

# The Home: The School of Life

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Lessons are learned in a home—the place that can become a piece of heaven here on earth.

Some parents excuse themselves for mistakes they have made at home, stating that the reason for this is that there is not a school for parenting.

In reality, such a school does exist and it can be the best of all. This school is called *home*.

As I travel back to the past on the wings of my memory, I recall cherished moments I have experienced with my wife. As I share these memories with you, you may recall experiences of your own—both happy and sad; we learn from them all.

## 1. The Temple Is the Place

When I returned from my mission, I met a beautiful young woman with long black hair down to her waist. She had beautiful, big honey eyes and a contagious smile. She captivated me from the first moment I saw her.

My wife had set the goal to get married in the temple, although back then the nearest temple required a trip of over 4,000 miles (6,400 km).

Our civil marriage ceremony was both happy and sad, for we were married with an expiration date. The officer pronounced the words “And now I declare you husband and wife,” but immediately after, he said, “until death do you part.”

So with sacrifice we set out to purchase a one-way ticket to the Mesa Arizona Temple.

In the temple, as we were kneeling down at the altar, an authorized servant pronounced the words I longed for, which declared us husband and wife for time and for all eternity.

A friend took us to Sunday School. During the meeting he stood up and introduced us to the class. As the meeting came to a close, a brother approached me and shook my hand, leaving a 20-dollar bill in it. Soon after, another brother reached out to me as well, and to my surprise, he also left a bill in my hand. I quickly looked for my wife, who was across the room, and shouted, “Blanquy, shake hands with everyone!”

Soon we had gathered enough money to return to Guatemala.

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2. To Contend, You Need Two People

One of my wife’s mottoes has been “In order to contend, you need two people, and I will never be one of them.”

The Lord has clearly described the attributes which should guide our dealings with other people. These are persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and love unfeigned.<sup>2</sup>

Physical abuse in the family is a practice that is occurring less often in certain societies, and we rejoice in that. However, we are still far from eliminating emotional abuse. The harm caused by this form of abuse dwells in our memory, it wounds our personality, it sows hatred in our hearts, it lowers our self-esteem, and it fills us with fear.

Participating in the ceremony of celestial marriage is not enough. We also have to live a celestial life.

## 3. A Child Who Sings Is a Happy Child

This is another motto my wife mentions frequently.

The Savior understood the importance of sacred music. After He observed Passover with His disciples, the scriptures relate, “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”<sup>3</sup>

And speaking through the Prophet Joseph, He said, “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.”<sup>4</sup>

How touching it is to hear the song of a little one who has been taught by his or her parents to sing, “I am a child of God.”<sup>5</sup>

## 4. I Need You to Hug Me

The words “I love you,” “Thank you very much,” and “Forgive me” are like a balm for the soul. They transform tears into happiness. They provide comfort to the weighed-down soul, and they confirm the tender feelings of our heart. Just as plants wither with the lack of precious water, our love languishes and dies as we put to rest the words and acts of love.

I remember the days when we used to send love letters through standard post or how we collected a few coins to call our loved ones from a phone booth or how we would draw and write love poems on plain paper.

Today all of this sounds like museum material!

Technology in this day and age allows us to do wonders. How easy it is to send a text message of love and gratitude! Youth do it all the time. I wonder if this and other beautiful practices continue once our home is established. One of the recent text messages I received from my wife reads like this: “A hug like heaven, a kiss like the sun, and an evening like the moon. Happy day, I love you.”

I cannot resist feeling like I am in heaven when I get a message like this.

Our Father in Heaven is a perfect example of expressing love. As He presented His Son, He used the words “This

is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”<sup>6</sup>

## 5. I Love the Book of Mormon and My Savior, Jesus Christ

I am filled with emotion when I see my wife read the Book of Mormon every day. As she does so, I can feel her testimony just by seeing the joy in her countenance as she reads over the passages that testify of the mission of the Savior.

How wise are the words of our Savior: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”<sup>7</sup>

Inspired by this, I asked my grandchild Raquel, who had recently learned how to read, “What would you say about setting a goal to read the Book of Mormon?”

Her answer was “But, Grandpa, it’s so hard. It’s a big book.”

Then I asked her to read me a page. I took out a stopwatch and timed her. I said, “You took only three minutes, and the Spanish version of the Book of Mormon has 642 pages, so you need 1,926 minutes.”

This could have scared her even more, so I divided that number by 60 minutes and told her she would need only 32 hours to read it—less than a day and a half!

Then she said to me, “That’s so easy, Grandpa.”

In the end, Raquel, her brother, Esteban, and our other grandchildren took more time than this because this is a book which needs to be read with a spirit of prayer and meditation.

With time, as we learn to delight in the scriptures, we shall exclaim as the Psalmist: “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”<sup>8</sup>

## 6. It Is Not Enough to Know the Scriptures; We Have to Live Them

I remember when I was a returned missionary, and having searched the scriptures diligently, I thought I knew it all. During our courtship, Blanquy and I would study the scriptures together. I used many of my notes and references to share my knowledge of the gospel with her. After we married I came to a serious realization as I learned a great lesson from her: I may have tried to *teach* her the gospel, but she taught me how to *live* it.

When the Savior concluded the Sermon on the Mount, He gave this wise counsel: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”<sup>9</sup>

Those who live the celestial principles found in the scriptures give comfort to those who suffer. They bring joy to those who are depressed, direction to those who are lost, peace to those who are distressed, and a sure guidance to those who seek the truth.

In summary:

1. The temple is the place.
2. To contend, you need two people, and I will never be one of them.

3. A child who sings is a happy child.
4. I need you to hug me.
5. I love the Book of Mormon and my Savior, Jesus Christ.
6. It is not enough to know the scriptures; we have to live them.

These and many other lessons are learned in a home—the place that can become a piece of heaven here on earth.<sup>10</sup> I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of our Heavenly Father provide a sure direction in this life and the promise of eternal life, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Notes

1. Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 121:41.
3. Mark 14:26.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 25:12.
5. “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.
6. Matthew 3:17; see also Mark 1:11; 3 Nephi 11:7.
7. John 5:39.
8. Psalm 119:103.
9. Matthew 7:24.
10. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (2003), 43, 150.

