

YOU HAVE HEARD STORIES ABOUT MORMONISM  
The religion's temples, for example,...  
...& its "eternal marriage" or "forever family."

What about temples and marriage/family? What exactly does the Mormon church teach?

In its personal study guide and teacher's manual, *Gospel Principles*, the Mormon church describes marriage as "a law of the gospel." It teaches that "Adam and Eve were married by God... They had an eternal marriage...[and] taught the law of eternal marriage to their children and their children's children." Over time a wicked world abandoned the law, and God withdrew "the authority to perform the sacred ordinance."

According to Mormons, God finally restored the gospel and eternal marriage in the nineteenth century with new scriptures and visions, visitations, and revelations; and the founding of the Mormon church. However, it is hard to imagine that today's "restored" marriage ritual—and "restored gospel" itself—actually reflect practices and doctrines known in Adam's day or at any time in Christian history.

**From the Mormon church's *Gospel Principles*:**

"Not only must an eternal marriage be performed by the proper priesthood authority, but it must also be done in one of the holy temples of the Lord. The temple is the only place this holy ordinance can be performed."

[The Mormon church claims that it alone has "proper priesthood authority" and "holy temples of the Lord." See [P.S. #4](#), re Mormon priesthood and church leaders, and [P.S. #12](#), re temples.]

Some requirements before a proper eternal marriage can be performed: •Men must hold the "Melchizedek Priesthood." •Men and women must be interviewed and approved by leaders at two levels of the church's hierarchy and receive a permit, called a "recommend," to enter a temple. •Believe the "restored gospel" and submit to the exclusive authority of the church president. •Pay a "full-tithe" to the church. •Eschew "hot drinks" (defined as coffee and tea), and certain other substances.

Some blessings of a proper eternal marriage: •"We can live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of God." [Mormons call this "exaltation" or "eternal life."] •"We can be exalted as God is and receive a fulness of joy." •"We can, at some future time, increase our family by having spirit children." •And, "We will become gods."

Preparing for the big day: •"...all boys and girls from their infancy up [should] plan to be married in the temple." •"...your Heavenly Father expects you to marry for eternity and rear a good, strong family." •"...young women [should] say to their boyfriends: 'I am sorry, but as much as I love you, I will not marry out of the holy temple.'"

[Members have been told that, should they be unmarried or childless at death through no fault of their own, living Mormons can participate in temple rituals to correct these deficiencies.]

**From a teacher's manual, *Endowed from on High*:**

Temple ordinances give instructions for eternal life. When you die, they "enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell."

"...in the temple we receive the ordinances that will enable us to return to the presence of God. We also make covenants to live the laws of the gospel."

"With the taking of each covenant...a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions." Otherwise, the Lord "is under no obligation to give us the blessing, and we shall not receive it."

"...members who receive temple ordinances and make covenants with God wear special garments (underclothing) throughout the rest of their lives. ...Temple garments are manufactured by the Church" [and sold to 'worthy' members for wear 24/7].

**Is this the Christian message of Good News?**

To gain eternal life you must be a Mormon. You must be married. Your marriage must take place in a Mormon temple. In a temple wedding (and in other Mormon ordinances) you make covenants (promises); God keeps His promises to you if you keep yours.

**You have heard stories. Now what?**

What are the stories? About "secret" rituals—e.g. the "key words, the signs and tokens," as above? About *walking back* or *returning* to heaven? About special underwear? About men and women becoming gods and having spirit children?

Knowing their sacred rituals and beliefs, you can talk with Mormon friends, not to assault, insult, or embarrass, but to present the distinctly different, liberating news of God's *gift* of eternal life. Mormonism is complex; focus on the Bible's simple gospel truths.