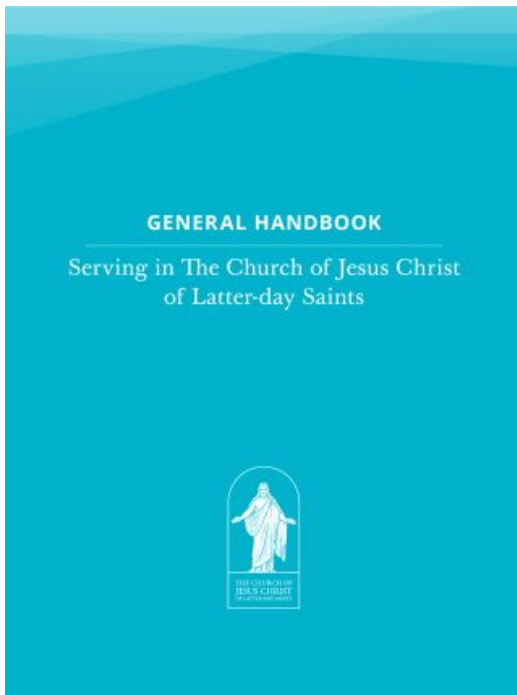


General Handbook of the Church

Excerpts from Chapters 1 and 2



1.1 God’s Plan of Happiness

Heavenly Father provided the plan of happiness to enable us to enjoy all His blessings. His work and glory is to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Immortality is to live forever with a resurrected physical body. Eternal life, or exaltation, is to become like God and live in His presence eternally as families. We cannot obtain immortality and eternal life without God’s help. In this life, we are subject to sin and death, which separate us from Heavenly Father and prevent us from becoming more like Him. Jesus Christ is central to God’s plan. Because of Heavenly Father’s infinite love for us, He sent His Son to redeem us from sin and death through His atoning sacrifice (see John 3:16). Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ ensures that each of us born on earth will be resurrected and gain immortality. His Atonement also makes it possible for us to be cleansed from sin and have our hearts changed so we can receive eternal life and a fulness of joy. To receive eternal life, we must “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). This invitation extends to all who have lived or will ever live on the earth. Heavenly Father wants all of His children to choose to return to Him.

1.3.1 Priesthood Authority and Keys

Through the priesthood, God accomplishes the work of salvation and exaltation. The priesthood authority and keys needed to direct God’s work on earth were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11-16; 112:30; see also 3.1). These keys are held by Church leaders today. They call and authorize others to assist in God’s work (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:8, 65-67).

1.3.2 Covenants and Ordinances

In Heavenly Father’s plan, we make covenants as we receive the

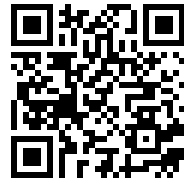
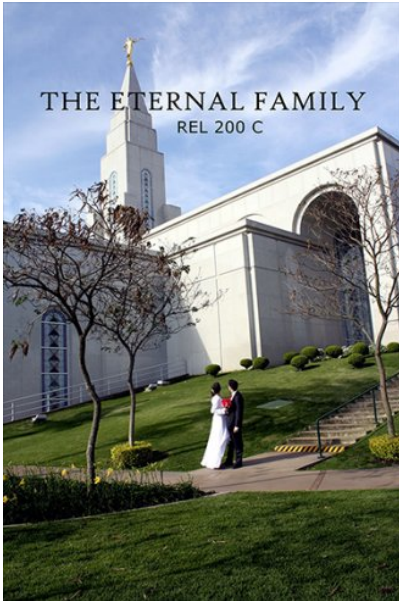
ordinances of salvation and exaltation, such as baptism (see John 3:5; see also chapter 18). These covenants and ordinances are essential for us to become more like God and return to dwell in His presence (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19-22).

1.3.3 Prophetic Direction

Through His chosen prophets, God reveals truth and provides inspired guidance and warnings (see Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:4). This guidance helps us enter and remain on the path leading to eternal life.

1.3.4 Scriptures

Under the direction of the Lord's prophets and apostles, the Church provides and preserves the word of God as found in the holy scriptures. The scriptures testify of Christ, teach His gospel, and help us exercise faith in Him (see Jacob 7:10-11; Helaman 15:7).



The Eternal Family.
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