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# Marriage Is Ordained of God

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D&C 49:15–16

In this revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1831, teachings of the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing (Shakers) were addressed. One teaching—the celibate life was higher than marriage—was strongly refuted by the Lord (D&C 49: Introduction). The Lord said to His Prophet Joseph, “Marriage is ordained of God unto man. Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and this that the earth might answer the end of its creation” (vv. 15–16).

Through the years, holy prophets have reiterated the Lord’s message of the sanctity of marriage. For example, before President Gordon B. Hinckley introduced “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” at the September 23, 1995, General Relief Society Meeting, he said,

With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn. In furtherance of this, we of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles now issue a proclamation to the Church and to the world as a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family, which the prophets, seers, and revelators of this church have repeatedly stated throughout its history.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 100.

The Proclamation begins, “[We] solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” The Proclamation further states—

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. ...

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.<sup>2</sup>

With the same divine message that “marriage is ordained unto man,” it is little wonder that strengthening marriage continues to be addressed by Church leaders (D&C 49:15). President Russell M. Nelson in his general conference address in April 2006 told the story of man and a woman he observed on an airplane flight:

On a recent flight, I sat behind a husband and wife. She obviously loved her husband. As she stroked the back of his neck I could see her wedding ring. She would nestle close to him and rest her head upon his shoulder, seeking his companionship. In contrast, he seemed totally oblivious to her presence. He was focused solely upon an electronic game player. During the entire flight, his attention was riveted upon that device. Not once did he look at her, speak to her, or acknowledge

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<sup>2</sup> “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” presented at the September 23, 1995 General Relief Society Meeting by President Gordon B. Hinckley.

her yearning for affection. His inattention made me feel like shouting: “Open your eyes, man! Can’t you see? Pay attention! Your wife loves you! She needs you!”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Russell M. Nelson, “Nurturing Marriage,” *Ensign*, May 2006.