Across the desk from me sits a delightful young couple. They have come to ask me to perform the marriage ceremony for them tomorrow in the temple of the Lord. The young man has penetrating eyes, curly hair, and a captivating smile. The young woman is alert and lovely, her dark hair adding glory to her shining face, which she frequently lifts up to her companion in adoration. Here is the love of youth at its best and sweetest. And when they are comfortably seated near one another so that their hands are sometimes touching, I say to them:

And so you are going to be married, John and Mary! And tomorrow is the great day! How happy I am for you as you approach this sacred hour! Congratulations to you, John and Mary, and I wish for you eternities of happiness. This you want -- this you may have -- if you will do the things of which I tell you here today.

Happiness, though, is an elusive thing, John and Mary. It is a little like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. If you go out deliberately to find it, you may have great difficulty catching it. But if you will follow directions closely, you will not need to pursue it. It will overtake you and remain with you.

Happiness is a strange commodity. It cannot be purchased with money, and yet it is bought with a price. It is not dependent upon houses, or lands, or flocks, or degrees, or position, or comforts; for many of the most unhappy people in all the world have these. The millionaire has comforts and luxuries, but he has no happiness unless he has paid the same price for it that you can also pay. Often the rich are the most unhappy.

If you think that ease and comfort and money are necessary to your happiness, ask your parents and others whose lives are in the autumn. If they have been financially successful, they will generally tell you that the happiest days were not the ones when they were retired, with a palatial home, two cars in the garage, and money with which to travel around the world; but their joyous days were those when they, too, planned and worked for the wherewithal to make ends meet; when they had their little ones about them and were wholly absorbed in family life and Church work.

And so, Mary and John, you may live in a single room or a small cabin and be happy. You may ride the bus or walk instead of riding in a luxurious car, and still be happy. You may wear your clothes more than a single season and still be happy.

You ask, “What is the price of happiness?” You will be surprised with the simplicity of the answer. The treasure house of happiness may be unlocked and remain open to those who use the following keys: First, you must live the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity and simplicity -- not a halfhearted compliance, but hewing to the line, and this means an all-out devoted consecration to the great program of salvation and exaltation in an orthodox manner. Second, you must forget yourself and love your companion more than yourself. If you do these things, happiness will be yours in great and never failing abundance.

Now the living of the gospel is not a thing of the letter, but of the spirit, and your attitudes toward it are far more important than the mechanics of it, but a combination of doing and feeling will bring spiritual, mental, and temporal advancement and growth.

Mary and John, I congratulate you for your vision and faith and your willingness to forgo the fanfare and glamour of a worldly wedding for a simple, quiet, but beautiful marriage in the temple, a sweet eternal ceremony that will be unostentatious and sacred like your birth, blessing, baptism, or ordination.

Because your people are prosperous, Mary, I realize you could have had all that the world might offer in a glamorous wedding with candles and flowers, attendants and pageantry. But you chose the simple, sacred way the Lord’s way. I salute you!

You could have been married on a merry-go-round as a couple recently were on television, exchanging vows astride painted wooden horses, for which they were to receive all expenses for a wedding trip. You, Mary and John, would not be willing to commercialize on this sacred ordinance and sell your “birthright for a mess of pottage.” You are like many other devoted Latter-day Saint people who prefer to be married in the House of the Lord. John and Mary, I commend you.

I know you plan a reception following the marriage. It offers a delightful opportunity for relatives and friends to bring gifts and wish you well, but I hope you will again avoid temptation to go to extremes in following the world in showy pageantry. There is danger that the ostentatious display may detract from and overshadow
the simple wedding. With your good judgment and clear thinking, I know you can graciously entertain your guests in a wholesome, friendly, and dignified reception without the excesses so often in evidence.

Now, Mary, you must understand that John will not be able to support you as has your father, who has been accumulating for a quarter century; John is just starting. For that matter, perhaps he never will have as much as your father.

And furthermore, Mary, with your wholesome attitude toward family life, I know you will desire to devote your life to your home and family, so when you resign your job and no longer have that income to spend upon yourself, it will mean many adjustments for you; but I understand you have considered all those things and are willing. You see, Mary, it was never intended by the Lord that married women should compete with men in employment. They have a far greater and more important service to render, and so you give up your employment and settle down to become the queen of the little new home that you will proceed to transform into a heaven for John, this man whom you adore. John will work hard and will do his best to provide you with comforts and even luxuries later, but this is the perfect way, to “start from scratch” together.

And, Mary, you have much to learn in these coming months. Perhaps you, like most of the other young women of the nation, have prepared yourself for a career that you will not follow. One college president said about ninety-two percent of all the girls in his college studied languages and mathematics and business, and then when they were married found that they not only had limited use for their specialized training, but they had also failed to train for the great career to which they were now to dedicate their lives. Mary, you are to become a career woman in the greatest career on earth — that of homemaker, wife, and mother. And so, if you failed to prepare for motherhood and homemaking when you could, you may make up somewhat devoting yourself to those subjects now. In your spare time you could now study child psychology and child discipline, the fundamentals of nursing, the art of teaching, particularly how to tell stories and teach children; and you will want to get all the theory as well as the practice now in cooking, sewing, budgeting, and buying.

John’s limited income will spread far if you can learn to buy efficiently and cook expertly so that there will never be waste. And his small income can go far if you learn to make some of your own clothes and those of the children and utilize scraps and pick up bargains. And if you learn the rudiments of nursing, you may be able to save much in doctor and hospital costs by recognizing symptoms and treating minor afflictions, and you may also have the satisfaction of even saving the lives of your own precious family by your being able to do practical nursing. And so your economies will largely make up for the loss of your own income.

You wouldn’t want to work outside the home anyway, Mary, for women are expected to earn the living only in emergencies, and you must know that many are the broken homes resulting when women leave their posts at home. You see, if both husband and wife are working away from home and come home tired, it is very easy for unpleasantness and misunderstandings to arise. And so, Mary, you will remain at home, making it attractive and heavenly, and when John comes home tired, you will be fresh and pleasant; the house will be orderly; the dinner will be tempting; and life will have real meaning.

And you must remember, John, that Mary’s life is not always an easy one. Those months of waiting for the babies are trying ones, often associated with physical discomforts and many deprivations. You will need to be more solicitous of her comfort and more understanding if she should sometimes be irritable. You should assist her about the home and with the little ones and spend no time away from the home and family except to fulfill needed obligations imposed by church service and your occupation. You will limit your social life as she must, and to those activities in which Mary may join you.

Now, John and Mary, there may be a temptation to economize by living with the parents on either side. Do not make this serious error. You two will constitute a new family tomorrow. Well-meaning relatives have broken up many a home. Numerous divorces are attributable to the interference of parents who thought they were only protecting their loved children. Live in your own home even though it be but a modest cottage or a tent. Live your own life. Mary, you must not go home to your parents for long visits, leaving John home alone; neither will you, John, leave Mary when it can be avoided.

And John, you will, of course, do your best to provide the home and the living. But you will not take two or three jobs in order to give Mary luxuries, for Mary has already made her mental adjustments and is willing to get along on what you can reasonably produce. And you will secure employment that is compatible with good family life, John. You will not take a traveling job that will take you away from your home, except in emergencies. Both you and Mary will prefer to have a smaller salary with you at home, rather than to have greater luxuries with you away. And if your work moves you permanently to another location, Mary will go with
you, even though it means being away from family and friends, and even in less desirable places and with fewer opportunities. You are being married for that reason -- that you may always be together.

Your love, like a flower, must be nourished. There will come a great love and interdependence between you, for your love is a divine one. It is deep, inclusive, comprehensive. It is not like that association of the world which is misnamed love, but which is mostly physical attraction. When marriage is based on this only, the parties soon tire of one another. There is a break and a divorce, and a new, fresher physical attraction comes with another marriage which in turn may last only until it, too, becomes stale. The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but spiritual attraction as well. It is faith and confidence in, and understanding of, one another. It is a total partnership. It is companionship with common ideals and standards. It is unselfishness toward and sacrifice for one another. It is cleanliness of thought and action and faith in God and his program. It is parenthood in mortality ever looking toward godhood and creationship, and parenthood of spirits. It is vast, all-inclusive, and limitless. This kind of love never tires or wanes. It lives on through sickness and sorrow, through prosperity and privation, through accomplishment and disappointment, through time and eternity. John and Mary, this is the love that I feel you are bringing to one another, but even this richer, more abundant love will wilt and die if it is not given food, so you must live and treat each other in a manner that your love will grow. Today it is demonstrative love, but in the tomorrows of ten, thirty, fifty years, it will be a far greater and more intensified love, grown quieter and more dignified with the years of sacrifice, suffering, joys, and consecration to one another, to your family, and to the kingdom of God.

For your love to ripen so gloriously, there must be an increase of confidence and understanding, a frequent and sincere expression of appreciation of one another. There must be a forgetting of self and a constant concern for the other. There must be a focusing of interests and hopes and objectives into a single channel.

Now, John and Mary, many young people plan to postpone their spiritual life, church activity, and the bearing of a family, until they get their degrees or get established financially; and by the time they are prepared according to their ambitious standards, they have lost much of the inclination and powers and time.

You, John, are the head of the family. You hold the priesthood. Give this little family righteous leadership. Tomorrow at the end of your first perfect day of marriage, you two should kneel at your bedside before retiring, in your first family prayer, and thank the Lord for the love that has brought you together, and for all your rich blessings, and ask him to assist you to remain true to your covenants and keep clean and worthy and active. Then never let a day pass without your morning and evening devotion. Now is the time to chart your life’s course. Determine to attend your priesthood and sacrament meetings every Sabbath, pay your tithing faithfully, sustain in very deed the authorities of the Church, support the programs of the Church, visit the temple often, give service in the organizations, and keep your actions constructive, your attitudes wholesome.

And, John and Mary, tomorrow when I repeat the phrases that will bind you for eternity, I shall say the same impressive words that the Lord said to that handsome youth and his lovely bride in the Garden of Eden: “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.” The Lord does not waste words. He meant what he said. You did not come on earth just to “eat, drink, and be merry.” You came knowing full well your responsibilities. You came to get for yourself a mortal body that could become perfected, immortalized, and you understood that you were to act in partnership with God in providing bodies for other spirits equally anxious to come to the earth for righteous purposes. And so you will not postpone parenthood. There will be rationalists who will name to you numerous reasons for postponement. Of course, it will be harder to get your college degrees or your financial start with a family, but strength like yours will be undaunted in the face of difficult obstacles. Have your family as the Lord intended. Of course, it is expensive, but you will find a way, and besides, it is often those children who grow up with responsibility and hardships who carry on the world’s work. And, John and Mary, do not limit your family as the world does. I am wondering now where I might have been had my parents decided arbitrarily that one or two children would be enough, or that three or four would be all they could support, or that even five would be the limit; for I was the sixth of eleven children. Don’t think you will love the later ones less or have fewer material things for them. Perhaps, like Jacob, you might love the eleventh one most. Young people, have your family, love them, sacrifice for them, teach them righteousness, and you will be blessed and happy all the days of your eternal lives.

Now, Mary and John, there is an indispensable element in this happiness you desire. There must be fidelity and confidence. John, you have had a legitimate and proper opportunity these past years to look the world over for a wife, to date numerous girls, and to compare
and contrast them with one another, weighing their virtues and attractions, and finally, of them all you have selected Mary as the one with whom you wish to be associated forever, the one who reaches such heights of perfection in your eyes that she is worthy not only to be your helpmeet but also the mother of your posterity. You have built for Mary a pedestal, and placing her on it, will never permit any other ever to share the place with her. She is your queen, your counterpart, your love throughout the eternities.

And you, Mary, have had the same privilege of comparing all the boys who came to see you, and you have selected John as the finest specimen of young manhood, the most desirable companion, to be your husband and the father of your children; and now, having made your choice, this is final. You have built a pedestal on which you have placed John, and no one may ever share that place with him. Never again will you look upon any man as you have John, for he is now your mate and sweetheart and husband for eternities.

Henceforth, your eyes will never wander; your thoughts will never stray; in a very literal way you will keep yourselves for each other only, in mind and body and spirit. You will remember that the Lord Jesus Christ said:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28.)

And it can be paraphrased also to say: “. . . she that looketh upon a man to lust after him hath committed adultery already with him in her heart.” And I want to say to you, also, that flirting by married people, even though they think it innocent and limited, is a serious sin and is the approach toward eventual downfall. A very large share of all divorces have their origin in infidelity of one or both parties, so you can see how important it is to heed this warning and strictly avoid even the appearance of or approach toward evil.

Now, John and Mary, being human, you may some day have differences of opinion resulting even in little quarrels. Neither of you will be so unfaithful to the other as to go back to your parents or friends and discuss with them your little differences. That would be gross disloyalty. Your intimate life is your own and must not be shared with or confided in others. You will not go back to your people for sympathy but will thresh out your own difficulties. Suppose an injury has been inflicted; unkind words have been said; hearts are torn; and each feels that the other is wholly at fault. Nothing is done to heal the wound. The hours pass. There is a throbbing of hearts through the night, a day of sullenness and unkindness and further misunderstanding. Injury is heaped upon injury until the attorney is employed, the home broken, and the lives of parents and children blasted.

But there is a healing balm which, if applied early, in but a few minutes will return you to sane thinking; and know that, with so much at stake — your love, yourselves, your family, your ideals, your exaltation, your eternities -- you cannot afford to take chances. You must swallow your pride and with courage, you, John, would say: “Mary, darling, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you. Please forgive me.” And Mary, you would reply: “John, dear, it was I who was at fault more than you. Please forgive me.” And you go into one another’s arms and life is on an even keel again. And when you retire at night, it is forgotten, and there is no chasm between you as you have your family prayer. This time you could thank the Lord for the courage and strength he helped you muster to avert a threatened calamity. And with this fortitude and determination, you will find that the misunderstandings will reduce in numbers, and whereas they may have come at intervals of weeks, the intervals will come to be months and years, and finally you will learn wholly to enmesh your lives, forever barring the pettiness that is so disastrous.

Now, tomorrow is the glorious and eventful day. I’ll meet you at the temple in the beautiful room decorated in white, typifying purity. The walls of the temple will shut out the sounds of the world below. Here in sweet composure the ceremony will be performed to unite you two for all eternity. Your immediate family and closest friends will be there and with you will rise to spiritual heights in this heaven upon earth.

And when the ceremony is completed, you two will go forth from those sacred precincts, your thoughts on a high spiritual plane a “little lower than the angels.” Hand in hand, with your eyes to the light, you will go forth to conquer and build and love and exalt yourselves and your family.

Goodbye until tomorrow, John and Mary, and God bless you always.