

Wisdom Through the Ages

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I want to thank the conference organizers for inviting me to speak today. Anything worthwhile I say belongs to those wiser, more intelligent, and more connected to Heaven than I am. I have acknowledged those sources in the written transcript of this talk. Any errors, misunderstandings, or poorly expressed ideas are entirely my own.¹

The theme of this conference is *The Family of God—Refuge in a Troubled World*.² The pattern of the Holy Order is that of a married couple: one man and one wife.³ Yet not everyone will have the opportunity to marry, raise children, or remain in a union they wish to continue into eternity. God knows every soul and has promised to wipe away all tears from our eyes, acknowledging that mortality gives us reasons to weep.⁴

The entry “Holy Spirit of Promise” in *A Glossary of Gospel Terms* teaches that what is established through God’s word and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will endure eternally. While that sealing must occur in mortality, the Holy Spirit of Promise can extend hope to those who receive by revelation the promise of eternal marriage even if they do not obtain the ordinance in this life. What God promises here, He is bound to fulfill hereafter.⁵

¹ Many of my siblings are of genius-level intelligence. I am not. I learned that I had to work much harder to understand even half as much. As a child, I loved reading Encyclopedias and was fascinated by both the intelligence of mankind and the majesty of creation. As a teenager, I discovered my father’s *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* and voraciously read its entries, hungering and thirsting for a knowledge of God. You can imagine my joy when *A Glossary of Gospel Terms* was introduced to us and I once again am fascinated by the intelligence of a man and the majesty of the Creator. I am blessed to have married a man who shares that same hunger and thirst for divine knowledge. I have learned much from him and consider myself his most important convert as he has led me to a fuller understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than I otherwise would have had.

² We are gathered here this weekend during the 222 anniversary of the birth of Emma Hale Smith, the beloved wife, staunchest supporter, and truest friend of the prophet, Joseph. Emma Hale Smith Bidamon was born July 10, 1804 in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

³ See Snuffer, Denver C. (October 19, 2017) *The Holy Order* and Snuffer, Denver C. (April 2024) *The Holy Order, Part 2* retrieved from <https://denversnuffer.com/blog/papers/>, access June 1, 2026.

⁴ See New Covenants (NC) Revelation 8:8. All scripture references are from the Covenant Christian Edition of the scriptures and can be found at scriptures.info.

⁵ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Holy Spirit of Promise,” found in Covenant Christian edition of the scriptures.

This world is in a constant state of entropy which can make truth difficult to preserve. Throughout scripture we see repeated cycles of apostasy followed by restoration. One consequence of apostasy is the confounding of language, or a corruption of terms, definitions, beliefs, and ideas.⁶

In our day, the true meanings of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Patriarchy have become distorted. The world defines knowledge as information, learning, or skills acquired through study or experience.⁷ Wisdom is defined as sound judgement, good sense, and practical insight.⁸ Patriarchy is commonly understood as male authority, hierarchy, and domination.⁹ While these definitions contain fragments of truth, revelation has restored a fuller understanding.

Joseph Smith taught that true knowledge is not merely learning about God but coming into His presence. It is to be visited by the Lord, to know Him through direct relationship and personal ministry. Christ declared that eternal life is to know God.¹⁰ This kind of knowledge comes through revelation, covenant, and communion with Heaven. This truth has been restored again in our day.¹¹

On April 10, 1842, Joseph preached:

As far as we degenerate from God we descend to the devil and lose knowledge and without knowledge we cannot be saved . . . is not God good. Yes, then you be good. If He is faithful, then you be faithful. Add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge . . . Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.¹²

⁶ See Old Covenants (OC) Genesis 6:6, New Covenants introduction to Book of Mormon, and Teaching & Commandments (T&C) 146:10.

⁷ See Merriam-Webster Dictionary “Knowledge,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/knowledge>, accessed April 22, 2026.

⁸ See Merriam-Webster Dictionary “Wisdom,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wisdom>, accessed April 24, 2026.

⁹ See Merriam-Webster Dictionary “Patriarch,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patriarchy>, accessed April 24, 2026.

¹⁰ See NC John 9:19.

¹¹ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Knowledge.”

¹² See Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 113-114.

Knowledge and Wisdom are eternal attributes — part of what it means to be male and female. In scripture, Wisdom is a feminine noun.¹³ Knowledge may provide the spark of creation, but Wisdom is necessary to guide and counsel — to receive, temper, apportion and weave its power.¹⁴ Balance between them is necessary for an orderly creation to exist.¹⁵ Alone they are barren, but together they are infinite, because they continue.¹⁶

The physical is a mirror of the spiritual: The seed of man provides the spark of life, but it is within the womb of the woman that life is nurtured and formed. Together, man and woman become whole and complete, capable not only of creating, but of nurturing a new creation.¹⁷

Patriarchy, rightly understood, is the eternal, *divine partnership* of Knowledge and Wisdom working together in unity, harmony, and covenant relationship. It is the godly order founded upon mutual devotion, shared stewardship, and oneness before God.¹⁸

The Lord “invites everyone to come to Him and share in His goodness and doesn’t deny anyone who comes to Him, black or white, enslaved or free, male or female.”¹⁹ The Lord’s order here reminds mankind that Heaven does not share our prejudices, vanities, or social hierarchies.²⁰

Throughout my life I have observed that, in the pursuit of equality as the world defines it, there is a danger that women undervalue or even lose sight of their own eternal and divine role. Too

¹³ In Hebrew, Wisdom is called chakmah, which is a feminine noun. In Greek it is Sophia which is a feminine noun.

¹⁴ Nothing in this world is more desirable than acquiring wisdom — understanding and putting knowledge to wise use. Zion will require the wisdom to use pure knowledge in meekness, humility, and charity. Zion will require Her influence. Wisdom and prudence [are] companions. Prudence means “good judgment or common sense” and is the quality of assessing things correctly and making sound decisions in light of the circumstances and persons involved. Prudent judgment is not hasty nor unfair. See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Wisdom.”

¹⁵ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Mary, the Mother of Christ.” Creation begins with the active initiative of knowledge, but order and harmony require wisdom.

¹⁶ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Wisdom.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Knowledge.” While the role of Knowledge is primarily male and the role of Wisdom is primarily female, they are not mutually exclusive. Men and women can have both knowledge and wisdom.

¹⁹ CofC 2 Nephi 11:17.

²⁰ See Snuffer, Denver C. (January 24, 2021), #134: Equality, Part 1, *Denver Snuffer Podcast*. <https://denversnuffer.com/2021/01/134-equality-part-1/>, accessed April 26, 2026.

often, worth has been measured by proximity to traditionally male roles and responsibilities rather than by the eternal importance of Wisdom.

One of my favorite courses at BYU was taught by a visiting Jewish professor. He challenged everything I had ever been taught about men, women, and the family throughout history. He laid out in meticulous detail that many modern assumptions about men, women, husbands, wives, and families are rooted in false traditions and misunderstandings of the past. It was a fascinating course and exposed to my young mind a fatal human flaw: that a lie, vain tradition, false belief, or foolish error repeated often enough eventually becomes accepted as truth.²¹

Zion is meant to be a place where all deal justly with one other and are equally accountable before God.²² It is to such a place that the Gods will be welcomed, where the residents will walk and talk with Them in the cool of the day.²³ It will become a mirror on earth of what is in Heaven. Therefore, it must be established upon pillars of Knowledge and Wisdom, working together in equality, unity, and harmony, in a godly partnership.

Yet mankind has resisted this divine pattern throughout time. King Limhi recognized this iniquity when he rejoiced and lamented,

How awe-inspiring are the Lord's works! How patient He is with His people!
In contrast, how blind and stubborn are people in their understanding. They won't seek Wisdom and don't want Her to rule over them. Yes, they're like a wild flock fleeing from the shepherd, scattered, hunted, and eaten by forest predators.²⁴

²¹ "A lie told often enough becomes the truth" describes the illusory truth effect where repeated information is perceived as more believable, regardless of its accuracy. The illusory truth effect is the cognitive tendency to believe false information is true after repeated exposure, as familiarity makes it easier to process and misconstrued as validity. This phenomenon works even when information is obviously false or contradictory to prior knowledge. It creates powerful implications for the rapid spread of fake news, propaganda, and misinformation.

²² See NC Jacob 3; NC Hebrews 1:23; and T&C 158:15. See also NC 3 Nephi 12:3: "And they taught and did minister one to another, and they had all things in common among them, every man dealing justly one with another."

²³ See OC Genesis 2:17 and T&C 110, LoF 2:13.

²⁴ Covenant of Christ (CofC) Mosiah 5:14.

Limhi was not just describing his own generation. Throughout scripture, mankind has repeatedly rejected Wisdom, dismissed Her voice, and refused Her counsel.²⁵

An examination of several eternal relationships can help us better understand the partnership between Knowledge and Wisdom — a partnership vital not only to recognize, but also to emulate. To discern Wisdom through the ages and mankind's recurring rejection of Her, we must go back to the very beginning, even before the foundation of the world.

God — the Father and the Mother:

Many women question their place in God's family because of religious priesthood claims and a perceived lack of scriptural inclusion of the "Divine Female whose greatest attribute is to bestow wisdom upon the whole of this creation."²⁶

The greatest of all love stories is the eternal, divine Partnership between God the Father and God the Mother. The Mother in Heaven was beside the Father when His work began. She was not only present when the plan was laid, but She helped establish it. She built Her house and shaped Her seven pillars.²⁷ All that our Father knows, the Mother knows; all that He established and ordered, She established and ordered.²⁸

One of Heavenly Mother's titles is "The Great Weaver" because She formed unorganized intelligence into organized spirits, becoming the Mother of All Living.²⁹ Mortal women have

²⁵ Consider that throughout scripture Wisdom repeatedly counsels fidelity in marriage and warns against practices that lead to inequality, jealousy, and the breaking of hearts. Jacob reminded his people that the Lord God delights in chastity and has commanded faithfulness in marriage, warning against practices that cause suffering among women and children. It was the Father and Mother as one who instructed Jacob to remind his people that they had been commanded that "no man among you is to have more than one wife—and he is not to have any concubines. I the Lord God delight in women's chastity and prostitution is an abomination to Me . . . For in My Wisdom I will have covenant people . . . and they will hearken to this commandment to have only one wife." See Covenant of Christ (CofC) Jacob 2:7-8.

²⁶ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Mary, the Mother of Christ."

²⁷ OC Proverbs 1:39; see also *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Jacob's Ladder."

²⁸ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Mary, the Mother of Christ" and OC Proverbs 1:37. It is the Mother's eternal right to choose the heir, and the First was chosen. See T&C 145, T&C 145 — The Book of Abraham 6; T&C 69:6; 2 Nephi 10:6; Isaiah 6:6; and *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Sons of the Morning." See also Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Our Divine Parents*, p. 7: "And Adam knew Eve, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord . . . [Cain's] ambition undid his mother's choosing, and he fell from grace. But note in the account that it was Eve who chose Cain. That was her right. That right came down from the Mother in Heaven as one of the roles occupied by all mothers over their offspring."

²⁹ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Mary, the Mother of Christ."

inherited a similar power from Her: all human life begins in the womb, where the work of The Great Weaver is replicated for everyone who has ever lived in this world.³⁰

It was the Mother in Heaven's condescension and sacrifice that "made it possible for the Son of God to enter this fallen world for the salvation of everything in it . . . [therefore] She was also a critical participant for providing the sacrificial lamb required for our redemption."³¹

Because men and women refuse to seek Wisdom and do not want Her to rule over them, the Divine Mother was almost entirely erased from the scriptural record.³² Before this methodical and intentional removal, Her existence was central and significant. She was the female deity in Jerusalem, the Mother of the Lord in the royal family, the divine Wisdom, and the Lady of the Temple. Those few in our day who believe in Her existence often imagine a soft, kind, gentle mother figure, a source of emotional comfort and maternal nurturing, full of mercy and the most lovable of creatures.³³ Consider that after Lucifer rebelled, it required at minimum the Mother's consent and approval to cast him out of Heaven.³⁴ Yet, it is possible that She advocated for it and thereby demonstrated a strength and firmness of character that may surpass even that of the Father.³⁵

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Mary, the Mother of Christ." The title Theotokos, or "Mother of God," became almost exclusively associated with Mary, the Mother of Christ. The Mother laid aside her "white robe of glory," see Nibley, Hugh (1973) *Treasures in the Heavens: some early Christian insights into the organizing of worlds*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 8, Issue 3-4 (Autumn – Winter 1973); *Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Mary, the Mother of Christ," and 1 Nephi 3:8.

³² A group called the Deuteronomists edited the scriptural records and according to Margaret Barker, Biblical scholar, almost entirely erased the Divine Mother.

³³ Catholicism has preserved the memory of the Divine Mother better than most traditions though their veneration of Her portrays a soft, kindly, gentle, mother figure, a source of emotional comfort and maternal nurturing, full of mercy and the most lovable of creatures. In Catholic theology, Mary is considered a supreme and powerful Queen because of her divine motherhood. As the Queen Mother, she is viewed as exceptionally powerful and merciful. Her queenship is defined by love, service, and humility. Many religions believe in a Divine Mother including, but not limited to, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Catholicism, Hinduism, Kabbalistic Judaism/Mysticism, and other Ancient Near Eastern Religions. Others believe that the She was a young, helpless, childlike victim of God, one of His eternal Heavenly Harem. Still others have lost all knowledge of Her.

³⁴ See T&C 145 — The Book of Abraham 6:3; T&C 69:6; 2 Nephi 10:6; and Isaiah 6:6.

³⁵ "A Visit with Denver Snuffer," (May 13, 2015), p. 16, https://restorationarchives.net/pdf/2015.05.13_A-Visit-with-Denver-Snuffer_transcript.pdf, accessed May 4, 2026. It would be interesting if the casting out of Lucifer was accomplished through a Women's Council headed by the Heavenly Mother. See

As the mother of Christ, Mary bore witness to sacrifice and redemption.³⁶ She fulfilled her role perfectly and attained to the resurrection of the dead.³⁷ While we do not pray to Her, nor worship Her, Wisdom declares: “[W]hoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord.”³⁸ This means that “when we use the word *Father* to describe God, we finally regard God to be both *male and female* — the original *image of God*.”³⁹

Adam and Eve:

In a prior estate, Adam and Eve had been sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. United as one, they had proven themselves true and faithful and progressed to become living souls, with both bodies and spirits. In God’s kingdom, they had sat upon thrones, equal and eternally joined together.⁴⁰

³⁶ Consider that Mary, the Mother of Christ witnessed both her husband’s sacrifice in a prior estate and the exquisite agony of her Son in this mortality. See Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Our Divine Parents*, p. 18. See also T&C 171 – The Testimony of St. John 5:3 “Then Jesus affirmed to them, In the name of Father Ahman I tell you, The Son does nothing of himself, but I am following the path that my Father walks. Every thing the Father has done, I am likewise to do. My Father loves His Son, and has revealed to me every thing he has done, and I have a work to do for me to finish the path of my Father.” See also T&C 161:15.

³⁷ See Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Our Divine Parents*, pp. 18-21.

³⁸ OC Proverbs 1:38. See also NC 3 Nephi 8:8, and *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Mary, the Mother of Christ:” The role of God the Father is critical to acknowledge and understand for our salvation. Jesus Christ is the essential Savior and Redeemer whose atoning sacrifice is the means ordained by God to now rescue mankind from sin and death. Salvation depends on knowing, confessing, and worshiping Christ. Anything that distracts men or women from that can become an impediment to salvation. Symbolized by the Moon, the Mother watches over Her children and bridges the gulf between the Father’s throne and this fallen world. The Moon is a beautifully orchestrated symbol of the Mother, or Divine Feminine: the moon watches over the world at night just as a mother awakens throughout the night to care for her children; the female menstrual cycle frequently aligns with the moons 29.5 day synodic month, although light pollution in our modern world has weakened this synchronization. Additionally, although the Sun is about 400 times larger in diameter than the Moon, it is also 400 times father away causing them to appear nearly the same size in the sky. While pregnant, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth and sang a hymn of worship and praise, rejoicing that in this fallen world her husband was faithful and true and had brought about that which they had planned to do together, “My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed, for he who is mighty has done to me great things, and I will magnify his holy name for his mercy on those who fear him from generation to generation (NC Luke 1:8).”

³⁹ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Mary the Mother of Christ,” as well as OC Genesis 2:8, CofC Mosiah 5:9, and CofC Alma 12:15. When the scriptures mention God speaking as the “voice of many waters,” it is describing both the Father and the Mother speaking as One. See OC Revelation 7:9: “And I heard something like the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters [male and female], and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

⁴⁰ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Eve.”

Adam was chosen in the Heavenly Council to become the first man. He was born the physical son of the Creator Gods and placed in Eden.⁴¹ They commanded that he not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.⁴²

Seeing that it was not good for Adam to be alone, the Gods formed a woman to be his partner and his ezer (AY-zer) kenegdo (keh-neg-DOE) — a helpmeet equal in stature, yet possessing different and necessary strengths to make the couple a complete whole.⁴³ Eve was formed not out of the dust to be beneath Adam, nor out of the air to be above him, but from his side to be equal to him, intended to walk beside him.⁴⁴

The Gods united Adam and Eve in marriage and commanded them to leave Father and Mother and cleave faithfully to each other.⁴⁵

Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit out of season.⁴⁶ He promised that it would make her wise, her eyes would be opened, and she would become like the Gods, knowing good and evil. After Eve chose to eat the fruit of *that* tree, Adam faced a difficult choice — remain in Eden with his Parents or leave with his wife. Adam chose Eve, demonstrating the sacredness and fidelity of the marriage relationship.⁴⁷

Adam and Eve's original records may once have contained valuable truths about enduring the suffering of mortality, reconciling grief and disappointments, remaining faithful through the trials of marriage and family life, and healing the fundamental breach of the separation of

⁴¹ The Creator Gods are known in Christianity today by their earthly names: Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

⁴² See OC Genesis 2:13.

⁴³ This Hebrew phrase means “power/strength corresponding to him.” See Strong's Concordance #5828 “Ezer” defined as help, helper, or strength and #5048 “Kenegdo” implies a counterpart who stands equal and opposite to another, like a mirror image or a partner in a matching pair. As the physical daughter of Heavenly Father and Mother, she was “endowed with her Mother's creative abilities. . . . The fertility of Eve, and thereafter of all the daughters of Eve, came because of the power given from direct descent from the Heavenly Mother, “ see *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Eve.”

⁴⁴ When the Gods brought her to Adam, he named her Eve, out of respect for the Heavenly Mother, “for thus [has] the Lord God, called the first of all women” see OC Genesis 2:18.

⁴⁵ See OC Genesis 2:14 and T&C 157:34-41. Cleave to means “to cling to, adhere to, stick to, hold fast to, and be faithful to.” They were also commanded to multiply and replenish the earth, see OC Genesis 2:9.

⁴⁶ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, “Commandment” and OC Genesis 2:16.

⁴⁷ See T&C 9:11-12.

knowledge and wisdom from the Source of Knowledge and Wisdom.⁴⁸ Those records have largely been lost.

Many Judeo-Christian traditions portray Eve as the temptress and deceiver who caused Adam, and all of creation, to sin and fall from God's presence, bringing death and suffering into this world. The belief that menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth were assigned to Eve and all her daughters as punishment has shaped attitudes toward women for centuries. Some even characterize women as untrustworthy, morally inferior, and wicked precisely because they inherited these traits from Eve.⁴⁹ What eternal truths have been lost because of mankind's vilification of her and her daughters?

Together Adam and Eve model the partnership of knowledge and wisdom. After many generations, they were redeemed from the Fall and entered back into the Lord's presence. When the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, the effect was knowledge given through prophecy and revelation: "And Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth."⁵⁰

The effect of the Spirit upon Eve was wisdom, "Were it not for our transgression, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption."⁵¹

⁴⁸ There are no records that tell us exactly how Adam and Eve worked out marital differences they may have had, how they dealt with the inevitable issues associated with being a human being in a fallen world, how they coped with the pain and suffering they must have experienced when Cain murdered his brother, their birthright heir, Able, how they worked out their salvation, stayed true and faithful to each other, loved their children, taught them the Gospel, and worshipped God.

⁴⁹ See the Bible and the Jewish Tanakh: The Jewish scriptures are called the Tanakh after the first letters of the three parts in the Jewish tradition: T for Torah, the Teachings of Moses, or the first five books; N for Nevi'im, the books of the prophets; and Kh for Ketuvim, for the Writings, which include the psalms and wisdom literature. The Jewish Talmud asserts that ten curses, including those associated with childbearing, desiring her husband, and death were inflicted upon Eve as punishment for her sin. See The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women, *Eve: Midrash and Aggadah* by Tamar Kadari. Retrieved from <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/eve-midrash-and-aggadah>, accessed on May 5, 2026. In the Islamic Quran, however, the story of Adam and Eve is told in such a way that the couple share the responsibility for eating the fruit and falling from God's presence (Quran 7:19-23).

⁵⁰ See OC Genesis 3:4. See also Snuffer, Denver C. (July 26, 2014) *Marriage and Family*, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹ Ibid.

This is the role of the woman, the gift of the woman: to receive, process, and interpret prophecy, specifically in relation to the family and the eternal purposes of God.⁵²

The Gods have counseled men to seek not only the Wisdom of the Mother but the wisdom of a godly wife:

Hear, you children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. . . . Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve you; love her, and she shall keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote you. She shall bring you to honor when you do embrace her. She shall give to your head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to you.⁵³

In *Answer to Prayer for Covenant*, we learn that men who have acquired Knowledge cannot “sit upon a throne” in the Father’s Kingdom unless Wisdom has agreed to enter an eternal marriage covenant with him.⁵⁴

When a man and woman have found someone willing to marry them the real work of the relationship has only just begun. The growth humans resist most often is reflected through our closest relationships. Being in relationship requires us to confront our egos, our fears, our selfishness, our need for validation, and the unresolved wounds we carry within us. It is in relationships that we can practice being part of, rather than one of. Women who care for a child learn that life is no longer centered solely on herself, she is not one thing anymore, she is a *collective thing*. Perhaps the most challenging spiritual path is relationship because it is within the family where the deepest refinement of the soul can occur.⁵⁵

Marriage provides a multitude of life experiences that help us learn obedience, sacrifice, chastity, and consecration. For men, it presents a divine proving ground—an opportunity for the Heavenly Mother to observe if they will faithfully serve, provide for, and protect those

⁵² See Snuffer, Denver C. (July 26, 2014) *Marriage and Family*, pp. 8-9.

⁵³ OC Proverbs 1:16.

⁵⁴ T&C 157:37-43.

⁵⁵ Hartley, Brittney [@nononsensespirituality] (March 31, 2026), What is the most challenging spiritual path? [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DWhN-UHDWR_

entrusted to their care.⁵⁶ For many women, they

“[G]ive up their lives” to become a wife. Even to the point they surrender their prior [sur]name and become known by a new name and begin a new life. The sacrifice for them is completed in childbirth, where they risk their life and then shed their blood to bring a new person into the world.⁵⁷

The Lord desires to protect the fidelity and sanctity of marriage and families. He has revealed:

Whenever I have people who are mine, I command them to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where my presence can dwell or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister, because it is in such a place that it has been ordained to recover you, establish by my word and my oath your marriages, and endow my people with knowledge from on high that will unfold to you the mysteries of godliness, instruct you in my ways, that you may walk in my path. . . . Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah’s covenant with him; Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca’s covenant with him; and Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel’s covenant with him; . . . the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.⁵⁸

Abraham and Sarah:

The triumphs and struggles of Abraham and Sarah’s love story follow them through many profound trials.⁵⁹ Their lives were marked by sacrifice, difficulty, disappointment, and deep

⁵⁶ Throughout time, women and children have been the most vulnerable, marginalized, and dependent upon the husband and father for protection, shelter, food, and care. The Mother watches how men treat women and children, often considered “the least of these” as she carefully chooses Her sons. See also Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Ten Parables*, Ch. 10 “The Missing Virtue.” See also NC Matthew 11:23-25 and 1 Timothy 1:13.

⁵⁷ Snuffer, Denver C. (April 8, 2010). D&C 132, part 3. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://denversnuffer.com/2010/04/d-c-132-part-3/> accessed May 10, 2026.

⁵⁸ T&C 157:41-43.

⁵⁹ Some of Abraham and Sarah’s trials the scriptures bring awareness to are: Abrahams’s near execution by wicked priests; their departure from their homeland into the wilderness; a severe famine; fear that Sarah’s great beauty would lead to Abraham’s death at the hand of jealous rivals; a war to rescue Abraham’s nephew Lot; decades of infertility; a covenant from the Lord and a promise of innumerable descendants; a surrogate arrangement that introduced conflict; intercession with the Lord concerning the destruction of Sodom and

heartache. They worked through the complexities of their marriage and remained faithful to each other while seeking greater righteousness and reconciliation with the Lord.

They were visited by the Lord, received a covenant and new names, and were adopted into the Family of God.⁶⁰ The scriptures provide a glimpse of the immensity of Abraham's knowledge; yet Sarah's wisdom has often been interpreted as impatience, harshness, cruelty, or lack of faith.

Isaac and Rebecca:

Like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca struggled with infertility. Isaac entreated the Lord for a child and eventually she conceived twins.⁶¹

Rebecca's wisdom has been portrayed as a mother who played favorites — one who loved Jacob and hated Esau — and as a manipulative wife who deceived her husband. In reality, her actions were in accordance with the mother's eternal right to choose the heir as well as her right to receive inspiration from the Lord concerning her children.⁶² While the twins were in her womb, Rebecca felt them struggling. She inquired of the Lord and received revelation, "Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from your body. And one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger."⁶³

A "dim-sighted" Isaac favored Esau as his birthright heir. Rebecca held firm to the revelation she had received and she did what she needed to do to ensure that Jacob received the covenantal blessing.⁶⁴

Through all of Isaac and Rebecca's marital and familial conflicts, as a couple they honored God, and their marriage covenant and attained exaltation.⁶⁵

Gomorrah; the long-awaited birth of their son, Isaac; the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael; years of wandering and displacement; the near sacrifice of Isaac at Abraham's hand; concluding with Sarah's death.

⁶⁰ See OC Genesis 6:6 to Genesis 8 and T&C 145 — The Book of Abraham.

⁶¹ See OC Genesis 9:2.

⁶² "This pattern of the mother choosing the heir is not just an allegory or an event in family history. It is an eternal right belonging to the mothers." See Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Our Divine Parents*, p. 10.

⁶³ OC Genesis 9:2.

⁶⁴ The question is: was Isaac's eyesight only physically dim, or was he also "dim-sighted" spiritually as to who the correct birthright son should be?

⁶⁵ See T&C 157:42.

Jacob and Rachel:

Jacob's great love for Rachel was evidenced by his willingness to labor for fourteen years to obtain her hand in marriage.⁶⁶ Their marriage endured deception, displacement, jealousy, and contention within the family, periods of barrenness, and grief. Jacob mourned Rachel's death, as she sacrificed her life to bring Benjamin into the world. Together, they became joint heirs in the Kingdom of God.⁶⁷

These sacred stories teach us that although each couple experienced moments of joy, they also endured the inevitable pains, stresses, struggles, difficulties, and traumas of mortal existence. Each experienced profound refinement as they worked together to obtain knowledge and wisdom, and to come to peace with themselves, with God, and with each other.

Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene:

There is little in traditional Christianity that informs us regarding the divine union of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.⁶⁸ Like that of the Heavenly Parents, Jesus and the Magdalene's sacred relationship has become obscured over time to the point that most of the Christian world believes that he never married.⁶⁹ No writings of the Magdalene's own are accepted within mainstream Christianity. Even the Second Epistle of John, addressed "unto the elect lady and her children," preserves no name within the record.⁷⁰

Several apocryphal Christian writings, including the *Gospel of Mary* and the debated *Gospel of the Beloved Companion*, expand upon the Magdalene's role as Jesus' divine companion and most faithful disciple — one who uniquely understood his teachings, and was honored as the "Apostle of Apostles."⁷¹ In the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* "there were three who always walked with the Lord: Mary, his mother, and her sister, and Magdalene, the one who was called his

⁶⁶ See NC Genesis 9:24 "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel. And they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

⁶⁷ See T&C 157:42.

⁶⁸ The name Magdalene was an ancient title for the Lady of the Temple and means "the exalted lady" or "the elect lady." See works by Margaret Barker.

⁶⁹ The earliest and most reliable sources about Mary Magdalene's life are the three Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke which were all written during the first century A.D. Whenever she is listed among the women disciples in the Synoptic Gospels, her name appears first, indicating her prominence among them.

⁷⁰ See NC 2 John 1:1.

⁷¹ In *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Apostle" we learn that an apostle is one who is sent with a message from God and has qualified by witnessing Christ's resurrection.

companion.”⁷² Jesus “loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth.”⁷³ Her close relationship with Jesus caused tension with the other disciples, who asked him, “Why do you love her more than all of us?”⁷⁴

Biblical theologian Dr. Margaret Barker connects the title Magdalene to ancient temple traditions in which Mary Magdalene represents the divine Feminine — the Lady of Wisdom.⁷⁵

Modern revelation, specifically *The Testimony of St. John*, expands upon the sparse Biblical record, portraying Mary Magdalene as the Elect Lady and divine companion of Jesus.⁷⁶ It was she who “cut off seven locks of his hair that had not been cut before,” took royal oil used to anoint kings and “applied it to the head, arms and hands, legs and feet of Jesus” in preparation for his death and resurrection.⁷⁷

Mary Magdalene stood beside her mother-in-law, Mary, at the cross while her husband was crucified and watched over his body during his burial.⁷⁸ She went in the early morning, while it was still dark, to the sepulcher and found the tomb empty.⁷⁹ Mary, the Elect Lady, became the first witness of the risen Lord, remaining at the sepulcher weeping after the others had departed.⁸⁰ When she recognized Him, she clung to Him, unwilling to let Him go.⁸¹

To discover what fragments remain of Mary Magdalene’s wisdom requires we look to alternative texts that have preserved remnants of truth.

⁷² The Gospel of Philip, <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gop.html>, accessed May 22, 2026.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ The Savior answered and said to them, “Why do I not love you like her? . . . When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness.” The Gospel of Philip, <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gop.html>, accessed May 22, 2026.

⁷⁵ See Margaret Barker’s Temple Theology. Dr. Barker postulates that the title Magdalene stems from the Aramaic word mgaddela, meaning “the tower” or “the great one.” The title Magdalene signifies Mary’s exalted status as an Elect Lady and spiritual pillar in early Christianity.

⁷⁶ See T&C 171 — The Testimony of St. John 8:13.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See T&C 171 — The Testimony of St. John 11:16 and NC Matthew 12:32.

⁷⁹ See T&C 171 — The Testimony of St. John 12:1.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

The disregarded role of the divine feminine is mirrored in a renowned Gnostic narrative known as the *Hymn of the Pearl*, or the *Robe of Glory*, found within the *Acts of Thomas*.⁸²

A young prince, the son of the King of Kings, left his Eastern home and was sent to a harsh, cruel land to retrieve a single, unique pearl that was guarded by a serpent. Upon arrival, the prince forgot his royal lineage and mission, adopted the local customs, and fell into a deep sleep. His Father and Mother, the King and Queen, sent a letter to remind him of his purpose. The prince awoke, remembered his quest, sought for and found his pearl, and returned with her to his Father's kingdom where he was dressed in a robe of glory.

Like the prince, men are commanded by God to seek for Wisdom, a “pearl of great price” with whom they can be complete and obtain the right to have their seed continue into eternity.⁸³

Joseph and Emma Smith:

Joseph Smith was informed by an angelic messenger on September 22, 1823, that he would receive the ancient record when he brought the right person with him.⁸⁴

Two years later, Joseph met Emma Hale while boarding near her family home in Harmony, Pennsylvania.⁸⁵ As soon as they met, he began “paying his addresses” to her.⁸⁶ When Emma left home to visit Joseph's employer in January 1827, she had no intention of marrying. During her stay, Joseph visited her. Believing that “[N]o young woman . . . was better calculated to render the man of her choice happy than Miss Emma Hale . . . [that] she would be my choice in preference to any other woman I have ever seen” Joseph proposed marriage.⁸⁷ Even though

⁸² See The Gnostic Society Library, Gnostic Scriptures and Fragments: The Hymn of the Pearl — The Acts of Thomas; <http://gnosis.org/library/hymnpearl.htm>, accessed May 5, 2026.

⁸³ See T&C 157:43.

⁸⁴ See T&C 1 – Joseph Smith History 3 and Manuscript of the Early History of Joseph Smith; and Jessee, Dean (1977) “Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 1 , Article 4. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol17/iss1/4>, accessed May 12, 2026.

⁸⁵ From October 1825 – January 1827 Joseph Smith Jr. worked for Mr. Josiah Stowell of Chenango Co., New York. During the time Joseph was employed by Mr. Stowell he boarded with Mr. Isaac Hale, Emma's father. See T&C 1 — Joseph Smith History: 4 and 5.

⁸⁶ Lucy Mack Smith's *History, 1844-1845*. See also Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844-1845*, Page [1], bk. [1], p. [1], bk. [1], *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed April 17, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/1>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

her parents were “bitterly opposed to him,” Emma preferred “to marry him to any other man she knew” and so she consented.⁸⁸

Joseph and Emma were married on January 18, 1827.⁸⁹ Eight months later, Emma was by his side when Joseph visited the location of the sacred record. This time, because he was now complete with a wife whom he loved and who loved him, the plates were delivered into his hands.⁹⁰

Emma was one of the first witnesses of the ancient record. She testified that “The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen tablecloth . . . I once felt of the plates as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape.”⁹¹ She did not look at them because she was not “specially curious about them.” She was “satisfied that it was the work of God and therefore [she] did not feel it necessary to do so.”⁹²

Emma had not the slightest doubt that the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity.⁹³ She was highly intelligent and helped Joseph with the translation, acting as his first scribe.⁹⁴ She stated that:

⁸⁸ "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52. *The Gospel Reflector*, Vol. 1, No. 6, (March 15, 1841), pp. 174-175. Benjamin Winchester, editor, independent Latter Day Saint periodical published semi-monthly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania between January 1, 1841, and June 15, 1841. In Oliver Cowdery's letter to W. W. Phelps, he characterized Emma as a woman who possessed “a decidedly correct mind and uncommon ability of talent and judgment . . . a manifest willingness to fulfill, . . . that passage in sacred writ, — “and they twain shall be one flesh” — by accompanying her husband against the wishes and advice of her relatives . . . I . . . can say in justice, her character stands as fair for morality, piety and virtue, as any in the world.” Emma consistently demonstrated steadiness, moral conviction, and unwavering loyalty in the midst of repeated upheaval. She exhibited an unshakable confidence that is reminiscent of that of Mary, the Mother of Christ who “kept all those things and pondered them in her heart” trusting that all things “work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

⁸⁹ Joseph and Emma were married by Squire Tarble on September 18, 1827. Emma Smith's obituary gives a date for their marriage of September 19, 1827, while her mother-in-law, Lucy Mack Smith's biography and Joseph Smith's History gives a date of September 18, 1827. Years later, when asked about their courtship and marriage, Emma stated that she did not remember the exact date of their marriage as their certificate of marriage was lost in some of the marches they were forced to make. See "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52.

⁹⁰ See T&C 1 – Joseph Smith History 6.

⁹¹ "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

[N]o man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, [Joseph] would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he could at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as [Joseph] was, it was simply impossible.⁹⁵

Like the Patriarchs of old, Joseph and Emma wandered in the wilderness, fleeing from place to place, alternating between taking refuge with others and opening their own home to those in need. One time, while Joseph was away, Emma's presence in the Newel K. Whitney home became a source of tension. She quietly left without complaint and said nothing of the humiliating incident.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *The Saints' Herald*, Vol. 31, No. 25, (June 21, 1884), p. 396; Edmund Clark Briggs to Joseph Smith III, June 4, 1884. Emma remarked that due to Joseph's limited education, "He could not pronounce the word Sariah," she also recalled that one time while translating, where it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it?" When she informed him, it had, he replied, "O, I thought I was deceived." See also "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52.

⁹⁶ Smith, Lucy (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, pp. 240-241 and Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844-1845, Page [1], bk. [1], p. [1], bk. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed April 17, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/1>. After Joseph returned, he quickly secured a comfortable home for his family in Kirtland. Soon afterward, he left to the East for Church business, placing Emma in Hyrum's care, during which time she gave birth to Joseph III. See Smith, Lucy (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, pp. 240-241 and Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844-1845, Page [1], bk. [1], p. [1], bk. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed April 17, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/1>. Lucy Mack Smith recalled, "During Joseph's absence, [Emma] continued to devote herself to the Church, assisting wherever needed, particularly in preparing clothing for traveling elders and supporting those she lived with through her cheerful, faithful presence and lively, spirited conversation. Whatever her hands found to do, she did with her might, never asking if she would benefit more than others." Emma and Joseph had another son, Frederick, 3 ½ years after the birth of Joseph Smith III who was born November 6, 1832, in Kirtland, Ohio. Frederick Granger Williams Smith was born June 20, 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio. Throughout the end of 1842 and the year 1843, Emma suffered chronic illness. During their Nauvoo years, Emma lost two more children, a stillborn son, and 14 month old, Don Carlos, after "a long season of sickness and distress." *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 2, No. 21, (September 1, 1841), p. 533. On October 5, 1842, she was baptized twice in the Mississippi River for her health and at first seemed better, yet that evening she grew worse and Joseph was "much troubled on account of [her] sickness."⁹⁶ She did not attend any of the Relief Society meetings during 1843 due to frequent travels and the chronic state of her health. The beginning of 1844 found her health much improved and she was pregnant with her ninth child.

Emma's stoic devotion would continue to be tested with greater trials. The constant displacements were compounded by chronic illnesses, relentless persecution, and the devastating deaths of several children.⁹⁷ These trials deeply marked both her family life and spiritual journey. Her divine spiritual calling neither protected her from nor offered her immunity from intense personal trauma. Her mortal struggles were inextricably intertwined with her spiritual destiny.

Their first child, born severely deformed, did not survive and Emma lingered near death for two weeks.⁹⁸ While Joseph anxiously cared for her, praying for her recovery, he also faced the loss of the manuscript taken by Martin Harris.⁹⁹ Though still weak, it was Emma who urged Joseph, against his wishes, to go after Harris and inquire into his silence.¹⁰⁰

On June 28, 1830, Emma was baptized along with twelve others under the hands of Oliver Cowdery.¹⁰¹ Before the baptisms were finished, a mob began to collect, desiring to commit violence upon the group. Joseph was arrested on charges of “being a disorderly person; of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon” before he could attend to the confirmations of those who had been baptized.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ While living in Ohio Emma gave birth to twins: a boy and a girl who did not survive. Around that same time, a woman named Julia Murdock died while giving birth to twins who were then adopted by Emma and Joseph. Less than one year later, the infant boy, named Joseph, died from the effects of a mob forcing Joseph out of their home and into the night, leaving the door open, thereby exposing the ill baby to the cold. Emma had lost her fourth child. See Last Testimony of Sister Emma in *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), p. 50.

⁹⁸ Emma's sister-in-law, Rhoda Skinner, who served as midwife, and Sophia Lewis, who was present at the birth indicated that the infant had birth defects. See E. D. Howe (1834) *Mormonism Unveiled*, p. 269, self-published: Painesville; digital copy accessed May 23, 2026

<https://archive.org/details/mormonismunvaile00howe/page/268/mode/2up?q=lewis>.

⁹⁹ See Smith, Lucy Mack (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, p. 137. Reprinted in 1912 by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House.

¹⁰⁰ See Smith, Lucy (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, pp. 137-138.

¹⁰¹ The other twelve people baptized that day were Hezekiah and Martha Long Peck, Joseph and Polly Peck Knight, William and Esther Knight Stringham, Joseph Knight jr., Aaron and Esther Peck Culver, Levi Hall, Polly Knight and Julia Stringham. See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (December 15, 1842), p. 40.

¹⁰² See *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (December 15, 1842), p. 40. In early August 1830, Newel and Sally Knight visited Joseph and Emma. Neither Emma nor Sally had been confirmed yet and so it was proposed that the men should confirm their wives and partake together of the sacrament. Joseph set out to procure some wine when he was met by a heavenly messenger who commanded him not to buy wine or strong drink from his enemies, not even to drink any unless it was of his own make. Joseph immediately returned home and, in obedience to the commandment, prepared wine. They held their meeting, partook of the sacrament together, confirmed their wives, and spent the evening in a glorious manner. See History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834], p. 51, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed May 15, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30->

Shortly after her baptism, Joseph received a revelation for Emma. God called her, “my daughter in Zion,” forgave her of her sins, and revealed that she was “an elect lady, whom [He] has called.”¹⁰³ The nature of her calling was to be a comfort to Joseph, go with him wherever the Lord took him, serve again as his scribe, and compile a selection of sacred hymns. The Lord gave instruction that she should be “ordained under [Joseph’s] hand to expound scriptures and exhort the church, according as it shall be given [to her] by [the Lord’s] spirit.”¹⁰⁴ The Lord counseled her that her time should be given to writing and to learning much and that Joseph would lay his hands upon her and she would receive the holy ghost.¹⁰⁵

Emma began collecting hymns as directed by the Lord, carefully selecting those that taught the precepts and principles of the gospel.¹⁰⁶ In her first hymnal, she affirmed the principles expressed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants section 101, “Statement on Marriage,” by including Hymn 62, titled, “On Marriage.”¹⁰⁷ As she prepared an expanded 1841 edition, she invited church members “endowed with poetical genius” to contribute hymns that would “cheer the heart of the righteous.”¹⁰⁸

august-1834/57. See also T&C 8. Those present on this occasion were Joseph and Emma Smith, Newel and Sarah (Sally) Knight, and John Whitmer.

¹⁰³ T&C 5:1.

¹⁰⁴ T&C 5:5.

¹⁰⁵ See T&C 5.

¹⁰⁶ On April 30, 1832, at a meeting of the Council of the Literary Firm, in Independence, Missouri, they ordered that “the Hymns selected by sister Emma be corrected by br. William W. Phelps.” (Minutes, 30 April 1832, p. 26, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2025, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-30-april-1832/2>. Joseph Smith was a member of the literary council and was present at this meeting.) Two months later, the first issue of *The Evening and Morning Star* published eight hymns. Other hymns were presented in the newspaper over the course of the next few years. (Eight hymns were printed in the first edition of *The Evening and Morning Star*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1832), p. 8; the Hymns were not given names or titles. In addition, there were no tunes added to the hymns, all hymns were sung to traditional tunes that were familiar to the congregation.) In 1835 the first edition of Emma’s *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* was published. Her second edition was printed in 1841 and contained 302 hymns.

¹⁰⁷ This hymn was first published in the 1835 edition of Emma’s *Sacred Collection of Hymns* as Hymn 62 (P. M.), p. 81. It was not included in the 1841 edition. The verses of this hymn teach eternal truths about marriage: 1 When earth was dress’d in beauty, And join’d with heav’n above. The Lord took Eve to Adam, And taught them how to love. 2 On such a grand occasion, As union had begun, They held a sweet communion, And join’d the twain as one. 3 And bless’d them as an altar, For chaste and pure desire, That no unhallow’d being Might offer there “strange fire.” 4 Beware of all temptation; Be good, be just, be wise, Be even as the angels, That dwell in Paradise. 5 Go multiply,—replenish, And fill the earth with men, That all your vast creation, May come to God again:— 6 And dwell amid perfection, In Zion’s wide domains, Where union is eternal, And Jesus ever reigns.

¹⁰⁸ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (November 1, 1840), p. 204.

As seen with Wisdom throughout history, Emma's calling was repeatedly challenged and disregarded. Other men published rival hymnals, compiled collections independent of her authority, and received credit for the sacred work she had been divinely appointed to perform.¹⁰⁹

While Joseph was illegally imprisoned in Liberty Jail, Emma traveled several times to visit him, remaining overnight on more than one occasion. When it became necessary for her to leave their home and community, she walked with their children across the frozen Mississippi River to the safety of Illinois.¹¹⁰ Distraught at leaving Joseph behind, Emma wrote to him:

[T]he walls, bars, and bolts, rolling rivers, running streams, rising hills, sinking vallies and spreading prairies that separate us, and the cruel injustice that first cast you into prison and still holds you there, with many other considerations, places my feelings far beyond description. . . [yet] I still live and am yet willing to suffer more.¹¹¹

After they were settled in Nauvoo, Joseph and Emma became increasingly concerned that the moral condition of some of the Saints was deteriorating. In response, they organized the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo to help “assist, by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the female community.”¹¹² Emma was elected by the women to serve as their

¹⁰⁹ In April 1840, D. W. Rogers was charged with “compiling and selling a hymnal as if it was the one selected and published by [Emma]” (Times and Seasons, Vol. 1, No. 6, [April 1840], p. 92). In 1840, early Mormon apostles Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor compiled and published a hymnal in Manchester, England, titled “A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe”. Known as the Manchester Hymnal, this words-only book contained 271 hymns and was used for decades and became the foundational text for the early European converts (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Topics, “Hymns,” accessed May 15, 2026, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/hymns?lang=eng>). And William W. Phelps, originally assigned to assist Emma in editing hymns, has since been credited with her work and with doctrinally revising the hymns she selected (see the historical introduction at Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835, p. 0, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed May 15, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/1>).

¹¹⁰ *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, p. 4. Emma carried her children: three year old, Frederick, and her infant, Alexander, in her arms while eight year old Julia, and seven year old Joseph held onto her dress at either side.

¹¹¹ Emma Hale Smith letter to Joseph Smith Jr. March 7, 1839.

¹¹² The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was established on March 17, 1842. See Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, p. 7, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed May 16, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/30>.

president at which time Joseph read the Emma Revelation from the Doctrine and Covenants,¹¹³ stating that

[S]he was ordained at the time the Revelation was given to expound the scriptures to all; and to teach the female part of [the] community; and that not she alone, but others, may attain to the same blessings. . . . and that why she was called an Elect lady is because, she was elected to preside.¹¹⁴

Emma Smith's calling and election had been made sure.¹¹⁵

As president of the Relief Society, and the wisdom of her day, Emma denounced corruption, wickedness, polygamy, bigamy, fornication, adultery, and prostitution in the "only city in the world that pretends to work righteousness in union."¹¹⁶ She desired to protect the "persecuted mothers, widows, wives and daughters of the saints of Nauvoo."¹¹⁷ She possessed little tolerance for hypocrisy or pretended righteousness, remarking, "I never liked people's masks, and of all the masks I ever saw a religious mask is the most to be detested."¹¹⁸

Defending the safety and good name of her husband, she petitioned Illinois Governor Thomas Carlin to stand up to the Missourians who sought Joseph's life, writing:

[D]ear sir, it is the pecuniary interest of a whole community alone, that prompts me again to appeal to your excellency. . . . and also the life of my husband; who had not committed any crime whatever . . . Need I say he is not guilty of the crime alleged against him . . . every act demonstrates the fact, that all the design of the prosecution, is to throw him in the power of his enemies, without the least ray of hope that he would be . . . allowed . . . a fair trial. I appeal to your excellency as I would unto a father . . . and beg you to spare me

¹¹³ See T&C 5.

¹¹⁴ During that meeting Joseph read 2nd Epistle of John 1 "The elder, unto the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth — and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." See Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, p. 8, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed May 16, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/31>.

¹¹⁵ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Calling and Election."

¹¹⁶ See *The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo*, as published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Vol. I, No. 47, (March 20, 1844), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ See *The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo*, as published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Vol. I, No. 47, (March 20, 1844), p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Joseph Smith III January 21, 1870.

. . . [and] my innocent children the heartrending sorrow of again seeing their father unjustly dragged to prison or to death.¹¹⁹

Months later, after returning from a business trip to St. Louis, Emma arrived to find that a bar had been established in the Nauvoo Mansion. She spoke privately with Joseph about the propriety of operating a bar in their home. He explained that the arrangement was only temporary, noting that he felt obligated to help Porter Rockwell after Rockwell had become a scapegoat for charges made against them both.

Calm and collected, yet earnest and direct, Emma responded that it was inappropriate for the leader of a religious body to maintain a hotel with a “room fitted out as a liquor-selling establishment.” When Joseph defended his position by reminding her that all taverns commonly had bars, Emma emphatically, yet quietly uttered:

Well, Joseph, the furniture and other goods I have purchased for the house will come, and you can have some other person look after things here. As for me, I will take my children and go across to the old house and stay there, for I will not have them raised up under such conditions as this arrangement imposes upon us, nor have them mingle with the kind of men who frequent such a place. You are at liberty to make your choice; either that bar goes out of the house, or we will!

It did not take Joseph long to make the choice. He replied immediately, “Very well, Emma; I will have it removed at once”—and he did.¹²⁰

Joseph’s letters reveal deep affection for Emma. Hers reflect intelligence, strength, moral conviction, and a “devotedness to the interest of [Joseph] . . . [and] the effusions of a heart wholly his.”¹²¹ She was “ready to go with [Joseph] if [he] was obliged to leave” but had confidence that he would be protected if they were prudent in the matter.¹²² Emma took

¹¹⁹ Emma Hale Smith letter to Governor Thomas Carlin August 16, 1842. Emma wrote to Carlin again on August 27, 1842.

¹²⁰ *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, pp. 34-35.

¹²¹ Letter, Thomas Carlin to Emma Smith, 7 September 1842 [Extradition of JS for Accessory to Assault], p. 203, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed June 1, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-thomas-carlin-to-emma-smith-7-september-1842-extradition-of-js-for-accessory-to-assault/3>.

¹²² Emma Hale Smith letter to Joseph Smith Jr. August 16, 1842.

precautions with Joseph's safety, aiding him in hiding from his enemies. On one such occasion she wrote to him,

[O]ur enemies think they have almost found you, by seeing where the letters were mailed. . . . I cannot tell you my feelings when I found I could not see you before you left, yet I expect you can realize them, the children feel very anxious about you because they don't know where you have gone; I verily feel that if I had no more confidence in God than some I could name, I should be in a sad case indeed but I still believe that if we humble ourselves, and are as faithful as we can be we shall be delivered from every snare that may be laid for our feet.¹²³

Together, Joseph and Emma remained devoted to one another, their children, and their faith. Her commitment to God's work is evidenced in the care she extolled with the manuscript of the Inspired Translation of the Bible.¹²⁴ She felt there was a sacredness attached to them and was very particular in who she let handle them, believing that "[N]ot every L.D.S. could be trusted to copy them," and she did not trust many of them with the reading of them.¹²⁵ It was her opinion that if she had trusted all that wished for that privilege, they would have been stolen from her.¹²⁶

Because men and women refuse to seek Wisdom and do not want her to rule over them, the name Emma Hale Smith became a "hiss and a byword" in the LDS Church.¹²⁷ We know comparatively little of Emma's personal life because some of her papers were lost when the Saints were forced to flee, while her personal books and all of her and Joseph's historical

¹²³ Emma Hale Smith letter to Joseph Smith Jr. April 25, 1837.

¹²⁴ Emma kept close care of the manuscript and often thought that the reason her home did not burn down when it had often been on fire was because of them. See Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Joseph Smith III January 20, 1867.

¹²⁵ Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Joseph Smith III January 20, 1867.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ The phrase "hiss and byword" refers to a person, group, or thing that is universally mocked, despised, and held in utter contempt. It describes someone who has become an object of ridicule, scandal, or shame, often resulting in them being publicly scorned and talked about negatively. "LDS Church" in this context refers to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Brigham Young said of Emma that she was a "damnable liar," the "most wicked woman," and that she had poisoned Joseph on several occasions. See Fair Faithful Answers, Informed Response, "Why did Emma Smith and Brigham Young dislike one another?"

https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/answers/Why_did_Emma_Smith_and_Brigham_Young_dislike_one_another%3F, access May 19, 2026.

records were either stolen from her or carried off by Willard Richards and William Clayton.¹²⁸ Emma's opposition to spiritual corruption and false doctrine caused her to become reviled by some of the highest leaders of the church in Nauvoo.¹²⁹ After Joseph's death, her home was watched, visitors were monitored, and threats were made against her safety and property.¹³⁰ Like Wisdom through the ages, she refused to yield her convictions or abandon what she knew to be right.¹³¹

Those of us who honor Emma's memory today and understand her role as a member of the Holy Order may assume that, had we been among her contemporaries, we would have admired her character and welcomed her teachings.¹³² Emma's own words should give us pause: "[Joseph] usually gave some heed to what I had to say. It was *quite a grievous thing to many* that I had any influence with him."¹³³

Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear recognize that this same pattern — the rejection of Wisdom — is repeating in our day. Even among this Covenant body, there are those who justify the systemic silencing, disregarding, dismissing, and casting aside of the **women who embody wisdom** among us.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ When asked about their courtship and marriage, Emma stated that she did not remember the exact date of their marriage as their certificate of marriage was lost in some of the marches they were forced to make. See "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52; and "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289; *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52; and Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Mrs. Pilgrim March 27, 1876. In a letter Emma wrote to Thomas Gregg on April 21, 1846, she said, "I have no documents or papers in my possession of a historical character whatever. All the records of Mr. Smiths of that nature were left with Willard Richards and Wm Clayton and they have carried them off with them." Emma Hale Smith letter to Thomas Gregg, April 21, 1846, Chicago Historical Society (Ill.) collection of manuscripts about Mormons, 1832-1954.

¹²⁹ See *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, pp. 38-39.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Posthumous idealization or glorification refers to the phenomenon of sanitizing the memory of someone who has passed away, erasing their human flaws and frailties, even to the point of praising, elevating, or idolizing an individual—often turning them into a heroic or saintly figure.

¹³³ "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *The Saint's Herald*, Vol. 26, No 19, (October 1, 1879), p. 289 and *The Saints' Advocate*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1879), pp. 49-52. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁴ Today, within the Covenant Christian community, Stephanie Snuffer has been inspired to undertake a healing ministry through which she teaches listeners how to heal from the emotional, mental, and spiritual wounds and sorrows that mortality inflicts. The Lord has said our wounds, as well those we have inflicted upon others, fill us with shame and keep us from standing with confidence in His presence (T&C 157:49). You can listen to Stephanie Snuffer's podcast *In Sanity, A Piece of Mind*, available on many podcast platforms.

On January 19, 1841, the Lord promised the saints that if they built a house unto his name, He would come to it and restore again that which was lost to them, or that which He had taken away, even the fullness of the Priesthood. He would show Joseph “all things pertaining to this house and the Priesthood thereof.”¹³⁵

Just over a year later, Joseph Smith taught the Nauvoo Relief Society:

[T]he church is not now organized in its proper order, and cannot be until the Temple is completed. . . if you live up to your privilege, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates, females, if they are pure and innocent can come into the presence of God.¹³⁶

A summation of the instruction he had given to the sisters was recorded in his journal, [M]et the members of the ‘Female Relief Society’ . . . gave a lecture on the priesthood showing how the Sisters would come in possession of the privileges and blessings and gifts of the priesthood — and that the signs should follow them, such as healing the sick casting out devils etc. and that they might attain unto these blessings by a virtuous life and conversation and diligence in keeping all the commandments.¹³⁷

The Holy Order consists of exalted men and their wives.¹³⁸ This means that beyond the veil there exists not merely a brotherhood of priesthood, but a heavenly sisterhood as well. These women are Wisdom. Men and women qualify to associate with the Heavenly Order as they learn to act in a priestly manner: serving, loving, nurturing, sacrificing, and walking in holiness before God. The best place to practice these divine qualities is within the walls of our own homes.

¹³⁵ T&C 141:10.

¹³⁶ Joseph gave this sermon to the Relief Society on April 28, 1842 Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, pp. 34-41, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 11, 2025, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/57>. The Minutes record the following after Joseph’s remarks: “The spirit of the Lord was pour’d out in a very powerful manner, never to be forgotten by those present on that interesting occasion.”

¹³⁷ The Joseph Smith Papers (2011). *Journals, Vol. 2, December 1841 – April 1843*, p. 52. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian’s Press.

¹³⁸ See Snuffer, Denver C. (October 19, 2017) *The Holy Order* and Snuffer, Denver C. (April 2024) *The Holy Order, Part 2* retrieved from <https://denversnuffer.com/blog/papers/>, access June 1, 2026.

The fullness of the Priesthood, which the Lord and Joseph referred to in these instances, was not restored again to the saints during Joseph's life.¹³⁹ When, and if, it is, it will be found within the walls of a Temple commanded by the Lord, consecrated to Him, and visited and accepted by Him. One of its functions will be to organize the Lord's people into a new and different order, one that resembles the order in the age of the Patriarchs: a Family of God, with a Father and a Mother who stand at the head.

God's House is a house of order: His Family consists of husbands and wives, Fathers and Mothers in Heaven. The Restoration of all things is not merely preserving the work begun by Joseph Smith but completing it. To do so requires that we walk back through the Fathers and their wives, the Mothers in Heaven, until we arrive at the beginning.

There is no God the Father without the Mother; no Adam without Eve; no Abraham without Sarah; no Isaac without Rebecca; no Jacob without Rachel; no Christ without Mary Magdalene; and no Joseph without Emma. It requires Wisdom to guide and counsel pure Knowledge.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, this same pattern is true in every dispensation.

The trials Emma endured for seventeen years as the wife of a prophet came to a climax on June 27, 1844, when Joseph and his brother Hyrum were murdered. Overwhelmed with grief, Emma and her children spent hours of seclusion in the living room as they waited for Joseph and Hyrum's bodies to be brought home. At the Mansion House, their bodies were washed and dressed in burial clothes.¹⁴¹ Emma leaned over her husband's coffin, placed her hands upon his cheeks, and in grief-stricken accents cried, "Oh, Joseph, Joseph! My husband, my husband! Have they taken you from me at last!" Emma was assisted to her room, almost in a state of insensibility.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ This is in part because the Nauvoo saints never completed building the Nauvoo Temple. The saints dedicated an unfinished temple. According to author Jacob Friefeld, "Though never entirely finished, builders added a roof in 1845, and worshipers began holding religious ceremonies into early 1846 (and perhaps as late as 1848 when the church sold the temple)." See Friefeld, Jacob K. (July 29, 2020), *The Destruction of the Temple: A Tornado Hits Nauvoo*. <https://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov/Blog/Posts/16/Illinois-History/2020/7/The-destruction-of-the-temple-a-tornado-hits-Nauvoo/blog-post/>, access May 1, 2026.

¹⁴⁰ See *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, "Wisdom."

¹⁴¹ *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁴² *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, pp. 37-38 and Smith, Lucy (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, pp. 352-355. Lucy Mack Smith "recalled hearing the sobs and groans and cries of "Father! Husband! Brothers!" She cried out to the Lord in agony of soul, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken this family!" See Smith, Lucy (1845) *Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors*, pp. 352-355.

Just shy of 40 years old, Emma became a widow with four young children and a baby on the way.¹⁴³ Lucy Mack Smith said of Emma that she had endured hardships “which would have borne down almost any other woman.”¹⁴⁴ Years later, Emma reflected upon her life:

I have seen many, yes very many trying scenes in my life, in which I could not see any good in them, neither could I see any place where any good could grow out of them[;] but yet I feel a divine trust in God, that all things shall work for good, perhaps not to me, but it may be of some one else.¹⁴⁵ . . . I often find I have to yield my will to surrounding circumstances . . . and have had to rest on the blessed promise, that all things shall work together for good, to them that love God and keep his commandments.¹⁴⁶

The Mothers in Heaven, and those living among us, demonstrate that wisdom is developed through years of sacrifice, suffering, service, and faithfulness.¹⁴⁷

The Lord has declared, “It is not enough to receive my covenant, but you must also abide it.” To ignore, abuse, rebel against, defy, or turn a deaf ear to the divine feminine is to break the covenant entirely. The Lord has promised, “[A]ll who abide [the covenant], whether on this land or any other land, will be mine, and I will watch over them and protect them in the day of harvest, and gather them in as a *hen* gathers *her* chicks under *her* wings.”¹⁴⁸ This suggests that the acceptance of, and reverence for, the divine partnership between Knowledge and Wisdom was foundational to the establishment of Enoch’s and Melchizedek’s Zions.

When *we* **finally** accept and heed Wisdom and *do* as **she** is instructing — to govern the Knowledge we are receiving by tempering, apportioning, and weaving its power into a balanced and orderly creation — Zion will emerge again upon the earth, and we will find refuge in a troubled world.

¹⁴³ Joseph and Emma’s children living at the time of Joseph’s death: Julia (adopted daughter) 13, Joseph III 11, Frederick 8, Alexander 6. Emma was pregnant and gave birth to David Hyrum 5 months later November 17, 1844.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, Lucy (1845) Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors, pp. 204-207, 223 and Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845, Page [1], bk. [1], p. [1], bk. [1], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed April 17, 2026, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/1>.

¹⁴⁵ Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Joseph Smith III 1869.

¹⁴⁶ Emma Hale Smith Bidamon letter to Joseph Smith III December 27, 1868.

¹⁴⁷ See Snuffer, Denver C. (2018) *Ten Parables*, Ch. 5, “The Weathered Tree.”

¹⁴⁸ T&C 157:48.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.