AND OBEYS GOD'S LAW, HE OR SHE RECEIVES THE BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVENANT.

Elder Russel M Nelson (Oct 2011)

WHY COVENANTS?

- ▶ Covenants grant access to the power of God
- ▶ Covenants provide a structured path through our time on the earth
- ▶ Shield us from distraction and confusion by defining goals for us to move towards
- ▶ Access to all the blessings of the gospel are predicated upon accepting the conditions governing their us



THE TEMPLE LIES AT THE CENTER OF STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH AND SPIRITUAL FORTITUDE BECAUSE THE SAVIOR AND HIS DOCTRINE ARE THE VERY HEART OF THE TEMPLE. EVERYTHING TAUGHT IN THE TEMPLE, THROUGH INSTRUCTION AND THROUGH THE SPIRIT, INCREASES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS CHRIST. HIS ESSENTIAL ORDINANCES BIND US TO HIM THROUGH SACRED PRIESTHOOD COVENANTS.

President Russel M Nelson (April 2021)

THE TEMPLE

- ▶ Grants us access to the penultimate covenants available in this life
- ▶ Allows us to express ultimate Christ-Like service through helping grant access to covenants to those who can't for themselves
- ▶ Repeated exposure to consecrated spaces helps us receive guidance from the spirit by isolating the influences of the world.



IT IS THE ONE PATH THAT LEADS TO THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM OF GOD. WE EMBARK UPON THE PATH AT THE GATE OF BAPTISM AND THEN “PRESS FORWARD WITH A STEADFASTNESS IN CHRIST, HAVING A PERFECT BRIGHTNESS OF HOPE, AND A LOVE OF GOD AND OF ALL MEN [THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS] . . . TO THE END.” IN THE COURSE OF THE COVENANT PATH (WHICH, BY THE WAY, EXTENDS BEYOND MORTALITY), WE RECEIVE ALL THE ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS PERTAINING TO SALVATION AND EXALTATION.

D Todd Christofferson, April 2021

OVERVIEW OF COVENANT PATH PROGRESSION

- ▶ Begins with Baptism
- ▶ Builds with the Priesthood
- ▶ Expands in the temple
- ▶ Continues beyond death

ASPECTS OF THE PATH

- ▶ Obedience to Gods' commandment with exactness and diligence
- ▶ Binding of individual souls to God
- ▶ Influence of the Holy Ghost
- ▶ Gathering of others into the Covenant Path
- ▶ Inheritance of covenant blessings

THE COVENANT PATH LEADS TO THE ORDINANCES OF THE TEMPLE, SUCH AS THE TEMPLE ENDOWMENT. THE ENDOWMENT IS GOD'S GIFT OF SACRED COVENANTS THAT CONNECT US MORE FULLY TO HIM. IN THE ENDOWMENT, WE COVENANT, FIRST, TO STRIVE TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD; SECOND, TO REPENT WITH A BROKEN HEART AND CONTRITE SPIRIT; THIRD, TO LIVE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. (...) FOURTH, TO KEEP THE LAW OF CHASTITY AND, FIFTH, TO DEDICATE OURSELVES AND EVERYTHING THE LORD BLESSES US WITH TO BUILD UP HIS CHURCH.

Dale G Renlund, April 2023

SPECIFIC TEMPLE COVENANTS

- ▶ Obedience to Gods' commandment with exactness and diligence
- ▶ Access to and participation in the repentance process with the intent to change to avoid future transgression
- ▶ Through repentance become better able to live the gospel by understanding and conversion to its' principles.
- ▶ Purity of intent and process regarding the procreative power
- ▶ Application of all the blessings received through obedience to the gospel in pursuit of bringing others to the same blessings

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

- ▶ Development / Age (Temporary)
- ▶ Lack of Knowledge
- ▶ Incomplete Context/Understanding
- ▶ Deliberate Separation

UNFORCED ERRORS ARE CONSIDERED THE RESULT OF A PLAYER'S BLUNDER RATHER THAN BEING CAUSED BY THE OPPONENT'S SKILL.

TOO OFTEN OUR PROBLEMS OR CHALLENGES ARE SELF-INFILTED, THE RESULT OF POOR CHOICES, OR, WE COULD SAY, THE RESULT OF "UNFORCED ERRORS." WHEN WE ARE DILIGENTLY PURSUING THE COVENANT PATH, WE QUITE NATURALLY AVOID MANY "UNFORCED ERRORS."

D. Todd Christofferson, April 2021

BARRIERS TO ACCESS - DEVELOPMENT / AGE (TEMPORARY)

- ▶ Developmentally unable to understand the covenant process
- ▶ "... their children shall be baptized for the remission of sins when eight years old" - D&C 68:27

BARRIERS TO ACCESS - LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ Unable to find the information necessary to participate in the covenant path
- ▶ Have yet to encounter religion or the gospel of Jesus Christ specifically

BARRIERS TO ACCESS - INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING

- ▶ "line upon line, precept upon precept" - 2 Nephi 28:30
- ▶ Unable to establish a context or reasoning behind a specific principle
- ▶ Just because we have the facts or raw text of the gospel does not mean we understand it
- ▶ Unprepared to receive the underlying principle

“LISTEN! BEHOLD, A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW. AND AS HE SOWED, SOME SEED FELL ALONG THE PATH, AND THE BIRDS CAME AND DEVoured IT. OTHER SEED FELL ON ROCKY GROUND, WHERE IT DID NOT HAVE MUCH SOIL, AND IMMEDIATELY IT SPRANG UP, SINCE IT HAD NO DEPTH OF SOIL. AND WHEN THE SUN ROSE, IT WAS SCORCHED, AND SINCE IT HAD NO ROOT, IT WITHERED AWAY. OTHER SEED FELL AMONG THORNS, AND THE THORNS GREW UP AND CHOKED IT, AND IT YIELDED NO GRAIN. AND OTHER SEEDS FELL INTO GOOD SOIL AND PRODUCED GRAIN, GROWING UP AND INCREASING AND YIELDING THIRTYFOLD AND SIXTYFOLD AND A HUNDREDFOLD.” AND HE SAID, “HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR.”

Mark 4:3-9

BARRIERS TO ACCESS - DELIBERATE SEPARATION

- ▶ Unable to establish a context or reasoning behind a specific principle resulting in discontinuation of practice
- ▶ Disagreement with the perceived results of a principle
- ▶ Gradual separation/discontinuation in pursuit of greater emotional comfort

OUR REVEALED DOCTRINE (...) ESTABLISHES THAT PERSONAL REPENTANCE IS A COMMANDED PREREQUISITE TO PARTAKE OF THE SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT AND INHERIT THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM.

Quinten L. Cook, April 2022

DEFINING REPENTANCE

- ▶ Deliberate change in behavior
- ▶ Acknowledgement that past actions are beyond our control
- ▶ Acceptance that only Christ can fully balance past actions
- ▶ Faith that Christ is willing and able to pay for the effects of our actions
- ▶ A willingness to release the burden of that history

REPENTANCE IS INDIVIDUAL CHANGE IN COMBINATION WITH THE ATONEMENT. TO THIS PROCESS WE BRING OUR PRESENT. CHRIST BRINGS THE MEANS TO ADDRESS THE PAST. TOGETHER THESE THINGS CREATE A NEW FUTURE FOR OUR LIVES

Elliot Francis, April 2023

APPLYING REPENTANCE

- ▶ Recognize that repentance is a necessary and unavoidable step on our path to salvation
- ▶ Accept that change is needed/desired
- ▶ Internalize the desire to reach for that change, even as we fail to achieve it.
- ▶ Place the instructions of the gospel and the savior ahead of our own conceptions about what is needed
- ▶ Pursue those changes that are revealed to us until they replace our nature

THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO THE COVENANT PATH IS BLINDNESS, INTENTIONAL OR OTHERWISE, TO THE INDIVIDUAL VALUE EACH OF OUR SOULS TO GOD AND HIS PLAN.

WHEN WE KNOW OUR OWN WORTH IN GODS EYES WE CHANGE OUR BEHAVIOR TO MATCH THAT PERCEIVED WORTH.

Elliot Francis, April 2023

REPENTING OUR WAY TO THE TEMPLE

- ▶ Covenants are the path to God.
- ▶ Temple participation is where we receive eternal covenants
- ▶ Continuing temple participation is one of the most effective "enduring to the end" actions we can take
- ▶ If we are unclear on, in disagreement with, or unready for any of the points above repentance is available to us to help us make the changes needed

SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL, FAILURE IS NOT FATAL: IT IS THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE THAT COUNTS.

Winston Churchill (Attributed)

REPENTING OUR WAY TO THE TEMPLE

- ▶ Accept that our value is sufficient to warrant the atonement
- ▶ Understand that repentance is the only way to endure along the covenant path
- ▶ Change our behavior so as to both desire and be worthy of bringing other souls to the covenant path
- ▶ Pursue further light and knowledge through temple worship so that we may become more effective in pointing others towards the path

THE LORD DOES NOT EXPECT PERFECTION FROM US AT THIS POINT IN OUR ETERNAL PROGRESSION. BUT HE DOES EXPECT US TO BECOME INCREASINGLY PURE. DAILY REPENTANCE IS THE PATHWAY TO PURITY, AND PURITY BRINGS POWER.

President Russel M. Nelson, April 2019