

Covenants with God Strengthen, Protect, and Prepare Us for Eternal Glor

Covenants with God Strengthen, Protect, and Prepare Us for Eternal Glory

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As we choose to make covenants and keep them, we will be blessed with more happiness in this life and a glorious eternal life to come.

Sisters, what a joy to gather in a worldwide sisterhood! As women who make and keep covenants with God, we share spiritual bonds that help us meet the challenges of our day and prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And keeping those covenants allows us to be women of influence who can draw others to the Savior.

Those who have been baptized covenanted on that never-to-be-forgotten day to take Jesus Christ's name upon them, to always remember Him, to keep His commandments, and to serve Him to the end. When we do these things, Heavenly Father promises to forgive our sins and give us the companionship of the Holy Ghost. These blessings start us on the path that, if we press forward and endure to the end, will allow us to live with Him and His Son in the celestial kingdom. *Every* baptized person has the promise of these privileges if she or he keeps the covenant made that special day.

Those who make further covenants in the temple receive powerful promises conditioned on personal faithfulness. We solemnly promise to obey God's commandments, live the gospel of Jesus Christ, be morally pure, and dedicate our time and talents to the Lord. In return, God promises blessings in this life and the opportunity to return to Him.¹ In that process, we are given, or endowed with, the power to discern between truth and error, between right and wrong, amid the confusing and negative voices that bombard us. What a powerful gift!

In preparation for my first trip to the temple, my mother and experienced Relief Society sisters helped me select the items I would need, including beautiful ceremonial clothing. But the most important preparation came even before knowing what to wear. After interviewing me to determine if I was worthy, my bishop explained the covenants I would make. His careful explanation gave me the chance to think about and be prepared to make those covenants.

When the day came, I participated with a feeling of gratitude and peace. Even though I did not understand the full significance of the covenants I made, I did know that I was bound to God through those covenants and was promised blessings I could scarcely comprehend if I kept them. Since that first experience, I have been continually assured that keeping the covenants we make with God allows us to draw upon the Savior's power, which strengthens us in our inevitable trials, provides protection from the adversary's influence, and prepares us for eternal glory.

Life's experiences can range from humorous to heart-wrenching, from grim to glorious. Each experience helps us understand more about our Father's encompassing love and our capacity to change through the Savior's gift of grace. Keeping our covenants allows the Savior's power to cleanse us as we learn through experience—whether it is a minor misjudgment or a major failing. Our Redeemer is there to catch us when we fall *if* we turn to Him.

Have you ever stood on a high cliff with your toes on its edge and your back to the abyss below? In rappelling, even though you are securely connected to a system of strong ropes and equipment that can deliver you to safety, standing on the edge is still heart-racing. Stepping backward off the cliff and swinging into thin air requires trust in an anchor secured to an immovable object. It demands trust in the person who will apply tension to the rope as you descend. And although the equipment provides you with some ability to control your descent, you must have confidence that your partner will not allow you to fall.

I vividly remember rappelling with a group of young women. I was first in the group to go. As I stepped backwards off the cliff, I began to fall without control. Gratefully, the rope jerked and my too-rapid descent was stopped. As I dangled halfway down the jagged rock face, I prayed fervently for whomever or whatever was keeping me from dropping onto the rocks.

Later, I learned that the anchor bolt had not been securely set, and as I stepped off the edge, the person belaying me was jerked on his back and pulled towards the edge of the cliff. Somehow, he wedged his feet against some rocks. Stabilized in that position, he was able to laboriously lower me, hand over hand, with the rope. Although I couldn't see him, I knew he was working with all his strength to save me. Another friend was at the bottom of the cliff, prepared to catch me if the rope ceased to hold. As I came within reach, he caught my harness and lowered me to the ground.

With Jesus Christ as our anchor and perfect partner, we are assured of His loving strength in trial and of eventual deliverance through Him. As President M. Russell Ballard taught: "Faith in God and in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the ... anchor we must have in our lives to hold us fast during times of social turbulence and wickedness. ... Our faith ... must be centered in Jesus Christ, his life and his atonement, and in the restoration of his gospel."²

The spiritual equipment that keeps us from being broken on the rocks of adversity is our testimony of Jesus Christ and the covenants we make. We can rely on these supports to guide and carry us to safety. As our willing partner, the Savior will not allow us to fall beyond His reach. Even in our times of suffering and sorrow, He is there to lift and encourage. His power helps us recover from the often-devastating impact of others' choices. However, we each must put on the harness and make sure the knots are securely tied. We must choose to be anchored to the Savior, to be bound to Him by our covenants.³

How do we strengthen that anchor? We pray with a humble heart, study and ponder the scriptures, take the sacrament with a spirit of repentance and reverence, strive to keep the commandments, and follow the prophet's counsel. And as we fulfill our everyday tasks in "higher and holier"⁴ ways, we become more connected to the Savior and, at the same time, help others come unto Him.

What does that "higher and holier" way look like? We try to live the gospel in all our interactions. We care for those in need by truly ministering, expressing love through simple service. We share the good news of the gospel with those who need peace and strength and "know not where to find it."⁵ We work to unite families for eternity on both sides of the veil. And for those who have made covenants in the house of the Lord, as President Russell M. Nelson explained, "Each adult temple patron will wear the sacred garment of the priesthood, [which] ... reminds us ... to walk on the covenant path each day in a higher and holier way."⁶ These actions are not just an occasional splurge but are essential to our daily happiness—and eternal joy.

There is nothing more important to our eternal progress than keeping our covenants with God. When our temple covenants are in force, we can trust in a joyful reunion with loved ones on the other side of the veil. That child or parent or spouse who has left mortality is hoping with all his or her heart that you will be true to the covenants that bind you together. If we disregard or treat lightly our covenants with God, we are putting those eternal ties in danger. Now is the time to repent, repair, and try again.

Happiness is hollow if we exchange the blessings of eternal joy for momentary ease. No matter our age, that is the absolute truth: the key to lasting happiness is living the gospel of Jesus Christ and keeping our covenants. Our prophet, President Nelson, has affirmed that "our ultimate security and our only enduring happiness lies in holding to the iron rod of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, complete with its covenants and ordinances. When we do so, we can safely navigate through rough waters because we have access to God's power."⁷

Many of us are experiencing rough waters. As we are tossed by waves of adversity and are sometimes blinded by the torrents of tears that come in those difficulties, we may not know which direction to paddle our life's boat. We may not even think we have the strength to get to shore. Remembering *who* you are—a beloved child of God—*why* you are on the earth, and your *goal* of living with God and your loved ones can clear your vision and point you in the right direction. In the midst of the

storm, there is a bright light to show the way. “I am the light which shineth in darkness,” Jesus declared.⁸ We are assured of safety when we look to His light and maintain the integrity of our covenants.

It has been a privilege to meet women of all ages living in a wide variety of circumstances who are keeping their covenants. Each day, they look to the Lord and His prophet for guidance, rather than to popular media. Despite their individual challenges and the detrimental philosophies of the world that try to dissuade them from keeping their covenants, they are determined to stay on the covenant path. They rely on the promise of “all that [the] Father hath.”⁹ And whatever your age, each of you women who has made covenants with God has the ability to hold up the Lord’s light and lead others to Him.¹⁰ Through your keeping of covenants, He will bless you with His priesthood power and enable you to have a profound influence on all with whom you interact. As President Nelson declared, you are the women who will fulfill the prophecies that have been foretold!¹¹

Dear sisters, above all else, stay on the covenant path to Jesus Christ! We have been blessed to come to earth when temples dot the globe. Making and keeping temple covenants is available to every worthy member of the Church. Young adults, you don’t need to wait until marriage or a mission to make those sacred covenants. You can prepare as a young woman to receive the protection and strength temple covenants give as soon after the age of 18 as you are ready and feel a desire to honor those temple covenants.¹² You who have already received the blessings of the temple, don’t let detractors or distractions pull you away from eternal truths. Study and ask trusted sources for greater understanding of the sacred significance of the covenants you have made. Go to the temple as often as you can and listen to the Spirit. You will feel sweet reassurance that you are on the Lord’s path. You will find the courage to continue as well as to bring others with you.

I testify that as we choose to make covenants with Heavenly Father and access the power of the Savior to keep them, we will be blessed with more happiness in this life than we can now imagine and a glorious eternal life to come.¹³ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See “About the Temple Endowment,” temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “Anchor Your Soul,” *New Era*, Mar. 1993, 4.
3. See Matthew 11:28–30.
4. See Marianne Holman Prescott, “The Higher and Holier Way,” *Church News*, May 8, 2019, 18.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Closing Remarks,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 121.
7. Russell M. Nelson, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Prophet Addresses 49,089 in Seattle’s Safeco Field,” *Church News*, Sept. 23, 2018, 8.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 6:21.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.
10. See 3 Nephi 18:24.
11. See Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.
12. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 26.5.1, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
13. See “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).